

January 24, 2012

To: The Columbia Association Board of Directors
From: Carlton Haywood, Chairperson
Aquatics Master Plan Advisory Task Force
Subject: Review of draft Aquatics Master Plan



In April 2011, the CA Board directed staff to create an Aquatics Master Plan Task Force to provide guidance to the Columbia Association as it develops the aquatics master plan during Fiscal Year 2012. The Task Force was composed of members of the existing Aquatics Advisory Committee plus additional Columbia residents recruited via a public solicitation. As chairperson of the Columbia Aquatics Advisory Committee, I was asked to chair the Task Force. With this memorandum, the Task Force is providing the Board with its review of the draft Aquatics Master Plan.

Task Force Process

At its first meeting on June 21, 2011, the Task Force members introduced themselves, drafted a mission statement, and heard a presentation from CA staff on the aquatics master plan process. The membership of the Task Force and its mission statement are attached. Through November, the Task Force had meetings once a month at which staff presented information about Columbia demographics, CA aquatics facilities and programs, and about developing options for strengthening, maintaining, or changing aspects of the aquatics program. Task Force members asked questions and provided input on the material shared with them. In many cases, the information presented one month was in response to previous month requests from the Task Force. Some Task Force members participated in one of the focus group sessions organized by staff during the summer and most Task Force members attended one of the two public meetings in October. Early versions of what became Master Plan recommendations were discussed with the Task Force and in some cases those recommendations were amended in response to Task Force input. Meeting agendas, information materials, and meeting summaries were (and are) publically available on the Aquatics Master Plan website, <http://www.columbiaassociation.com/aquaticsmasterplan/>. The Task Force held two meetings in December and another in January to discuss successive drafts of the master plan and to advise staff where we agreed with draft content and where we thought changes would improve the document.

Task Force Assessment of the Aquatics Master Plan

At its January 3, 2012, meeting the Task Force formally assessed its findings on the Aquatics Master Plan and those findings are presented here.

- 1) The Master Plan speaks of three major challenges that it seeks to address and that are used to organize the plan's system wide principles. These challenges are "enhancing and expanding opportunities and access", "providing facilities for all", and "applying sustainable management practices." There was a consensus among Task Force members that these challenges provide the appropriate framework for the Master Plan. The Task Force also agreed that the goals of the plan have been reasonably met, that is, to identify and recommend "... principles and ... strategies that will raise the level of service and operation of our aquatic facilities for the enjoyment of the community."
- 2) Chapter 5, Principles and Recommended Implementation Strategies, provides recommendations to address 17 issues. The Task Force identified two recommendations to single out for Board attention. These are (Strategy number in parenthesis)

- a) Issue 1 (1): Expand Indoor Aquatics Capacity. This was a need heard many times through the public involvement process from many different user groups. Before a final decision is made to convert an outdoor pool for year round use or otherwise construct a new facility, however, much additional information on costs and benefits needs to be gathered and thus 1(1.2), Complete a feasibility study ..., should be a top priority and funded in the FY13 budget.
- b) Issue 2 (1): Replace Splashdown. The Task Force agrees with the Master Plan assessment that Splashdown is near the end of its useful life and that planning should commence immediately on developing a plan for its replacement. The Task Force further agrees that Splashdown has served an important role in the array of CA aquatics facilities as an attraction for young people and therefore that the replacement for Splashdown should serve the same function. The Master Plan specifies that Splashdown should continue operating until its replacement is ready for implementation or until the next time a repair with significant cost implications is required. The Task Force agrees with this approach although one member expressed concern that it is not noted in the Master Plan that Splashdown is currently closed due to safety problems.
- 3) On two issues in Chapter 5 the Task Force did not agree with the staff recommendation or did not itself reach a consensus. Those issues were
 - a) Issue 4 (2): Expand ... Opportunities by Repurposing Selected Facilities. There was no consensus among Task Force members on the recommendation to repurpose an outdoor pool to a zero depth water recreation facility, with as many against as for it. A large majority of the Task Force was opposed to conversion of any outdoor pools to a non-aquatics purpose.
 - b) Issue 7 (2): Consider Open (Free) Swim Times. The Task Force was split on this recommendation with as many opposed to it as those in favor. The Task Force did support, however, the concept of need-based pricing structures to enhance access to pools as recommended for Issue 15.
- 4) The Task Force agreed with the recommended strategies to address Issue 16 with some members noting that out of date or inaccurate information on websites is a too common occurrence today.
- 5) The Task Force agreed with all other Strategy recommendations in Chapter 5.
- 6) The Task Force agreed with the pool specific recommendations in Chapter 6, except that as noted in (3) the Task Force was split on the question of converting one or more outdoor pools to zero depth aquatics facilities and was opposed to converting any pool to a non aquatics use.
- 7) The Task Force agrees with the ordering of priority actions in Chapter 7, Recommended Implementation Timetable, with our additional suggestion that CA should use the Aquatics Advisory Committee and all other appropriate means to engage the public in the pool enclosure and Splashdown replacement feasibility studies.

Summary

As noted above, the Task Force agreed with the framework of challenges defined in the Master Plan and agreed with nearly all the Plan's recommended strategies, singling out two as highest priority for implementation. Recommendations for which there was not consensus support are specifically noted above. At its January 3 meeting, the Task Force reflected on its mission and on its engagement with staff in the development of the Aquatics Master Plan. We concluded that the process, from our perspective, was "positive", and that the staff did a great job, and commend them for the quantity and quality of information gathered and organized to provide a roadmap for continued improvement of CA

aquatics programs. With this report to the Board, we have completed our assignment. I will add my personal thanks to the Task Force members for their thoughtful and constructive suggestions and for their dedication to this process.

Members of the Aquatics Master Plan Task Force

Carlton Haywood, Chair
Patrick Dean
Emad Elshafei
Anne Fairbairn
Linda Friskey
Gunther Gottfeld
Kim Grinnell
Al Grinspoon
Roy Heath
Celeste Huecker
Janet Jones
Jim Maisel
Ginny Matthias
Ann Mech
Charlie Miller
David Ose
Ben Pritchard
Bill Santos
Nancy (Targett) Schurman
Nicki Stenzler
Virginia Thomas
Sandy Wollman
Saul Wollman

**COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION
Master Aquatics Plan Task Force**

Mission Statement

The mission of the **Master Aquatics Plan Task Force** (the “task force”) is to provide guidance to the Columbia Association (CA) as it develops the aquatics master plan, during Fiscal Year 2012. The Aquatics Master Plan is a 10-20 year plan for CA aquatics venues and associated programs.

Responsibilities

In fulfilling its mission, task force members have the following responsibilities:

1. To attend and actively participate in task force meetings, to provide volunteer help as needed, and to offer feedback and new ideas to the Columbia Association staff.
2. To bring a wide diversity of perspective to the master planning process.
3. To review and comment on working documents, analysis, alternatives and master plan draft recommendations as they are developed.
4. Provide guidance and suggestions on how to increase public awareness and involvement in the Aquatics Master Plan development process.
5. To assist the CA in disseminating information about the Aquatics Master Plan.
6. The task force will make reports to the CA Board on progress and recommendations including comments on the draft final plan.

Membership, Meetings and Anticipated Time Commitment

1. The task force will consist of no more than 25 members and will include the members of the Columbia Aquatics Advisory Committee.
2. Regular meetings of the task force will be held monthly in the evenings on the third Tuesday of each month.
3. It is anticipated that the task force will meet up to 10 times during Fiscal Year 2012 (through April 30, 2012).
4. CA staff will prepare and distribute the agenda, take meeting notes, and maintain a schedule of meetings.

Ground Rules

1. Task force members will engage in open dialogue, which allows for the voicing of different opinions and recognition that everyone in the group is responsible for the process.

2. When speaking with others outside the task force, task force members should indicate that they are not speaking on behalf of the task force or CA and should present only their own views and conscientiously refrain from expressing, characterizing or judging the views of others.
3. Each task force member takes responsibility for attending meetings, reading distributed materials, and participating in task force meetings.
4. Task force members shall seek to find common ground. On issues where common ground cannot be found, the group agrees to reflect differing viewpoints in their reporting and documentation and honestly characterize the strength of support for the different viewpoints.
5. Task force members will be aware of the limited time in the meetings and will therefore express themselves succinctly to allow time for others to share their thoughts and opinions. Members may politely remind each other about honoring this ground rule.