



SENIOR  
LEADERSHIP  
TEAM

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Chief Executive  
Officer

**Susan Krabbe**  
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## January 2021

### ***Office of the President/CEO***

The President/CEO, together with members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), held a virtual meeting with CA team members on 5 January. Each SLT member gave a quick overview of their department or office, and responded to written questions submitted in advance by team members. A presentation was also given on the FY 2022 draft budget. Feedback from team members regarding the virtual meeting was very positive.

In response to the events at the U.S. Capitol on 6 January, CA issued a statement on its blog page reiterating its commitment to cultivating a place where people can grow, as well as its support of solutions that prioritize the inclusivity on which the Columbia community was built.

Columbia Association held a virtual town hall on 21 January. Senior Leadership Team members responded to questions submitted by the public on a number of topics, including the draft FY 2022 budget, outdoor pools, pathways, open space, camps, and before and after school programs. More than 100 individuals attended the Zoom webinar, while more than 20 watched via CA's YouTube channel.

The President/CEO is continuing his work on Howard County's Spending Affordability Advisory Committee, and his participation in meetings of the Howard County Chamber, Howard County Economic Development Authority and Downtown Columbia Partnership boards of directors.

Howard County Library System (HCLS) has been designated a "2020 Five Star Library" by *Library Journal* for delivering excellence in public education in all ages. HCLS is the only library system in Maryland consistently earning the five-star ranking, which is attained by less than one per cent of public libraries in the United States.

Columbia was named the "Safest City" in America by WalletHub, the personal finance outlet. WalletHub compared more than 180 cities across 42 key indicators of safety, including three key dimensions: 1) Home & Community Safety, 2) Natural-Disaster Risk, and 3) Financial Safety.

Wallet Hub also named Columbia the second "Best City for Jobs" in the United States. More than 180 cities were compared across 32 key indicators of job-market strength, ranging from job opportunities to employment growth to monthly average starting salary. South Burlington, Vermont was named the "Best City for Jobs."

**MISSION** Engage our diverse community, cultivate a unique sense of place and enhance quality of life.

**VISION** CA creates and supports solutions to meet the evolving needs of a dynamic and inclusive community.

## ***Department of Administrative Services***

### **Accounting/Finance/Payroll**

The Accounting team led the organization through the development of the draft FY 2022 budget and production of the document, which was provided to the Board and community on 8 January, per the Board-approved schedule. The team is now working on compiling information requested by Board members and other community stakeholders.

The Finance team set up the banking arrangements for the new payment card processor and coordinated with the Information Technology (IT) Division on the project implementation.

The team continues to expand the use of paperless solutions in vendor payment processing.

The Payroll team, in conjunction with the Human Resources (HR) Division, enabled access to 2020 Wage and Tax Statements (Form W-2) on 8 January for team members who chose to receive their W-2 electronically. This may be the earliest access CA team members have had to these forms.

### **Human Resources**

The HR team has been focused on multiple initiatives in addition to their daily support of CA managers and team members. Some of these initiatives are:

- Collaborated with the Communications and Marketing team on the Virtual All Team Meeting held on 5 January to engage with team members, share updates from each department/office and familiarize the workforce with the Draft FY 2022 budget.
- Developed and facilitated “Years of Service Awards Week” (11-15 January) to recognize CA team members for their milestone years of service.
- Continued to engage team members on diversity, equity and inclusion (“DE&I”) by soliciting team members’ feedback on action items they envision for CA per the results of our DE&I Survey.
- Developed and deployed a monthly virtual meeting titled “Plug-In.” Team members across the organization join to discuss a monthly topic centered on a training and development course.
- Facilitated and communicated the opportunity, at the convenience of individual Plan participants, virtual, one-on-one sessions with CA’s 401(k) advisor.

### **Information Technology**

In early December, IT led the organization in completing the server migration project for Infor/Lawson, CA’s accounting and financial system.

In mid-December, the IT team completed the transition of our data center from Glen Allen, VA, a third-party site that the vendor was shutting down, to Howard County’s data center. CA is up and running in the county’s data center and we are in the process of closing out all operations in Glen Allen.

IT also has been configuring and deploying new payment terminals throughout CA, as part of the transition to the new payment processing service now being provided by Daxko, the vendor for the customer service system.

### **Purchasing**

The Purchasing team facilitated the successful transition of the Columbia Horse Center to the new operators, effective 1 January 2021. The team also assisted IT with all contractual arrangements for the data center move to the Howard County government site and the related security operations center monitoring initiative.

## ***Department of Sport and Fitness***

### Highlights

#### **Tennis**

Fall 2 Junior and Adult Programming continues through 24 January at the Long Reach Tennis Club and Athletic Club Indoor Tennis. More than 340 participants are enrolled, following strict safety guidelines and protocols.

The USTA 2021 League season began on 2 January, with an impressive level of participation in the “Mixed 18 & Over” program. More than 350 players compete weekly on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at the Long Reach Tennis Club and Athletic Club Indoor Tennis. Safety guidelines and protocols are followed.

Based upon community feedback, the outdoor tennis and pickleball courts remain open at the Owen Brown Tennis Club for member use.

#### **Aquatics**

The Clippers continue with their programming, despite capacity limitations. Presently, 375 swimmers are involved with the Clippers, which represents more than 889 visits to the Swim Center per week.

The Columbia Neighborhood Swim League (CNSL) families are very excited about the 2021 season. The first team manager meeting was held virtually, with more than 30 managers providing support and leadership for the upcoming season.

#### **Ice Rink**

Patricia Muth, Figure skating coach, was honored by the U. S. Figure Skating Association as part of their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Ms. Muth was recognized for her positive impact on thousands of Howard County youth during her **51** years at the Columbia Ice Rink.

#### **Group Fitness**

Group Fitness, with the assistance of CA’s Communications and Marketing Department, launched a new “Group Fitness at Home” Facebook page for both active and “frozen” members. More than 160 members signed up in two days. More information can be found at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cagrouppfitnessathome>

## ***Department of Communications and Marketing***

### Highlights

The Communications & Marketing (C&M) team has developed a robust system of content to connect with the Columbia community.

- C&M manages a series of content calendars that cater to the specific needs and interests of our members and others in the community. That includes plans to publish articles, post social media content and distribute newsletters on a consistent basis, creating a constant connection with our audience.
  - In addition to our CA Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages, we continue to invest in social media outlets focused on fitness ([CA Fit](#)), tennis ([CA Tennis](#)) and aquatics ([CA Swim](#)).
  - These outlets have also become [new blog categories](#), in addition to family-oriented articles (CA Parents' Corner). Over the past several months, the team has published more than 100 blog articles resulting in a more than 4,200% increase in user traffic for the blog section.
  - The Marketing & Communications team has drastically reformatted its regularly-scheduled newsletters to prominently feature our blog content with individual graphics. CA now sends out CA Fit, CA Swim, CA Tennis, CA Golf, Haven, CA Parents' Corner and CA Digest on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis.
- We are now allocating resources to develop and coordinate targeted advertising on multiple platforms, including social media and Google ad opportunities. Those ads are focused on generating leads and attracting new members. Additionally, the ads will highlight the overall value of CA, safety measures, member experience and incentives in an effort to bolster interest in revenue-generating facilities, services and programs.
- C&M has rebranded what was our CA Reopens pages to better reflect the evolving messages we need to share surrounding COVID-19. We are now emphasizing [the CA Commitment](#) to our stakeholders when it comes to safety measures, sanitation practices and updated policies. We continue to revisit and refine those efforts ahead of a return to more customary practices at our facilities.
- A 2021 Communications Strategy has been approved by the President/CEO and presented to the Board of Directors. The C&M team will move forward with implementing that strategy, including communications plans for the FY 2022 budget, the Board of Directors election process, biannual community engagement efforts, and numerous other aspects of CA that are outlined in the strategy document.
- The Customer and Member Service Center (CMSC) team has extended membership freezes for more than 2,000 members until at least 18 May. They also have allowed "frozen" members to use guest passes. The incentive is meant to give these members, notwithstanding the status of the membership, an opportunity to visit the facilities and experience firsthand the environment that has been created, including the many safety measures.

### Challenges

- Membership freezes and cancellations continue to be a significant challenge. There remains hesitation among the community to return to in-person programming at our facilities and recommit to a membership. Our job is to ensure the public of the ample opportunities - in and out of our physical facilities - to utilize a CA membership and to convey a bigger picture of the value we add and the quality of life we enhance.

### Opportunities

- The C&M team looks forward to the ongoing deployment of a COVID-19 vaccine and what that could mean for the public's safety and comfort in returning to group settings. That includes our health and wellness-focused facilities, arts and culture opportunities, and family-oriented programs.
- C&M plans to separate arts and culture into its own category in the coming months. While we are still in the early planning stages, C&M looks forward to growing that presence.

## ***Department of Open Space and Facility Services***

### Highlights

#### Watershed

Construction of the bioretention facilities in open space adjacent to the Faulkner Station HOA was completed. Landscape materials will be installed in the spring.

Construction is nearing completion on the State Highway Administration (SHA) stream stabilization project in Harpers Glen and Town Center. SHA's contractor, Ecotone, will install more than 1,900 trees and 1,200 shrubs in the spring.

### Facilities

The following projects were completed in January:

- Non-slip tile was installed at the Columbia Athletic Club spa.
- ADA modifications to the reception desk at Linden Hall.

The following projects are underway in January:

- Oakland Manor ADA ramp is under construction.
- Sediment removal continues in Lake Elkhorn, with a completion date by the end of February 2021.
- Reconstruction of tennis courts four through six at the Hobbit's Glen Tennis Center is ongoing and expected to be completed by February 2021.
- Restroom and Kitchen improvements at Claret Hall are under construction.

### Open Space

Team members in Open Space Operations have navigated many operational challenges during the pandemic, including increased usage of CA's pathways and parks.

- Over the past few months, team members in Open Space Operations have resumed deferred maintenance activities. The team has replenished the mulch in 80 tot lots,

community-wide, utilizing over 2,000 cubic yards of mulch. More than 100 trees and shrubs were also planted in the fall.

- Starting during the past summer and continuing to present, trash removal was increased to three times a day at the LakeFront Plaza, Lake Elkhorn, and Wilde Lake to compensate for the increase in usage in these areas.
- A digital inspection program for tot lots, LakeFront Plaza, and monument signs was developed and implemented over the past few months.

### Capital Improvements

The following projects were completed in January:

- Bridges: Long Reach LR-46 (April Brook Circle).
- Pathways: Hickory Ridge (275lf), Owen Brown (1,000lf), River Hill (475lf), Oakland Mills (1,100lf).
- Tot Lot Refurbishments: River Hill RH-10 (Angel Rose) & RH-24 (Distant Thunder); Long Reach LR-15 (Footed Ridge).

### Energy Management

New HVAC equipment was installed at the Youth and Teen Center in Oakland Mills and at Supreme Sports Club. To improve air quality, staff continues to install UV sanitizing air pear fans and HEPA air filters in CA facilities. Planning is underway for other capital improvements, including new HVAC units at the Talbot Springs Neighborhood Center and Columbia Gym.

## ***Department of Community Services***

### Highlights

#### Columbia Art Center

The December holiday ceramics sale at the Columbia Art Center was well received in the community. With an appointment, all the ceramics pieces for sale were available for review either online or in-person. The Art Center provided curbside pick-up and home deliveries of the purchases. Due to the popularity of the sale, the Art Center decided to continue the sale through the first part of 2021.

The Art Center hosted in-house sampling workshops in acrylic flow painting and fused glass during January. The workshops complied with social distancing practices and were attended with positive participation.

#### Youth and Teen Center

Assisted by NASA, the Youth and Teen Center (YTC), along with other after-school programs, were invited by the “Afterschool Alliance and Million Girls Moonshot” Group to participate in a live virtual conversation with the astronauts on the International Space Station. Participants were asked to video their questions and send them to be answered. Expedition 65 Astronauts Shannon Walker and Kate Rubins discussed and answered questions about life in space with participants (mainly young girls) from all over the world. Three YTC participants were able to dial in and explore a new world.

During the past several years, the YTC has hosted a cooking and baking event in December for the holidays. To honor that tradition in 2020, the YTC shared and released several favorite holiday cookie recipes and invited youth and their parents to bake together. Some favorite recipes included blossoms, M&M bars, and sugar cookies.

YTC's Middle School and Teen Advisory Committee will hold their first meeting of the year on 28 January.

### School Age Services

During the Howard County Public School System's winter break, School Age Services was able to operate the Schools Out program from the YTC, which is a recently licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education. Given the cold weather, participants and staff enjoyed the versatility and variety of the YTC, especially the outdoor courtyard, game room, and gymnasium space.

### Challenges

Lela Sewell-Williams, manager, Columbia Maryland Archives, has accepted the position of Curator of Manuscripts at Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Howard University. Her last day at CA will be 29 January. During her tenure at CA, Ms. Sewell-Williams created new programs and events to educate the community about the history of Columbia; and, most recently, implemented an online searchable database of the Archives' collection.

### Opportunities

The Youth and Teen Center, along with various partners (Jacaronda Center, Teen Time @ East Columbia Library and Columbia Baptist Fellowship), are in discussion about a grant opportunity with New York Life Insurance Company. The "Aim High" one-year grant focuses on underserved middle school students and must address racial equity and social injustice.

School Age Services (SAS) has applied for three grants, one for each program currently offered by Howard County Government. All current SAS team members have successfully completed the state mandated COVID-19 Training for child care providers. SAS team members are currently registering for COVID-19 vaccinations, which are available for credentialed child care workers.

## ***Office of Planning and Community Affairs***

### Highlights

OPCA wrapped up 2020 by completing workshops for the New Town Planning and Visioning project. After a total of seven virtual workshops, the consultants are now preparing a final document, which should be completed by the end of January 2021.

### Challenges

There are an increasing number of County-related projects that are currently underway, with OPCA sitting as active members on several committees in addition to monitoring development applications. Perhaps, most important to CA is the HoCo By Design General Plan Update, for which we provide input as a member of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) and endeavor

to advocate for the priorities and vision of the Columbia community in the drafting of this planning document.

#### Opportunities

CA is working with Howard County to enhance the Long Reach Village Center with new signage. Team members from OPCA and the Department of Open Space and Facility Services are leading this effort, which will ultimately improve navigation to and through the center, directly benefitting Stonehouse and the Arts Center.

### ***Thought of the Month***

“When we are no longer able to change a situation,  
we are challenged to change ourselves.”

Victor Frankl  
Neurologist, Philosopher,  
Psychologist who founded Logotherapy