



SENIOR  
LEADERSHIP  
TEAM

**Milton W. Matthews**  
President/  
Chief Executive  
Officer

**Susan Krabbe**  
Vice President/  
Chief Financial Officer

**Dan Burns**  
Director of  
Sport and Fitness

**Sheri Fanaroff**  
General Counsel

**Janet Loughran**  
Executive Assistant  
to the President/CEO

**Dennis Matthey**  
Director of Open Space  
and Facility Services

**Monica McMellon-Ajayi**  
Director of  
Human Resources

**Michelle Miller**  
Director of  
Community Services

**Tim Pinel**  
Chief Marketing  
Officer

**Kristin Russell**  
Director of Planning  
and Community Affairs

**Chuck Thompson**  
Chief Information Offi-  
cer

**Jackie Tuma**  
Director of Audit and  
Advisory Services

## March 2021

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

The Howard County Spending Affordability Advisory Committee presented its findings in a report issued on 1 March. The report found that Howard County is at a “crossroads,” and will need to make hard financial decisions not only in FY 2022, but also for the rest of the decade. Presentations of the report are being made upon request, and the President/CEO will participate in a presentation to the Downtown Columbia Housing Corporation Board of Directors on 23 March.

The President/CEO was asked by Howard Community College (HCC) to participate in an accreditation meeting with Middle States Examiners, the accreditation team for HCC, regarding his experience with the “Commission on the Future,” a gathering of community members, college trustees, faculty, staff, and students convened every five years to discuss the future and how it will impact HCC. The President/CEO, who served as a member of the 2017-2018 Commission and chaired its Sustainability Task Force, provided his insights into the work of the Commission, its impact upon HCC, and the longstanding relationship between CA and HCC.

The Downtown Columbia Partnership and Columbia Association are hosting “[BikeAround Downtown Columbia](#)” on 15 and 16 May. This year’s event includes an eight-mile course that begins and ends in ColorBurst Park in the Merriweather District and moves along the paths in Downtown Columbia and the Village of Oakland Mills. Registration for the event is available [here](#).

In honor of Women’s History Month, the Howard County Library will feature a virtual presentation by Dr. Richard Bell, Professor of History at the University of Maryland, on Harriet Tubman and Harriet Beecher Stowe on 23 March beginning at 7:00 p.m. More information and registration for the on-line presentation is available [here](#).

The Charmery, a locally owned ice cream shop, opened its store on the ground floor of the Juniper apartments in March. The Charmery features unique, seasonal ice cream flavors, specialty sundaes, and milkshakes. To honor its newest location, The Charmery is selling pints of Cake Kittamacookie ice cream.

WalletHub, a personal finance website, named Columbia the 8<sup>th</sup> happiest city in the country. WalletHub compared 182 of the largest cities, including the 150 most populated U. S. cities, plus at least two of the most populated cities in each state, across three key dimensions: (i) emotional and physical well-being; (ii) income and employment; and (iii) community and environment. Fremont, California was named the happiest city.

**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***

### Highlights

#### Accounting/Finance/Payroll

The entire team is beginning work on the FY 2021 financial statements audit and the 2020 401(k) plan audit, as well as producing the financial report and statements for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of FY 2021.

The team conducted the annual 401(k) plan refresher training for the village managers and village board chairs. This training is intended to help the village managers and their board chairs to increasingly grow their knowledge about regulatory developments, plan changes and any compliance issues identified by the external auditors, and to better understand and fulfill their fiduciary duties.

The Finance team submitted the annual commercial insurance renewal package to CA's brokers for the FY 2022 renewal process. As is understandable, especially given the pandemic and the volume of cyber incidents, the information requests were greater in volume and complexity than previous years.

#### Human Resources

The Human Resources ("HR") team has been very active with multiple initiatives in addition to their daily support of CA managers and team members. Some of these initiatives are:

- Initial meetings of CA's first diversity, equity and inclusion ("DE&I") committee, as they begin to identify and prioritize initiatives for this important effort.
- Supported and responded to a post-implementation review of Dayforce, CA's HRIS launched in June 2019.
- Continued to support the CA Board in the search process for the new President/CEO.

HR also updated CA's "Vacation & Travel Policy" to align with state and local restrictions, as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Information Technology

Information Technology ("IT") is in the process of planning the migration to new storage devices as the next component of transition from the old data center to the new center at Howard County IT.

IT is testing the equipment and systems for use at the outdoor pools this summer. No issues have been identified to date.

#### Purchasing

To facilitate operations for the start of FY 2022, the Purchasing team is updating contracts and purchase orders for the new fiscal year to ensure that all essential materials, supplies and services have favorable pricing and other terms through approved contracts.

The team continues to support the President/CEO search process.

The Director of Purchasing participated in a meeting of the Maryland Horse Industry Board to discuss the Columbia Horse Center and the new operators.

### Challenges

Staff reductions and vacancies continue to stress the capacity of existing team members. Also, staff anticipates substantial increases in commercial insurance premiums for FY 2022, precipitated by less favorable terms and higher required retention.

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

### Highlights

Dan Burns, Director, Sport and Fitness, was invited by Club Industry to participate in their “Future of Fitness” national virtual conference on 9 and 10 March. Dan was part of a three person panel, who discussed what nonprofits had learned from the pandemic and what the future looks like for such industry representatives moving forward, as well as sharing what for profit facilities could learn from the nonprofit organizations.

### Fitness Clubs

The fitness clubs continue to safely reopen amenities. In March, hot tubs and saunas reopened with updated COVID safety guidelines. The racquetball/squash courts at Athletic Club and Supreme Sports Club are now available for single match play. Reservations and face masks are required.

The basketball hoops at Columbia Gym and Supreme Sports Club are now available for one-on-one play. Reservations and face masks are required.

Group Fitness continues to post classes on a regular basis on the new CA at Home Group Fitness Facebook member page.

### Supreme Sports Club

Kidspace at Supreme Sports Club hosted Adventure Day on Friday, 12 February. The program hosted 11 young people and featured CDC-friendly activities, such as roller skating, games, and art/crafts.

### Columbia Gym

Columbia Gym hosted its first movie night in more than a year, with 11 families/young people participating in CDC-friendly activities, such as a movie, games, and arts/crafts.

Our Hip Hop Dance party was a big success. We aimed a laser light show (a professional nightclub light that moves to the music) on the ceiling. Twelve members attended and were very impressed as they came in.

### Haven on the Lake

During February, Haven on the Lake had 169 virtual engagements with members and non-members via our online class offerings, which is the most for online classes to date. Given the success of these virtual programs, we have many more scheduled for March and April.

## Tennis

Winter/Spring Junior and Adult Programming (25 January – 4 April 2021) continues at the Long Reach Tennis Club and Athletic Club Indoor Tennis. More than with 380 participants are enrolled, following strict safety guidelines and protocols. Participation in our instructional programming has grown from 250 in September 2020 to 381 in February/March 2021, an increase of 52.5%.

The USTA Mixed 18 & Over League continues with 420 players competing weekly on Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Long Reach Tennis Club and Athletic Club Indoor Tennis.

Private and Semi-Private Lessons with CA coaches continue to grow in demand. The team delivered 372 lessons from 16 February – 17 March 2021.

Based on community feedback, the outdoor tennis and pickleball courts at the Owen Brown Tennis Club will remain open, weather permitting, for member use on the weekends. The courts opened for community use on 8 March on a Monday-Friday schedule, from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. as part of our early spring soft opening.

## Challenges

Our current challenge dominating our focus is staffing the 15 outdoor pools for the upcoming season. Staff is exploring numerous options and the gap is closing, but there are still vacancies to be filled.

## Opportunities

With the increased vaccine rollout, we have the opportunity to begin welcoming back more of our former and frozen members and intensifying efforts to bring in more new members. The membership advocates are working hard to get them enrolled.

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

## Highlights

### Watershed/Community Engagement

- Streamwaders, a joint program between CA, MD Department of Natural Resources, and the Howard County Watershed Stewards Academy, began volunteer sampling in streams in Columbia on 11 March in the Village of Oakland Mills. Sampling in the Village of Kings Contrivance and the Village of Owen Brown will be completed by the end of March, weather permitting.
- Weed Warriors training begins 18 March, with the largest class to-date.
- Weed Warrior Pull and Plants begins on 20 March in the Village of Long Reach and on 28 March in the Village of Kings Contrivance.
- CA staff completed supplemental seeding in the SHA/ECOTONE stream restoration project area on 12 March. ECOTONE and CA supplemental shrub and tree planting is scheduled for the end of March/early April, weather permitting.

## Facilities

The following projects were completed in March:

- Fairway Hills Maintenance facility sprinkler replacement

- Dickinson Pool fencing
- Jeffers Hill Neighborhood Center playground fence replacement
- Teen Center water main break repair and restoration
- Claret Hall restroom renovations and repairs
- Family Life Center fire alarm panel replacement
- Hobbit's Glen tennis patio retaining walls and steps
- Hobbit's Glen tennis pathway connections

The following projects are underway in March:

- Reconstruction of Hobbit's Glen tennis courts - #4 through #6
- Restoration of water damage to Rose Price House
- Assistance by CA maintenance crew to the Aquatics Division in preparing for the opening of the outdoor pools
- Spring preparations to open outdoor tennis clubs
- Amherst House sprinkler design and permitting
- Roof replacement design and permitting for the Owen Brown Community Center
- Roof replacement design for the Maintenance Facility

#### Real Estate Services

- Initiated the steps to dedicate the Stevens Forest pond to Howard County
- Several easement requests for utility repair access and access for replacement of the Columbia area wooden guardrails are in process

#### Open Space

The following projects were completed or are now underway:

- The Open Space Operations team on-boarded Level Green Landscapes, a new grounds and landscape contractor, which involved multiple site visits and review of the scope of work
- Spring clean-up of landscape beds community-wide, including Symphony Woods Park, is underway
- Tot lot mulch replenishment is continuing throughout March
- Complete replacement of tot lot mulch at Phelps Luck, Besthold Garth, and Grey Rock is underway
- Trash removal is continuing three times per day, which is more than usual due to increased usage of the pathways and lakefronts
- Pressure washing and painting of select neighborhood and village signs

#### Capital Improvements

The following projects are underway or will be completed in March:

- Several small tot lot repairs to address issues found during the annual tot lot inspections
- Several neighborhood and village entry sign repairs to address issues found during the annual sign inspections
- Howard County Lake Elkhorn path improvements from Swan Point to Angelina Circle will be completed by the end of March
- LRBR48 and ORBR07 Bridge approaches were paved and backfilled

### Energy Management

- Planning continues for HVAC replacement work at the Columbia Gym, with work expected to commence at the end of March
- LED lighting was installed at the Bryant Woods Neighborhood Center and the Jeffers Hill Neighborhood Center
- Annual energy data reporting was completed as part of the ENERGY STAR and Better Buildings programs, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### Opportunities

- On Saturday, 24 April 24, 10 am until noon, several Boy Scout troops and CA staff will be planting 300 native trees purchased using grant funds from the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Howard County. The trees will be planted just north of the Park and Ride lot on Snowden River Parkway.
- CA will work with staff from several community village associations to purchase trees, enlist volunteers, and provide instructions on how to plant the trees.

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

### Highlights

The Columbia Art Center is hosting a theme exhibit entitled “Visionary Women”, scheduled to run from 8 March to 26 March 2021. The show, which is the first exhibit the Columbia Art Center has showcased in a year, features two-dimensional art by 19 local female artists. Visitors have the opportunity to view the show in-person by reservation or enjoy various exhibit features and artist interviews on social media.

The Youth and Teen Center will assist the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning in identifying three to eight teens to participate in a focus group to be held on 31 March. The County is seeking community input for its General Plan Update and wants to ensure that the values, needs, and priorities of the historically under-represented populations are heard.

Parent Huddles 2021 are back. Youth and Teen Center parents will attend a free on-line Financial Stability Series hosted by The Jacaranda Center for Family and Youth Development, beginning 16 March. Seven sessions will be offered on topics ranging from budgeting basics to home buying basics.

School Age Services (SAS) has successfully transitioned our current programs at Clemens Crossing, Northfield, and Jeffers Hill Elementary Schools to accommodate the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Hybrid Model, which started on 1 March.

### Challenges

Due to the current COVID restrictions for licensed child care programs and limited capacity inside of school buildings to accommodate phased return to in-person learning for students, we continue to operate only three out of our twenty licensed sites. HCPSS has continued to provide space to SAS to run our programs at the start of the Hybrid Model through the end of the school year at Clemens Crossing, Northfield, and Jeffers Hill Elementary Schools (this group transitioned from Cradlerock Elementary School on 1 March). HCPSS is aware that many

families have reached out to CA (and other care providers) in frustration with the lack of opportunities for care at CA's seventeen other school sites.

### Opportunities

In an effort to continue operations until there is a return a "normal" school schedule and programming, SAS has applied for additional funding through the Maryland State Department of Education's Child Care Pandemic Relief Fund Grant. The funds, which are being made available through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, provide \$10 billion in much-needed direct pandemic-related relief for the child care sector. These funds can be used to support providers facing reduced enrollment and increased costs of serving children safely; reduce family co-payments; pay staff salaries; provide care for the children of essential workers, regardless of income; support costs related to reopening; and more. These grant funds would be in addition to the recent and related grant CA received from Howard County.

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

### Highlights

We are experiencing performance gains in lead generation for fitness memberships from digital advertising efforts. While digital leads do not account for all sales, the leads produced through digital marketing represent the majority of inquiries, and gains in the marketing impact and efficiency were contributors to the organization's attainment of February sales goals.

A focus on Fitness leads has been necessary over the winter months, as interest in Golf memberships remain healthy and continuing the trend from the past year. The Marketing team is currently transitioning to a broader focus, which will roll out during March and April, on promoted sales of Play memberships, as well as an expanded focus on non-dues revenue (NDR) sales. Future reports will introduce similar tracking data for performance around those revenue-generating activities.

The Communications team facilitated a virtual information session for potential CA Board candidates on 20 February, which had an attendance of approximately 30 people over the course of the 90 minute event, with an additional 62 views on the YouTube stream made available afterwards. We are in close communication with the village community associations to support as much turnout as possible during the elections in April, which includes managing information about the elections on the CA website, as well as pointing visitors to the village websites where further detailed information is available.

Ensuring that our community is aware of what to expect this outdoor pool season remains one of our key focus areas. Registration protocols are being set up, with clear training and reference information under development to ensure that members and guests can book pool use as easily and equitably as possible. Additional upgrades to the pools section of the website have been published, and further improvements to the content, design and navigation continue.

The Communications team provided a rapid and detailed update to the public on the Board-approved Fiscal Year 2022 budget, with most summary content made available through blog and social media channels within hours of the final vote.

### Challenges

The marketing challenges associated with engaging with an audience that is undergoing rapid change, with respect to vaccinations and (therefore) willingness to consider membership options are significant. We have limited methods of identifying and targeting prospects on the basis of vaccination status, while at the same time recognizing that for many, this factor will be the key determinant.

We recently published a response to misstatements and mischaracterizations contained in a widely distributed mailer. We anticipate further similar content to be distributed, especially in the lead-up to village elections. CA Communications must continuously calibrate the extent to which there is value in engaging such content directly against the downside of giving it further relevance in the community.

### Opportunities

Vaccine rollout, better weather and improvements in COVID metrics generally are making membership sales less of an uphill battle, and we are seeing those outcomes in the numbers of inquiries leads that we're getting.

Several events being planned in the community in the spring and summer are providing us with new opportunities to engage with the community. In particular, we are working closely with the Downtown Columbia Partnership to prepare for running and biking events as well as future arts and culture events in the downtown area.

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

### Highlights

The Millennial Advisory Committee met to discuss CA's new Communications & Marketing Strategy, along with ways to promote participation in village elections. Additionally, the Office of Planning and Community Affairs (OPCA) facilitated the engagement of members of the Committee with a DPZ focus-group on Millennials and the General Plan Update.

### Opportunities

OPCA continues to participate in the Planning Advisory Committee for the "HoCo By Design" General Plan Update. With the completion of CA's New Town Planning & Visioning Guide, we can continue to engage with the County with the confidence that the Board's sentiments are being accurately shared based on the contents of that resource document, especially as we anticipate the upcoming "New Town Charrettes" to be held by Howard County.

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

"You can't change yesterday.  
You can't count on tomorrow.  
But you can choose what you do today."

John C. Maxwell  
American Author and Speaker