



Report to Mayor-Elect

Steve Benjamin

From Citizen Transition Teams

June 30, 2010

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Report of Mayor-Elect Steve Benjamin's Transition Team

Overview

Mayor-Elect Steve Benjamin invited nearly 200 Columbia region residents, each experts or leaders in his or her field, to provide suggestions to help Columbia achieve its considerable potential over the coming four years. He asked the four of us, as representatives with deep roots in our respective communities, to each facilitate the work of two committees. Following are the committees he formed in eight broad categories that impact the growth and quality of life in our City:

- Arts and Historic Preservation Committee
- Economic Development
- Education and Community Development
- Environment and Sustainability
- Government Operations and Efficiency
- Public Health
- Public Safety
- Regionalism and Intergovernmental Relations

As transition team leaders, we were charged by Mayor-Elect Benjamin:

Based on your background, expertise, and passion for the City of Columbia, frankly identify her strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. After reviewing your assessment, offer recommendations from your combined perspectives that will enable Columbia to become an even greater City. It is important that you approach your task by first seeking out early opportunities for improvement, then recommending top priority initiatives that require greater than six months and up to several years to define and implement. In all studies, keep in mind our mutual commitment to improving the quality of life for our diverse population through cost-effective, common sense, long-term solutions.

Committees were encouraged to adopt a common approach:

- identification of the current status of the City related to its category
- Strengths and weaknesses with their associated benefits or drawbacks
- Opportunities available to the community both early on (next 6 months) as well as top priorities for later (6-24 months) consideration.

The makeup of the committees required that there be flexibility in both meeting and reporting structure, resulting in varied but hopeful and practical reports. Each committee was supported by a talented intern who assisted with recording and staging work; each section is presented in the words of the committee and its members... All reports were submitted in draft to committee members for final input before this report was compiled.

On behalf of our committee chairs, members, interns and ourselves, we are grateful to Mayor Benjamin for giving us the opportunity to prepare community-based recommendations for the future of our City. We stand ready to assist in any way possible to assist with their implementation.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Luther Battiste
Barbara Rackes

Hon. Robert Dozier
Bessie Watson

Arts & Historic Preservation Committee

Arts & Historic Preservation Committee

Overview

What follows is the documentation from the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee discussions and findings regarding the state of cultural affairs in the City of Columbia.

The team identified and prioritized a set of strategies for achieving certain goals and objectives and created an Action Plan with accountabilities and timelines for the prioritized strategies. A set of strategies the team called “early opportunities” were identified, and owners and timelines were assigned to each of those strategies.

The team established that the City's priorities should lie in three main areas: finishing current cultural projects, the creation of a strong, central conduit which will have dollar allocation responsibility, strategic plan execution and a “menu” of City services for organizations seeking help or action; and a strong neighborhood initiative that will serve to connect, incubate and efficiently use current infrastructure in manners of adaptive re-use of neighborhood buildings.

The City of Columbia's cultural community has been fragmented by too many divisions of pots of money, resulting in ineffective funding and many projects that continue to sit in an incomplete form. The team acknowledged the need for the major projects in the cultural community to be finished and agreed to place them at the top of the priority list for this strategic plan. Completing these projects in a relatively short time frame will increase economic activity in the downtown area and will establish the need for the continued completion of any new or existing projects. Among the projects the team earmarked for completion are both screens of the Nickelodeon Theater (Fox Theater) on Main Street, the completion of the Renaissance Foundation building, and the completion of the dead space in the Columbia Museum of Art.

The team also established that there is a strong need for a central conduit/office with dollar allocation responsibility, strategic plan execution and servicing opportunities to act as a cohesive unit and voice for the city's cultural community. This office will organize the direction of the arts and historic preservation sector through projects, planning and guidance. It is key that this office have the responsibility of prioritizing the funding and planning of ongoing projects and also creating a “menu of services” to guide organizations through city processes. The conduit will also act as a central location for information regarding the city's cultural happenings. The office will also place responsibility on the institutions that it supports, encouraging those institutions to in turn support the smaller and fledgling institutions coming up behind them.

Columbia's neighborhoods have grown into strong centers in need of cultural anchors. A fine example of such a neighborhood with a relatively new anchor is the Whaley Mill area with 701 Whaley. In utilizing adaptive reuse of significant buildings in the city's neighborhoods and placing cultural initiatives in these structures, activity is created that will branch out into surrounding businesses and educational platforms. These spaces should be used as neighborhood centers as well as incubators for smaller cultural projects and events. Using these spaces in such a manner will promote economic development and cultural activity and will, in effect, create the opposite of

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the “broken window syndrome”. As the neighborhood sees the cleanup and activity surrounding the existing structures, it will be encouraged promote further civic, economic and cultural activities. Incentives should be given to groups moving into these spaces in order to promote initial activities, such as lowered rent. The key is to get the activity and cultural initiatives going, and the as the economic activity increases, adjust terms accordingly. An example of a possible project that would meet such a need would be the completion of a 600 to 800-seat entertainment venue in the downtown area, in a building such as the Tapp’s Building.

The execution of the team’s plan according to the three areas listed above will ensure that the City of Columbia cultivates a culture of confidence and activity. Attention to these areas will increase economic activity and will efficiently work to beautify, unify and stimulate the city’s cultural community and neighborhoods.

Respectfully submitted,

Shani Gilchrist (Co-Chair)

Todd Avant
Karen Brosius
Chris Brownlee
Anastasia Chernoff
Marvin Chernoff
Bobby Donaldson
Shirley Fields-Martin
Harriet Green
Laura Haney
Larry Hembree
Susie Heyward
Gloria James

Jordan Freking, Intern

Steve Morrison (Co-Chair)

Mary Skinner Jones
Robert Lewis
Lee Mashburn
Mike Miller
Heather Mitchell
Carla Lewis Moore
Wim Roefs
Debi Schadel
Kirkland Smith
William Starrett
Brenda Wheeler
John Whitehead

Barbara Rackes, Transition Leader

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High-level Issues (Situation Assessment)

The team identified the high-level issues the organization faces today.

HIGH-LEVEL ISSUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are a number of projects well underway that are currently awaiting completion due to competition for funds - While there are numerous performance venues in the city, performance potential is not being maximized due to challenges in booking and the need for a 600 – 800 seat theater - The city is not perceived of as pedestrian friendly due possibly to heat, traffic, and minimal green spaces - Many members of the committee believe that clarifying and coordinating the cultural advantages of Columbia will improve the overall perception of Columbia.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The team was asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Arts and Historic Preservation in the City of Columbia. In addition, they examined the external opportunities and threats to the Arts and Historic Preservation arena. What follows are their responses.

STRENGTHS	BENEFITS
A number of performance venues	Potential for both formal and guerilla events
Columbia Museum of Art & State Museum	Cultural, educational, and financial assets
Community of many talented and passionate individuals	Powerful vision for artistic and cultural development
Many colleges and universities in the city	Attract a diverse and energetic population of young people
Historic neighborhoods	Strong character and sense of community
Diverse communities and artistic centers throughout the city	

WEAKNESSES	IMPACT
Lack of clean, reliable, and affordable public transportation system	Failure to bridge gaps between artistic and cultural centers
Poor communication between organizations and public as well as intra-organizational	Lack of knowledge of events, Lack of support

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Minimal collaboration between arts and cultural organizations to cross-promote, support and build the community	Lack of community and support. Failure to reach full potential as an arts community
Issues with funding and financial stability for mainstays of Columbia arts scene including the distribution of the Hospitality Tax	Competitive clamor for funds each time the issue reaches City Council
The misperception of Arts and Historic Preservation in Columbia from within the city as well as surrounding areas	Decreased sales, audience participation and private funding.

OPPORTUNITIES	BENEFITS
Wrap up ongoing fundraising efforts and finish projects currently in the works, such as construction on the Nickelodeon, dead space in Columbia Museum of Art, and Renaissance Center	Create “early wins”, generating steam for the successful completion of later projects, venues and events
Expand the scope of pre-existing events, such as Indie Grits Film Festival, Jazz Under the Stars, and the Indie Grits Film Festival	A means of drawing in tourism dollars from around the state and the Southeastern region
Take advantage of the depth and diversity of the community by drawing in students, suburbanites and those groups on the edges of the city	Increase in tax revenues, sales and regional movability
Use diversity of arts organizations to advantage by way of multidisciplinary collaborations and marketing	Creates a stronger, more effective reach to audiences and potential audiences; efficiently combines resources
Maximize benefits of historic Columbia buildings and communities through walking tours	Creates a pride of ownership for residents, adds a larger tourism aspect

THREATS	IMPACT
Lack of focus of specific goals leading to	Projects go unfinished; lost opportunities for

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minimal results	revenue
Government regulations create prohibitive red-tape dilemmas	Decrease in number of events
Lack of funding and financial stability to allow for succession within historic organizations	Lack of qualified staff members to carry organizations on into the future
Apathy among the general populous	Decreased audience participation and revenues
Vulnerability of the Arts and Historic Preservation to economic conditions and political leadership	

GOAL AREAS, OBJECTIVES, CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS & BARRIERS

Based on the assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the team identified three goal areas, measurable objectives for each plus critical success factors and barriers related to implementing those measurable objectives. They separated Goal Areas into those that could be accomplished within the coming 6 months from priorities that could be accomplished over a near-term of 6-24 months. Lastly the committee identified a set of important issues that should be considered as successes are achieved and circumstances change.

Early Opportunities (1st 6 months)

High-level Goal # 1: Early Opportunities			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Completion of Nickelodeon Theater Projects			X
Completion of Renaissance Foundation			X
Complete New Workshop Theater off Elmwood Ave.		X	
Successful celebration of Columbia City Ballet's 50 th Anniversary and return them to financial stability	X		

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Celebration of Historic Columbia Foundation's 50 th Anniversary	X		
Investigate renovation of Columbia Music Festival Association's second space to serve as an incubator	X		
Successful first year for the Township Auditorium to demonstrate the potential for artistic success within the city	X		
Investigate the financial feasibility of renting the adjacent space to 701 Center for Contemporary Art for Contemporary Arts to serve as an incubator	X		
Complete construction of the Coble Pavilion at EdVenture			X
Complete renovations to State Museum including the new 4D theater			X
Complete construction of unused space in the Columbia Museum of Art			X
Increase use of new blackbox theater and rehearsal space at the Trustus Theater		X	

GOAL 1: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 1: BARRIERS
"Early wins" establishing confidence in cultural community	Funding primarily private

High-level Goal # 2: Creation of a strong, central conduit with strategic & allocation responsibilities			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Definition of entity along with Mission, Goals, Powers and Duties	X		
Contact cities with similar offices to serve as a resource as the office develops	X		

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Institute office with primary objectives of power to get things done, service, and strategic planning		X	
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GOAL 2: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 2: BARRIERS
Unified central voice for art community	Misconceived perception of fractioning of the arts community
Menu of services (directing toward permits, etc) for organizations seeking information relating to events, etc.	Competitive clamor for funds
Allocation responsibility	
Strategic responsibility	

High-level Goal #3: Neighborhood-Incubator Connection			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Define the role of the incubator within the community	X		
Identify specific incubators for each of the neighborhoods throughout the city	X		
Establish the incubator within neighborhoods to create a sense of involvement and community		X	

GOAL 3: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 3: BARRIERS
Increase in economic activity, adaptive reuse of underutilized structures	“Regionalism” of individual neighborhoods
Increase in community involvement	

PRIORITIES

Following the Committee's development of goals and objectives, the Committee placed each of the identified objectives into time-sensitive categories reflecting which of the objectives the Committee believes can be accomplished within a short time frame (Early Opportunities), within a timeframe of six to twenty-four months (Top Priorities) and issues that should be addressed at some future time.

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Early Opportunities (Next 6 Months)

EARLY OPPORTUNITY STRATEGIES	Owner	Timeframe
Develop a comprehensive calendar of events available online with an option to print.		
Develop a walking map of the city of Columbia available online with continued exploration of permanent placement in central locations		
Cross-promote major community events including the 50 th Anniversary of the Columbia City Ballet, the 50 th Anniversary of the Historic Columbia Foundation, and the first year of the renovated Township Auditorium	William Starrett, Robin Waites, Sally Roach	
Finish work on current construction projects beginning with both screens of the Nickelodeon on Main St., followed closely by the Renaissance Center	Larry Hembree, Mary Skinner-Jones	
Address the “walkability” of the city by planting trees to create shade and a more beautiful downtown area		
Complete unfinished projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “dead space” at the Columbia Museum of Art • Explore the financial feasibility of renting the space adjacent to 701 Center for Contemporary Art as a possible incubator clearing house for the city. See CMFA as example. 	Karen Brosius, Wim Roefs	

Priority Recommendations (6 – 24 months)

6-24 MONTH STRATEGIES	Owner	Timeframe
Create a strong central conduit with dollar allocation, strategic planning, and service responsibilities		
Identify all current projects, their needs for completion, and pursue collaborative marketing to promote and support multiple events and organizations	Jordan Freking/Shani Gilchrist /Central Conduit	6 months

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Establish a public art requirement possibly for business or new construction	Central Conduit	6 months
Increase public involvement through public forums on arts and culture in the city	Mayor's office/central conduit	4 to 6 months

Economic Development Committee

Economic Development Committee

Overview

The Economic Development Committee of the Transition Team of Mayor-Elect Steve Benjamin of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, met on June 14, 2010 in the Conference Room of the Enterprise Campus of Midlands Technical College. The Committee is composed of 46 community and business leaders in the City of Columbia selected by the Mayor-Elect, and is chaired by Rick Cohn and former Governor Jim Hodges. Transition Co-Chair Robert Dozier also participated in the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Cohn (Co-Chair)

Deborah Breedlove
Mike Briggs
Lee Bussell
Mia Butler
Bob Chen
Jay Courie
Bianca Crawford
Tom Deloach
John Durst
Deepal Eliatamby
Paul Fant
Jim Gambrell
Donald Gist
Ford Graham
Ben Green
Stan Harpe
Fred Jabber
Ray Jones, Esq.
Matt Kennell

Governor Jim Hodges (Co-Chair)

Andy Lawrence
David Lockwood
Ric Luber
April Lucas
John Lumpkin
Dan Mann
Pat Mason
Neil McLean
Ike McLeese
Reggie Murphy
Cathy Novinger
Rick Patel
Cameron Runyan
Doreen Sullivan
Diane Sumpter
Tigerron Wells
Dr. Marshall "Sonny" White
Jeremy Wilson
David Zalesne

Hon. Robert Dozier, Transition Leader

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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The Committee assessed economic development strengths and weaknesses of the City of Columbia (the "City"). Strengths identified by the Committee include:

- the presence of a good network of colleges and universities that serve the community, state and region, including a large research university,
- a large pool of experienced military, federal and state government workers, along with a good pool of experienced manufacturing workers,
- a terrific recreational lake in close proximity to the City
- solid infrastructure (including rail, water and sewer, interstate highways and a great airport facility), and close proximity to the Port of Charleston,
- good training programs for improving the skills of workers,
- strategically important U.S. Army operations at Fort Jackson.

The Committee identified several weaknesses in our economic development platform which need to be remedied to improve the City's business climate. Included in that list are the following:

- the need to dedicate more resources to job creation and recruitment,
- the need for broader support and coordination of the economic development efforts among elected leaders,
- the need to maintain a better balance between the interests of neighborhoods and businesses,
- the need to improve access to capital for development opportunities.

The Committee determined that economic development needs to be a greater priority for the City, given the expected cutbacks in government and university employment and the high level of unemployment facing the City, state, and nation.

Priority Recommendations

Key recommendations of the Committee include:

- Identify a clear set of economic development goals. Without such an assessment, it is difficult to measure success and chart a course for the type of community we wish to develop. The Committee identified the below set of proposed goals that we believe are important to the future of the City:
 - Foster a business friendly environment,
 - Focus on developing a support plan for existing businesses, while emphasizing safety and security in allocating city resources,
 - Promote development around the cluster concept,
 - Emphasize strong cultural and quality of life assets, such as the rivers, Riverbanks Zoo, the arts, and the University of South Carolina,
 - Support and encourage strong public schools,
 - Develop international relationships through programs like the Sister City network to encourage trade and development opportunities,
 - Develop a plan to build a positive image for the City.

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- Improve coordination among the various economic development stakeholders to ensure a greater likelihood for success.
- Institute a strong mayor form of government for the City, leading to simplified decision making by the city administration and greater accountability from city government. While not unanimous, the consensus was that the strong mayor form of government would allow the City to better achieve many of the goals laid out in this report.
- Emphasize a regional identity that builds on the strengths referenced above of the City and region. Cooperation of the surrounding communities will be necessary if we are to define, sustain and market a regional identity.
- Create an inventory of the resources available to support the economic development effort.
- Develop a list of allies and ambassadors from which to recruit to assist in economic development projects in the City's economic development effort.

With a better defined identity and an effort to engage the community in moving the City forward, the Committee anticipates significant progress.

The Committee applauds the work of community and regional leaders to emphasize key clusters for development opportunities, and believes the City should follow that path. These clusters include clean energy (which is a combination of nuclear and fuel cell technology), health sciences, information technology and insurance, military expansion and defense industries, and recreation and tourism. These clusters build around existing core strengths of the City and the Midlands region and our workforce and existing business base. We believe these areas provide a wealth of development opportunities in the next few decades and beyond to sustain and grow our City and the region.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive report, but to serve as a guide for a more in depth and continuing look at the City's challenges and opportunities in economic development. To be successful and achieve community "buy-in", it is important that citizens stay engaged in the economic development effort. For that reason, we encourage the Mayor to establish a seven member **Mayor's Advisory Committee for Economic Development**. The Mayor should meet regularly with this group to discuss economic development issues facing the City, and the Mayor's Advisory Committee should continue to refine and build on this report. Maintaining a healthy dialogue with business leaders has helped the State of South Carolina achieve great success in the past. The City should look to achieve the same success which can occur only if a strong line of communication exists between the Mayor and local citizens passionate about high quality growth and development.

Education &
Community Development Committee

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Education & Community Development Committee

Overview

The Education and Community Development Committee met twice as a whole in June. Also each committee member prepared a one-page brief on an issues discussed during the meeting to further elaborate on recommendations. At its first meeting, the committee outlined the purpose of its meetings as:

- Recommend issues in Education and Community Development that would have a greater opportunity for success if the Mayor became involved.
- Brainstorming Education
- Brainstorming Community Development
- Establish timeline for the committee's goals

What follows is the documentation from the Education and Community Development Committee for Mayor-Elect Steve Benjamin's Transition Team. The team identified the following critical assumptions in preparation for planning:

- Education and Community Development are interrelated
- There are eight core areas in the field of "Education and Community Development" that the Mayor-Elect should address during his administration; they are:
 1. Educational Advocacy
 2. Convening K-20 and Adult Education
 3. Youth and Gang Violence
 4. Website for the City of Columbia
 5. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program
 6. Housing Trust Fund
 7. Establishing Positive Media and Public Relations
 8. Re-Investing in Columbia's Neighborhoods

We look forward to working with Mayor-Elect Benjamin and his staff at the City of Columbia to build a great future for our citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Traci Young Cooper, Co-Chair

Karen Alexander
Rev. Aaron Bishop
Ashlye V. Clark
Rev. Wiley B. Cooper
Hon. Jamie Devine
Ronald L. Drayton
Anita Floyd
Alexzena Furgess
Shelvy Ham

Emily Burn, Intern

Malik Whitaker, Co-Chair

Tina N. Herbert
Yasha Y. Jones
Bruce Lawrence
Jennifer Moore
George Muhammad
Karen Oliver
Hon. Abigail Rogers
Christie Savage
Tige Watts

Robert Dozier, Transition Leader

Report of Mayor-Elect Steve Benjamin's Transition Team

High-level Issues (Situation Assessment)

The team identified the high-level issues the organization faces today.

High-level Issues - Education

1. There is a lack of school-readiness amongst children in Columbia
2. There is a lack of parental involvement
3. There is not an adequate amount of student support
4. There is not a strong relationship between educational leaders and business leaders

High-level Issues – Community Development

1. There is a lack of affordable housing, and a low percentage of people who desire to move into the city; lack of population growth from outsiders moving into Columbia
2. There is not a wholly positive image of Columbia
3. There are high levels of youth violence
4. There needs to be a housing trust fund in the city of Columbia
5. There needs to be more neighborhood involvement and a greater emphasis on the importance of strong neighborhoods

Priorities

Following the Committee's development of goals and objectives, the Committee placed each of the identified objectives into time-sensitive categories reflecting which of the objectives the Committee believes can be accomplished within a short time frame (Early Opportunities), within a timeframe of six to twenty-four months (Top Priorities) and issues that should be addressed at some future time.

Early Opportunities (Next 6 Months)

EARLY OPPORTUNITIES

- Recognize the link between Education and Community Development
- Promotion of National Night Out - August 2-3, 2010; Make a strong showing at NNO events
- Have a Mayor's initiative to reinvest in Columbia's neighborhoods
- Create a "Neighborhood of the Month" spotlight program similar to the "Business of the Month" spotlight program

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Develop reliable media contacts with TV, Print, and Radio outlets
Initiate contact with media contacts to discuss the importance to the city as a whole to have more positive press
Evaluate the current system/media contacts for sending information regarding positive press, to ensure that positive achievements are being consistently and adequately highlighted
Advocate for positive press about the City of Columbia
Begin a "Points of Pride" web campaign to highlight the positives and successes of the City of Columbia
Become a champion of the creation of a local Housing Trust Fund
Support the Housing Trust Fund initially being created and staffed with assistance from the United Way of the Midlands
Support identification of dedicated funding by the City of Columbia for the trust funds
Clean, improve, and promote the city's parks; this makes Columbia more family-friendly
Look at places/companies/businesses that are hiring and promote city-living to the new employees
Become a champion of the Volunteer Tax Income Assistance (VITA) Program and promote the value of free tax preparation
Promote the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program
Create a "Realtor of the Month" award to recognize a realtor who works on behalf of the city
Update the crime data taken from the City of Columbia and Richland Co.
Create a marketing and informative website for the City of Columbia with an easy-to-remember URL, and develop the website i.e. www.whycolumbia.com
Identify critical components of the city's website, such as highlighting quality schools, businesses, activities, etc. in Columbia
Pull together local educational leaders as a group; hold a "Joint Summit"
Develop Public Service advertising in support of parental involvement, tutoring, mentoring, and

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high quality early education; use radio, TV, billboards, and social media to highlight problems and offer solutions
Highlight existing school, organization, and community efforts to improve educational outcomes in the youth of Columbia
Utilize authors, artists, former educators, etc. in the community to go to schools as volunteers to mentor the children

Priority Recommendations (6 – 24 months)

Key Priorities (6-24 Months)
Work to improve Neighborhood safety by targeting high areas of crime using CompStat and organize neighborhood groups and watches, where no groups exist
Develop better collaboration with police and watches in those areas where groups do exist
Develop a marketing plan to highlight the achievements in communities and schools, via TV, radio, print, website, etc.; it is crucial to plan to identify positive aspects of all neighborhoods or schools, not just select ones that are commonly praised
Highlight the achievements of communities, i.e. Local clean-ups or revitalization programs
Highlight the achievements of schools, i.e. Structural changes, academics, sports
Encourage other local jurisdictions to participate with funding for the Housing Trust Fund - becoming a regional trust fund
Support the Trust Fund in accessing federal funds by contacts to state elected officials
Encourage people who want an urban lifestyle to move to Columbia; target professionals, young people, single people, etc.
Engage realtors on a quarterly basis about homeownership within Columbia and about the local school districts
Use the research-based, comprehensive crime model to implement an initiative which would involve law enforcement, services, community, and school-based components working together in a coordinated effort to reduce violence
Develop a marketing plan for the city's new marketing website
Establish goals for the City of Columbia, relative to increases in homes purchased and businesses opened within the city limits
Create a "Mayor's Annual Summit" - a joint meeting with superintendents from Richland, Lexington, Kershaw, and Fairfield counties, college presidents from the Midlands Region, and CEO's of local businesses, to develop a plan of action for education and local businesses to follow what would serve as a catalyst for economic development

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Improve Columbia's Literacy through programs that promote literacy, such as Midlands Tech Reads, Reading Initiative Program with the University of Phoenix, volunteer programs, etc.

Conduct an inventory of existing City of Columbia Educational Programs, by neighborhood, and share with city residents

Call on retired teachers and citizens in the City of Columbia to assist the local schools by serving as mentors and tutors

Recommendations for Future Consideration

LONG TERM ISSUES

Work with Columbia Council of Neighborhoods to create ventures that inspire greater participation among residents in their neighborhoods

Bring back the CANDO grant program for neighborhood improvements

Change Columbia from a "backyard culture" to a "front-yard culture"

Strengthen Columbia's presence as a "City of Neighborhoods" by working with CVB to host the annual Neighborhoods, USA Conference in Columbia

Teach communities and schools to become slightly competitive and learn to promote themselves and their positive aspects in order to be a "Highlighted School"

Partner with local businesses to provide incentives for communities and schools that are highlighted

Mayoral endorsement of communities and schools will restore confidence in the city's residents and will encourage individuals to move into this community

Support stronger zoning restrictions on tax preparers offering refund anticipation loans

The new marketing website for the City of Columbia (Why Columbia?) could be utilized as a critical resource for bringing businesses and families into the City of Columbia

Develop the (Why Columbia?) website as a resource for residents and business owners

Chart the progress of the city from year to year in terms of homes purchased and businesses opened within the city limits

Headline a campaign to make Columbia the most literate mid-size city in the Nation

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Detailed Work Papers

A substantial number of overarching issues were discussed in Education and Community Development Committee meetings. We offer those notes here as additional insight into the thinking of the committee members of the Education and Community Development Committee.

Education Meeting Notes:

- Columbia needs to partner with private groups and individuals to mentor children.
- There needs to be greater adult literacy and education.
- Provide the community with cultural and educational experiences.
- Use corporate sponsors to help improve the education system in the city.
- There needs to be increased visibility and connections between educational leaders and local business leaders.
- Adopt practices that encourage employees to be involved in education.
- The Mayor needs to be a public advocate for parental involvement in education.
- School readiness amongst schoolchildren needs to be improved.
- PIRC = Parental Involvement Research Center
- Promote one-on-one tutoring.
- Ensure that children are reading on their proper grade-level.
- Partner with programs that help the community and improve education.
- Provide transportation for children who have to go to remedial or evening schools.
- Emphasize early childhood education (pre-K to 2nd grade).
- Endorse Columbia's public school system to improve confidence in the schools.
- Have roundtable meetings and dedicate resources to follow-through and implement goals.
- Use local cable stations, radio, DM, billboards to improve the community's education.
- Build relationships with the media, especially *The State Newspaper*.

Community Development Meeting Notes:

- Create "Why Columbia?" – a website that informs the public and promotes the good things that are happening in the area.
- Create a trust fund for Columbia for homeownership, rehabilitation, and affordable housing.
- Greenville's trust fund began with the United Way.
- Promote the volunteer service where volunteers prepare tax returns for lower-income families.
- Put community information in water bills, paychecks, etc; let schools know about such services, or hold the services at local schools.
- Link education and community development.
- Look at the crime assessment that has already been researched.
- There is a growing amount of crime and youth violence.
- The highest local crime areas are located within the city of Columbia.
- Look for and apply for grants that would assist and improve the community.

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- Highlight the link between youth violence and gangs.
- There are 106 recognized neighborhoods, and 50-80 unrecognized neighborhoods in the city of Columbia; there is a direct correlation between inactive neighborhoods and higher crime rates.
- Change from a “backyard culture” to a “front-yard culture”.
- Emphasize National Night Out in the city (Columbia has already won national awards of NNO).
- Create and promote a positive image of Columbia.
- Establish a better relationship with local realtors to tackle the perception of there being “no good housing” within the city of Columbia.
- Engage realtors on a quarterly basis about homeownership within Columbia and about the local school districts.
- Increase funding for neighborhood improvement.

Educational Advocacy

Background

There is no local advocate for education that has the power of the bully pulpit to improve the educational landscape of the City by delivering consistent, research based messaging/activities that reach across multiple constituencies who vary with respect to ethnicity, race, income, and citizenship. According to the Ad Council, Public service advertising has inspired significant social change by influencing both public opinion and public policy. Its research shows that public service announcements are an effective means of communication and education, increasing awareness, reinforcing positive beliefs, intensifying personal concern and moving people to action. Steven Benjamin's election as the new Mayor of the City of Columbia provides an opportunity to promote positive educational outcomes for families and the community in school readiness, early childhood education, parental involvement, and literacy.

Rationale

Most American cities are facing rapidly changing demographics, more complex social problems, heightened calls from employers to properly prepare the future workforce, and increased scrutiny by state and federal governments to promote better outcomes for children. All of these issues are linked to the vitality and quality of cities—a fact that ultimately compels greater involvement in education by mayors.

Citizens naturally look to mayors to provide leadership in the face of these demands, and are holding mayors accountable for their ability to provide solutions, no matter what formal authority over the schools the mayor may have. For the last 75 years, most mayors have not been directly involved in public education or have shown little interest in getting involved. In the last 10 to 15 years, however, there has been a sea change: mayoral interest in education has escalated because of a growing awareness of the impact public schools have on a city's economic growth and development. The reputation of a city's public education system affects the city's own reputation and prestige. The quality of a city's school system also influences many other indicia of a city's

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viability—or lack thereof—including crime rates, health issues, foster care involvement, gang problems, housing needs, employment and unemployment rates, business and investment development, construction, tax revenues, the arts, and population trends. All mayors now realize that education is a critical part of their cities' social and economic vitality. (The United States Conference of Mayors 2006)

Strategies for Mayor Benjamin:

- Develop public service advertising in support of parental involvement, tutoring, and high quality early education. Use radio, television, billboards, and social media to highlight problems and offer solutions.
- Highlight existing school, organization, community efforts to improve educational outcomes.
- Conduct an inventory of existing City of Columbia educational programs by neighborhood and share with constituents.
- Call on retired teachers and citizens in the City to assist the schools by serving as mentors and tutors.
- Headline campaign to make Columbia the most literate mid-size City in the nation

Convening K-20 and Adult Education

Background/Rationale

Traditionally, midlands educational leaders have worked together to identify regional issues and develop prudent plans of action to address these issues. These leaders' work has served as a catalyst for establishing partnerships and cross-functional committees comprised of interested stakeholders. Many of these partnerships and committees have produced outstanding results and provided quality services to midlands residents.

While local educational leaders should be commended for taking the initiative to make these partnerships a reality, much more can and should be accomplished. The current transition to new leadership provides an opportunity to build upon existing relationships and forge new ones to expand the scope of education's impact in the local community. Quick and assertive action could lead to a more unified and comprehensive approach to address current issues.

Working together, education and business leaders could leverage existing resources to bring about changes that could benefit all segments of the Columbia community.

Working collaboratively is not a new concept for the region's education and business leaders. Many wonderful examples currently exist to show the positive results of previous collaborative efforts. However, there is a need and an opportunity for leaders to develop and implement creative strategies to address the current economic climate.

The two groups in our region that can have the biggest impact on the current economic climate through economic development activities are our education and business leaders.

Opportunities for the Mayor

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The mayor should convene a joint meeting with superintendents from Richland, Lexington and Fairfield counties, college presidents from the midlands region, and CEOs of local businesses to develop a plan of action for education and local businesses to follow that would serve as a catalyst for economic development.

Youth and Gang Violence

Background

City of Columbia Mayor Robert Coble, in his 2007 State of the City Speech, called for the creation of a comprehensive response initiative to address gang and youth violence in Columbia and Richland County. The first steps he outlined for this initiative were a complete assessment of these violence problems in the metro area (and Richland County). The Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of South Carolina and Benedict College were subsequently requested to conduct the assessment, and the Columbia City Council approved the funding of this effort.

Rationale

The overall goal of this assessment was to explore the nature, extent, and characteristics of gang and youth violence in the Columbia-Richland County metropolitan area. The team sought to identify past responses to youth violence by government, non-profit, and community organizations, along with the resources and abilities these groups may have for a future comprehensive response. The assessment team used a scientific approach and gathered crime related data from various criminal justice agencies in the area, including information from the Columbia Police Department, the Richland County Sheriff's Department, the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardons, and the joint 911 operations center for Columbia and Richland County., More than 100 individuals were interviewed, including criminal justice leaders and line-level personnel, community leaders, faith-based leaders, managers of community-based organizations, and school officials. Lastly, focus groups were conducted with community members from ten different communities across Columbia and Richland County.

The findings from the assessment covered three areas of inquiry. The first line of inquiry examined patterns and trends in youth and gang violence derived from a statistical and geographic analysis of official data provided by area criminal justice agencies. The second line of inquiry reported on interviews with criminal justice officials, school personnel, community leaders, and residents of communities with relatively high concentrations of violence. The third area of inquiry reviewed service, faith-based, and community resources available to combat youth violence, as well as suggestions from these groups for how to improve the overall response to the problem.

Results/Strategies

The analysis of criminal justice data revealed that youths, defined as individuals 12 to 24 years of age, account for approximately 50% of violent crime in Columbia and Richland County, which is disproportionately high relative to their representation in the census population for the area. The criminal justice personnel, community leaders, school officials, and community members shared the perspective that there has been an increase in gang activity in the area, specifically within the

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last few years. Many community members expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of police presence in their neighborhoods and the overall lack of a law enforcement response to the gang and youth violence problem.

Recommendations for Mayor Elect Benjamin

- The crime data taken from the City of Columbia and Richland County be updated. The research-based, comprehensive model recommended in the Assessment be implemented. This model suggests an initiative, which would involve enforcement, services, community, and school-based components working together in a coordinated effort to reduce violence.

Website for the City of Columbia

Background

In an age where technology is paramount, having an innovative and consistently maintained webpage can be a powerful marketing tool. Currently, the City of Columbia has a website at the following URL, <http://www.columbiasc.net>. This website provides links to the various departments within the City of Columbia, details about area events and activities, information regarding available jobs within the City of Columbia, a special section listing online services, and a business section. There is also a section entitled "Development Gateway". This section of the webpage appears to be a fairly new section, which is still under construction. Once completed, it appears that the website will have the following subsections: City of Columbia, New Development Gateway, Old Development Gateway, CPAC (Climate Protection Action Campaign), Drew Wellness, and Services.

Rationale

It is important that the new mayor serve as a spokesperson for highlighting the positive aspects of living in the City of Columbia. A website with this purpose as its goal can provide an immediate marketing tool and possibly increase the number of people choosing to live and/or start businesses within the City of Columbia. It appears that a similar concept may have been already underway with the new, section of the current website entitled the Development Gateway.

Apart from this new section, the current City of Columbia website has a more generic design business-oriented design. It is suggested that the new mayor use a friendly and easy to remember web address that can be advertised throughout the city of Columbia. This website would function in addition to and not in the place of the current website. The website would provide critical information to businesses and individuals considering living or operating a business within the city of Columbia. The website's URL should be easy to remember and easy to market on billboards, within the current website, and other correspondences generated by the City of Columbia.

Strategies

Short-term:

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- Come up with a name/URL that will be easy to remember and marketable. He could possibly have a contest to come up with the new URL. Possible examples include www.whycolumbia.com or www.whythiscity.com.
- Identify critical components of the website, such as highlighting quality schools within the City of Columbia, highlighting the business sector, making note of special events and activities, providing valuable information about housing within the City of Columbia, etc.
- Begin development of the website.

Mid-term:

- Develop a marketing plan for the website.
- Establish goals for the City of Columbia relative to increases in homes purchased and businesses opened within the city limits.

Long-term:

- The website would be utilized as a critical resource for bringing businesses and families into the city of Columbia.
- Chart the progress of the city from year-to-year.
- Develop the website as a resource for residents and business owners within the city.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program

Background

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a federal income tax credit available to working individuals and families. It is estimated that 15-20% of eligible EITC refunds go unclaimed each year. For the six counties of the Midlands this represents an annual loss of \$20 million annually. For the 2007 tax year, the United Way of the Midlands started a new free tax preparation sites in Richland and Lexington Counties and launched an Earned Income Tax Credit outreach campaign. The new free tax sites were staffed by trained volunteers that have passed IRS proficiency tests. In 2008 the program was transitioned to a United Way partner agency (The Cooperative Ministry) through the competitive grant process. In the last three years of the VITA program, over 5,400 free tax returns have been prepared with almost \$4 million in refunds. While the sites help household making \$50,000 or less annually, on average the VITA sites help people with an annual income of \$15,000.

Rationale

Financial stability is the foundation for healthy families and communities. Approximately 15% of the population in the Midlands lives in poverty. These estimated 70,000 people struggle on the margins each day making difficult choices between paying rent, accessing healthcare, or putting food on the table for their families. UWM's 2-1-1 information and referral line answers over 30,000 calls per year. The top three requests for help are: paying rent or mortgage, paying a utility bill, or finding shelter. The VITA program helps struggling families achieve greater stability.

Strategies

Short-term:

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- Become a champion of the VITA program and promote the value of free tax preparation and EITC in speeches, public events, and as part of an overall platform on community issues
- Promote VITA and EITC with City employees by encouraging City management:
 - Providing information on VITA/EITC during new hire orientations
 - Promote VITA volunteer opportunities with city employees
 - Inclusion of VITA/EITC information in water bills during December/January each year
 - Inclusion of payroll stuffers in city employee paycheck each December/January
 - Inclusion of 2-1-1 logo on City website for the public to find information on VITA sites and community resources available

Long-term:

Support stronger zoning restrictions on tax preparers offering refund anticipation loans

Housing Trust Fund

Background

Affordable housing is defined as paying no more than 30% of monthly income for housing. Paying amounts greater than this lead to difficult choices between paying rent and other basic needs such as medical care and nutritious food. 36 million people in the U.S. pay more than 30% of their income for housing—many of them pay more than half of their monthly income (NLIHC).

The fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit in the Columbia area is \$675 per month. The National Low Income Housing Coalition reports the 'housing wage' for the Columbia area to be \$12.98 for this two bedroom apartment. This means that workers earning less than \$12.98/hour struggle to find or pay for affordable housing. To secure an apartment for \$675/month, a worker making minimum wage (\$6.55) would need to work at least 79 hours a week. Further evidence of the shortage of affordable housing is the demand for assistance from the Columbia Housing Authority. Over 8,000 families are on the waiting list for housing assistance vouchers.

Encourage the development of local housing trust funds and support the use of trust funds by partner agencies. Incentives to encourage development of affordable housing have been successfully used in other communities in South Carolina – such as Greenville and Charleston. The creation of a local trust fund is essential to access potential new federal resources that may become available. The 2007 report of the City of Columbia's Affordable Housing Task Force recommends a similar housing trust fund program for the Midlands. United Way of the Midlands has advocated for a local trust fund since 2003.

Rationale

Affordable housing—both rental and homeownership-- supports long term stability of individuals and families. Development of housing that is truly affordable for people with low income requires deep subsidy. Additional resources are required. Trust funds are flexible sources of funding and

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used to leverage federal and state resources—typically at a ratio of 1:9. Finally, our community should be prepared to accept federal resources when the national housing trust fund is funded.

Strategies

Short-term:

- Become a champion of creation of a local housing trust fund
- Support the fund initially being created and staff with assistance from United Way of the Midlands
- Support identification of dedicated funding by the city for the trust funds

Mid-term and Long-term:

- Encourage other local jurisdictions to participate with funding – becoming a regional trust fund
- Support trust fund in accessing federal funds by contacts to state elected officials

Establishing Positive Media and Public Relations

Background

The City has often battled negative press on a variety of issues, including education and community development. Specifically with grade school education, there has been an underlying surge of opinion that outlining school districts offer students a better education. With community development, the crime and poor conditions of certain areas are over-emphasized, without equal or adequate attention to the positive steps and achievements in both areas. As a result of the trend of failing to highlight the positive, residents of the city have often embraced the images (thought patterns, stereotypes, etc.) displayed by the media.

Rationale

The mayor is in a great position to be an advocate for the communities and schools within the city. In fact, he or she is probably the most important advocate for the city, assuming that the mayor embraces the responsibility and makes an effort to advocate.

The mayor has the unique opportunity to restore confidence in residents in the communities and educational systems that exist in the city. While communities and schools that are not performing well need correction, they also need encouragement and resources. Those that are doing well, they need affirmation.

Strategies

Short-term:

- Develop reliable media contacts with TV, print, and radio outlets.
- Initiate contact with contacts to discuss the importance to the city as a whole to have more positive press.

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- Evaluate current system/contacts for sending information regarding positive press to ensure that positive achievements are being consistently and adequately highlighted.

Mid-Term:

- Develop a marketing plan to highlight the achievements in communities and schools – via TV, radio, print, website. It is crucial in this plan to identify positive aspects of all neighborhoods or schools – not just select ones that are commonly praised.
 - Highlight achievements of communities – for example: local clean-ups or revitalization programs.
 - Highlight achievements of schools – structural changes, academic, sports – ensuring to highlight every school.

Long-term:

- Teach communities and schools to become slightly competitive and learn to promote themselves and their positive aspects in order to be one of the mayor's highlighted communities or schools.
- Partner with local businesses to provide incentives for communities and schools that are highlighted.
 - Mayor's endorsement of communities and schools will restore confidence in city residents.
 - Mayor's endorsement of communities and schools encourage individuals that looking to move to the city that our city is safe and competitive.

Re-Investing in Columbia's Neighborhoods

Background

The City of Columbia is truly a “City of Neighborhoods” and over the past 30 years city government has had a strong relationship with neighborhood organizations and the Columbia Council of Neighborhoods. As of today, more than 106 different neighborhood groups make up CCN, and there are estimated to be 70-80 other neighborhoods or home-owners associations in the city that are not members of CCN. The City of Columbia and CCN have been successful partners in a number of ventures. Most recently, the City has been nationally recognized by the National Association of Town Watches for Columbia's National Night Out Kick-Off events. The kick-off event has also prompted other Midlands areas to hold their own events and promote more participation among neighborhoods outside the City of Columbia. Additionally, CCN provides funding to neighborhood's NNO events on the first Tuesday in August.

The city's Office of Community Development also administers a neighborhood mini-grant program that works with neighborhoods to fund special neighborhood improvement programs. That same office, with assistance provided by federal grant dollars, previously administered a program called CANDO (Columbia Assisting Neighborhood Development Opportunities) that facilitated the funding of neighborhood “bricks and mortar” projects and educational programs. However, federal funding for CANDO dried up and the program has not been administered over the past two years.

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We recommend the City re-invest in its neighborhoods to bring back the CANDO program, as well as continue efforts to work directly with neighborhoods on a number of existing programs and look for ventures to partner.

Rationale

As a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, a city is only as strong as its weakest neighborhood. For far too long, our neighborhoods have gotten away from being “front-porch” communities and have become “back-yard” communities. Police department CompStat data shows that neighborhoods that are better organized and more active are areas where crime is lower. The goal must be to develop more participation to, in turn, our city safer and our neighborhoods ideal places to raise children.

Strategies

Short-term:

- Create a “Neighborhood of the Month” spotlight program like the business spotlight program
- Make a strong showing at National Night Out events in August to make a major announcement of the above and the following items below.

Mid-term:

- Work to improve neighborhood safety by targeting high areas of crime using CompStat and organize neighborhood groups and watches, where no groups exist
- Develop better collaboration with police and watches in those areas where groups do exist

Long-term:

- Work with CCN to create ventures that inspire greater participation among residents in their neighborhoods
- Bring back the CANDO grant program for neighborhood improvements
- Strengthen Columbia's presence as a “City of Neighborhoods” by working with CVB to host the annual Neighborhoods, USA conference here in Columbia.

Environment & Sustainability Committee

Environment & Sustainability Committee

Mission

Members of the Environment and Sustainability Committee are honored to take part in establishing City policy at the request of Mayor Steve Benjamin. Mayor Benjamin tasked the Environmental and Sustainability Committee with identifying high-level goals for advancing environmental and sustainability policies by the City of Columbia, recommending objectives to accomplish those goals, and suggesting which of those objectives could be accomplished within a six-month time period (Early Opportunities) and those that may be accomplished within a two-year time period. The Committee engaged in a SWOT analysis to reach its goals and objectives, in which the City's existing strengths and weaknesses were identified, along with external opportunities and threats.

Overview

How the City treats these rivers reflects upon its priorities, leadership and pride as a community. Simply put, keeping our rivers clean enhances our business environment and our quality of life. Similarly, actions that the City takes to keep its streets clean and reduce residential and commercial solid waste visibly reflects whether the City is committed to a well-cared for urban environment that will attract new employment opportunities. To assure that the City of Columbia continues to thrive in the future, efforts taken by the City to conserve water and energy, landfill space, and limited financial resources is vital. Additionally, efficient land use practices not only conserve our natural environment but also create automobile fuel efficiency, greater opportunity for physical activity, and safer neighborhoods. Enhancing the City's green space serves multiple purposes of reducing heat generation caused by asphalt, improving water and air quality, creating wildlife habitat, and providing opportunities for community interaction. And the City must address its looming non-attainment of air quality standards if it wants to maintain a healthy populace and growing economy. Each of these issues is highlighted in six goals identified by the Committee.

The Committee acknowledges that many good ideas exist that may not be contained in this report. Given the short period of time in which the Committee worked, we could not possibly identify nor analyze every plan or proposal involving environmental and sustainability issues. The Committee simply hopes that the ideas contained within this report offer at least a fresh starting point for the City Council to revisit important environmental and sustainability issues. Also, it should be noted that the six goals identified by the Committee don't quite fit into neat categories – air quality, land use, solid waste management, green space development, and sustainability practices can and do overlap, making some of the Committee's stated objectives under each goal equally effective to further other goals. Finally, the Committee believes that several of the goals and objectives stated within this report cannot be accomplished by the City alone. As with many problems in modern life, a collaborative approach is required to effectively solve complex problems involving the balance of growth and conservation. Now is the time for the City of Columbia to engage its neighboring cities and counties, its citizens, and its political leadership to solve common environmental problems for the good of all.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The Environment and Sustainability Committee identified the following existing strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats associated with environmental and sustainability policy development:

STRENGTHS	BENEFITS
Existing residential recycling programs	Reduce waste stream
City's Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC) has created foundation for sustainability practices	Greater awareness of waste reduction, energy conservation and water conservation measures
Completed energy audit of City operations	Savings to taxpayers and reduced energy consumption
Adequate long term drinking water supply	City prepared for future water needs
Green Building Incentive Program	Creates incentives for energy efficiency
City received Bronze designation as Bicycle Friendly Community in 2008, guided by the work of a Committee and City staff. This created the foundation for implementation of programs and initiatives to grow into an even better bicycling community	Establishes a baseline upon which policies and initiatives can be built and expanded
Adoption of City's comprehensive land use plan, The Columbia Plan 2018.	Provides a foundation from which to develop progressive revisions to the City's land use and development ordinances
Competent staff	Potential to improve City functions

WEAKNESSES	IMPACT
Outdated land use ordinances, tree ordinance, building codes	Less efficient development process, missed opportunities for progressive land use practices
No recycling at city events or parks, or public events (festivals, football games)	Presents poor public image of City
Aging water and sewer infrastructure	Sewer overflows causing pollution of rivers
City lacks a plan for overall sustainability	No central vision to guide City in conservation efforts
History of poor floodplain management practices	Inappropriate development subject to flooding; missed opportunity to cause reduction in flood insurance premiums
City's willingness or capacity for public	Ineffective communication; distrust

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involvement/outreach concerning environmental issues is untested	
City lacks diverse and connected opportunities for people to bicycle and walk for transportation or recreation.	Citizens do not feel safe bicycling and walking for transportation and recreation.

OPPORTUNITIES	BENEFITS
Rise in environmental/conservation non-profit advocacy organizations has generated increased citizen interest, greater attention to City's environmental issues	Improved decision-making
Partnerships with USC and other institutions of higher education as a technical resource	Improved decision-making
Growing recreation on the Broad, Lower Saluda and Congaree Rivers	Growth in local businesses catering to recreation on rivers
New funding sources for weatherization, energy conservation, natural resource mitigation	Financial resources available for energy efficient buildings
Recent issuance of NPDES MS4 Stormwater Permit to City	Improved water quality
Stimulus funds available for implementing LEEDS standards by private businesses	Incentive for private business to adopt green building practices
Property owned by the City could be used for mitigation banking or wetlands restoration	Creates revenue source and protects sensitive ecological environments
Redevelopment of Bull Street property could serve as model for sustainable infill development and stream restoration	Improved quality of life, attract new residents
Adoption of progressive environmental policies can attract and retain work force	Improved quality of life, attract new residents

THREATS	IMPACT
Non-Attainment of EPA air quality standards	Would restrict development until air quality improved
Litter accumulating in waterways	Impacts aesthetic quality and water quality
Upstream waste water discharges threatening water quality, recreational opportunities	Adversely impacts public health, local economy, and water quality; reflects poorly on public perception of region as a whole
Recession adversely impacting City budget	Limited resources
Siltation of water bodies caused by stormwater runoff	Causes flooding, increase in turbidity

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Goals and Objectives

From the Committee's SWOT analysis, the following goals and objectives emerged:

1. THE CITY MUST LEAD REGIONAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY OF THE BROAD, LOWER SALUDA AND CONGAREE RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES.

The City of Columbia is a city of rivers. It is the defining natural feature of the Midlands, and makes the City of Columbia unique. How the City treats the rivers that flow through it reflects upon its priorities, leadership and pride as a community. Furthermore, watersheds do not follow jurisdictional lines, which necessitate a regional approach to problem-solving. Therefore, the Committee believes that the City must step forward as a regional leader, work with our neighboring city and county governments to solve our common water quality problems, and serve as a model for innovation and responsibility in water resource protection.

Objectives:

- A. The Committee recommends that the City adopt and/or enact progressive and innovative stormwater management practices, ordinance revisions and a stormwater management plan. The City of Columbia was recently issued its first National Pollutant Discharge System (NPDES) Stormwater Permit that requires the City to regulate stormwater runoff into its storm drain system, which eventually discharges into natural water bodies such as the Congaree River. This permit establishes timeframes in which the City must adopt a stormwater management plan, best management practices and revisions to its existing land disturbance and/or stormwater ordinances. The City can do much to improve water quality by seizing this opportunity to adopt progressive, innovative stormwater management practices and low-impact design requirements such as use of permeable asphalt, vegetated swales, rain gardens, planted green roofs, and rain harvesting.
- B. The Committee recommends that the City take the leadership role in implementing consolidation of small wastewater utilities as recommended under the Central Midlands 208 Plan. Under section 208 of the Clean Water Act, designated regional government entities of every State are required to facilitate the development and implementation of regional waste treatment management plans. For the Columbia area, the Central Midlands Council of Governments is charged with this responsibility. The Central Midlands 208 Plan and a subsequent research report include a recommendation that the City of Columbia or the City of Cayce undertake the necessary capital improvements to connect small private wastewater utilities to either system. The City can provide the political initiative to solve this problem. Doing so would visibly demonstrate a commitment to regional problem-solving and the resulting consolidation would measurably improve water quality.
- C. The Committee recommends that the City aggressively examine its wastewater collection system and repair or replace leaking pipes, which would measurably improve water quality. The City has a Capital Improvement Program for improvement of its wastewater infrastructure, and an Inflow and Infiltration Program to address inflow and infiltration,

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illicit connections, blockages, etc. It includes self-evaluation maintenance and operation plan that identifies blockages or potential problems. However, the City has room to improve its efforts to prevent sewage overflows. For example, the City does not have its wastewater system in digitized format, which could make inventory and analysis easier.

- D. The Committee recommends that the City engage with local watershed and water quality organizations to combat water quality problems. The Columbia area has experienced a rise in the formation and evolution of water quality advocacy and protection organizations, such as the Congaree Riverkeeper and the Gills Creek Watershed Association. Other watershed associations are in the process of formation. These organizations provide opportunities to the City for partnership and collaboration on water quality problems facing the City, and can assist with implementation of its stormwater NPDES permit.
- E. The Committee recommends that the City set itself as a positive example of compliance with its NPDES permit for its wastewater treatment facility. As one of the largest wastewater dischargers on the Congaree River, the City has a large impact upon the water quality of the Congaree. To demonstrate its commitment to clean water, the City should exceed expectations of compliance with the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the Columbia Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- F. The Committee recommends that the City establish a baseline inventory (from SCDHEC's Groundwater Contaminant Inventory) of known groundwater contaminants in Columbia and whether any are potentially discharging into a receiving body of water. Groundwater and surface water are inter-connected. Contaminants within groundwater, if not contained, eventually discharge into rivers and streams.
- G. The Committee recommends that the City seek to preserve and restore City-owned ecologically sensitive areas such as wetlands in an organized comprehensive fashion. Preserved or restored wetlands, for example, can serve as natural filtration for stormwater runoff and other pollutants. Additionally, such a program can serve as a valuable resource when the need arises to mitigate environmental damage elsewhere. The City of Columbia should examine mitigation banking opportunities or other means of natural resource restoration using city-owned property. Use of City-owned property in this manner can generate revenue for the City by selling mitigation credits to developers, utility companies, and the S.C. Department of Transportation, as well as offsetting City costs associated with its own construction projects. A preliminary review of City-owned property shows approximately 525 parcels, a fair number of which are located along the Broad River and along the confluence of the Broad and Lower Saluda Rivers.
- H. The Committee recommends that the City, upon sale of the Bull Street property, negotiate a development agreement for the property that includes restoration of Smith's Branch. Smith's Branch is an impaired tributary within the urban core of Columbia that is located within the North Columbia area. A sizeable portion of the Smith's Branch headwaters is piped underground. By piping Smith's Branch, it is disconnected from its floodplain, adds

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flood risk downstream, and scours the natural channel once discharged onto the surface watercourse. This stream restoration could include other properties upstream and downstream and may be a viable stream mitigation project suitable for revenue producing credits for developers or the City.

- I. The Committee recommends that the City expand the “trash the grease” outreach program to more actively seek behavior change. Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG) are a common cause of problems, and overflows, within the City of Columbia sewer collection system. As a result of these overflows, recreational risks from bacteria pollution occur in frequently in the Three Rivers area. In an effort to decrease FOG in the system, the City of Columbia has developed a “trash the grease” outreach campaign with residents and businesses. A three-person inspection team also follows-up with businesses to make sure they are using grease traps appropriately. While this program is improving grease waste at businesses, more attention should be paid to reducing residential grease waste. Avenues for reaching residents could be accessed through local watershed-based organizations and neighborhood associations within the City.
- J. The Committee recommends that the City promote a “Top Ten” list of actions residents can take to improve water quality, such as:
 - Encourage civic groups to adopt a waterway for trash pick-up in partnership with Keep the Midlands Beautiful
 - Refrain from pouring grease into drains (trash the grease)
 - Reduce outdoor water use
 - Scoop the poop! Pet waste reduction
 - Report stormwater concerns to city hotline (hotline required under new NPDES MS4 permit)
 - Wash cars on lawns instead of driveways
 - Decrease fertilizer use on lawns

2. THE CITY MUST REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF SOLID WASTE GOING TO LANDFILLS THROUGH ENHANCED RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING EFFORTS.

Just as the City's management of water quality affects public perception of the City's quality of life, the City's solid waste management policies represents a visible commentary on how the City is viewed in terms of its commitment to a clean, well-cared for urban environment. Furthermore, management of residential solid waste is one of the core services provided by the City, and has a significant impact on the environment and on the City's budget. By making cost effective choices to promote recycling and composting and reduce the amount of waste going to landfills, the City can lessen its impact on the environment, educate City residents about the importance of waste reduction, and reduce the City's solid waste disposal costs. The City can demonstrate its commitment to recycling by incorporating greater recycling efforts within its own operations and promoting ways in which its citizens can do their part to reduce their waste stream.

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Objectives:

- A. The Committee recommends that the City establish a committee or commission to gather public input and evaluate existing waste management practices, including household trash collection, recycling, the City's composting facility, and potential waste to energy opportunities. The Committee should be charged with recommending to City Council a goal of diverting a certain percentage of waste from landfill disposal.
- B. The Committee recommends that the City explore opportunities for unit based pricing or pay-as-you-throw programs that charge a variable rate for waste disposal based on the amount of trash residents throw away.
- C. The Committee recommends that the City expand its outreach to citizens by engaging in a "call to action" that informs citizens what they can do to reduce waste ending up in landfills, such as:
 - Encourage greater use of curbside and e-waste recycling programs.
 - Encourage management of yard and organic waste through composting and grass cycling
- D. The Committee recommends that the City require recycling at public events by revising the event permitting process to include a recycling plan, and expanding partnerships to provide recycling services to event organizers.
- E. The Committee recommends that the City increase diversion of construction and demolition waste by encouraging the deconstruction rather than demolition of buildings and by developing incentives or requirements for the reuse, recycling or reprocessing of materials as part of the building permit and construction plan process.
- F. The Committee recommends that the City establish a pilot program for public recycling in City parks and in one hospitality/retail district with eventual plans to expand recycling to all parks and all retail districts.
- G. The Committee recommends that the City expand materials collected through the City's recycling program (such as used cooking oil and increased variety of plastics) wherever financially feasible.
- H. The Committee recommends that the City implement a recycling program at multi-family dwellings.
- I. The Committee recommends that the City develop a plan for adoption of anaerobic digestion and other waste-to-energy options wherever cost-effective and environmentally sound.

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J. The Committee recommends that the City implement purchasing policy that creates a preference for City purchase of durable goods and prohibits purchase of “throw-away” items such as Styrofoam cups and bottled water.

3. THE CITY MUST ELEVATE AND EXPAND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES WITHIN THE CITY.

As population growth continues, cities are facing increasing demands on energy and water consumption. These demands threaten to exhaust natural and fiscal resources such that the ability to meet the needs of future generations may be compromised. Metropolitan areas that will deal best with these challenges are those that have proactively implemented conservation policies for the purpose of achieving a strong local economy built upon efficient transportation and energy and water conservation. A commitment to becoming a sustainable city will assure a thriving Columbia now and in the future.

Objectives:

- A. The Committee recommends that the City establish and empower a high-level Office of Sustainability with a Director position to raise the visibility of sustainability policies and lead sustainability efforts, including continued development of the City's Sustainability Plan.
- B. The Committee recommends that the City revisit the structure of Climate Protection Action Committee and give it a new mandate to implement public outreach of the City's Sustainability Plan.
- C. The Committee recommends that the City establish leak detection and repair program for its water system. Aging, broken pipes lose large quantities of water through leaks. Nationally, it is estimated that 14% of treated water is lost through undetected leaks in municipal water systems. According to a report by American Rivers, “*Hidden Reservoir, Why Water Efficiency is the Best Solution for the Southeast*,” (2008), almost 15% of the City's water was unaccounted for, meaning that it was lost through leaks or its use was unmetered. Regular audits of the City's water system to locate and repair leaks could boost the City's water capacity and save the City millions of dollars in unnecessary expansion costs.
- D. The Committee recommends that the City establish a goal to derive certain percentage of City energy use from renewable and alternative sources by 2020. The City of Charleston, for example, has established a goal of deriving 15% of its energy from renewable energy sources by 2020.
- E. The Committee recommends that the City provide safe and secure bicycle parking at all city-owned facilities.

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- F. The Committee recommends that the City meet the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and Low Impact Development (LID) standards in major city-owned construction/renovation projects.
 - G. The Committee recommends that the City implement policies for city vehicle fleet to include reduction in vehicle idling time for city vehicle fleet, including police, and develop schedule for phased replacement of the City's fleet with vehicles that are more fuel efficient.
 - H. The Committee recommends that the City encourage citizen use of electric vehicles by installing recharging stations in parking garages.
 - I. The Committee recommends that the City develop and implement a low cost loan program to fund residential and commercial energy efficiency retrofits and renewable energy improvements, including solar and wind energy, geothermal, fuel cells, and biomass, and purchase of Energy Star appliances. Several electric utility companies provide this type of service in South Carolina, such as Duke Energy and various electric cooperatives. S.C. Electric & Gas offers net metering for customers who generate their own renewable energy. Cities across the Country are providing low cost loan programs for residents to purchase energy efficient heating and air systems and renewable energy improvement. This type of investment in energy efficiency could add value to City residences, making the City's housing stock more marketable.
 - J. The Committee recommends that the City implement energy efficiency measures identified in the City's Energy Audit to improve energy efficiency in all city buildings where cost effective.
 - K. The Committee recommends that the City establish a comprehensive Bicycle/Walk to Work Program and Carpool program for City employees. Lexington County has draft a similar plan for consideration by its County Council, and Richland County is considering the same.
- 4. THE CITY MUST REVIEW AND REVISE ITS LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS TO PROMOTE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE LAND USE.**

While property located within the City's corporate limits are primarily urbanized, according to the City's comprehensive land use plan, The Columbia Plan 2018, approximately 19% of incorporated property is undeveloped. The City's zoning, land development and building ordinances play an important role in shaping the quality of new development within its corporate limits. These ordinances should serve to implement the City's comprehensive land use plan in a meaningful way, in particular its natural resource element. Additionally, the City's land use and development ordinances should be streamlined with an eye toward eliminating unnecessary regulatory processes that may hinder or discourage responsible, environmentally sensitive infill development. Also important is the issue of introducing

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greener design and infrastructure elements into existing built environments in a cost effective manner. Because the City's water utility is the primary driver of growth, the City should assume greater responsibility in promoting more efficient, environmentally sustainable growth both within and without its corporate limits, and in achieving consistency between City and County land use ordinances.

Objectives:

- A. The Committee recommends that the City initiate a development roundtable process involving developers, environmentalists and government to review its land use and development codes and recommend reforms of the City's land use and development code and ordinances to promote improved environmental protection, water quality, and sustainable development. Richland County, with the assistance of the Center for Watershed Protection, underwent a roundtable process to systematically examine Richland County's local codes and ordinances with an eye toward promoting more environmentally-sensitive and economically viable development. The County's experience was positive and productive. The Committee believes that the City could benefit from this same process.
- B. The Committee recommends that the City review and improve the City's tree ordinance and urban forestry plan to enhance the City's tree cover and reduce the "urban heat island" effect.
- C. The Committee recommends that the City identify and adopt improved incentives, such as development density bonuses, to promote conservation of green space and increased flexibility in sustainable development.
- D. The Committee recommends that the City develop a strategic policy or plan for water and sewer expansion that discourages inefficient land use patterns.
- E. The Committee recommends that the City undertake a serious examination and reform of its floodplain management program. The City of Columbia is a participating community within the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Currently, the City has a floodplain management ordinance, but other floodplain management regulations are scattered throughout its Code of Ordinances. Two Departments are responsible for administering its floodplain management requirements, which creates a propensity toward poor coordination. Past community reviews by FEMA of the City's administration and enforcement of its floodplain management provisions have consistently revealed significant violations of the minimum criteria of participation in the NFIP. Under the NFIP, there is a Community Rating System, a voluntary program that provides discounts on flood insurance premiums based on local initiatives to reduce flooding. The City has not taken part in this program. The Committee recommends that the City undertake a comprehensive review of its floodplain management ordinance and evaluate the effectiveness of its administration. Once the City corrects the problems identified in this review and evaluation, the City should join the Community Rating System, which will result in savings to its residents who purchase flood insurance.

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F. The Committee recommends that the City pursue grant funding under the Greening America's Capitals Program, a project of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to help state capitals develop an implementable vision of distinctive, environmentally friendly neighborhoods that incorporate innovative green building and green infrastructure strategies. This program will assist three to four communities per year, with the first projects beginning in the fall of 2010. The EPA will fund a team of designers to visit each city to produce designs and illustrations intended to catalyze or complement a larger planning process for the pilot neighborhood. Additionally, these pilots could be the testing ground for revisions to local codes and ordinances to better support sustainable growth and green building. The design team and EPA, HUD, and DOT staff will also assist in developing specific implementation strategies. For the first grant cycle, letters of interest from capital cities are due to the EPA by July 9, 2010.

5. THE CITY MUST PROACTIVELY ENHANCE AND PROTECT PUBLIC GREEN SPACE.

A large part of any city's aesthetic appeal rests upon the quantity and quality of its public green space, whether that takes the form of neighborhood parks, undisturbed natural areas, or the extent of urban tree canopy along public right-of-ways. Public green space also positively impacts water quality, air quality, and climate. The City should step up its efforts to develop additional green space and enhance existing green space.

Objectives:

- A. The Committee recommends that the City implement the City of Columbia connection to the Three Rivers Greenway and continue City support of the River Alliance plans.
- B. The Committee recommends that the City establish a "10,000 Trees" Program, a collaborative city-wide public-private program, with the goal of significantly expanding the city's urban tree canopy over the next several years. The addition of tree canopy within built environments can combat the "urban heat island" effect caused by asphalt and reduced vegetation that raises temperatures within cities, causing increased demand for electricity and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, added tree canopy in the City enhances the aesthetic appeal of the City, and provides shade for bicyclers, walkers and runners.
- C. The Committee recommends that the City of Columbia examine mitigation banking opportunities or other means of natural resource restoration using city-owned property. Use of City-owned property in this manner can effectively transform neglected property into valuable green space and generate revenue for the City by selling mitigation credits to developers, as well as offsetting City costs associated with its own construction projects. A preliminary review of City-owned property shows approximately 525 parcels, a good

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number of which are located along the Broad River and along the confluence of the Broad and Lower Saluda Rivers.

- D. The Committee recommends that the City explore ways to promote community gardens as a way to enhance existing green space in neighborhoods. Community gardens have the added benefits of building community involvement; increasing the number of people outside, thus serving as a deterrent against crime; and supply a local source of nutritious food to neighbors.
- E. The Committee recommends that the City consider use of green roofs on City-owned buildings, or provide incentives for green roof use on private buildings, in order to create additional urban green space for wildlife habitat. Green roofs, or roofs designed to incorporate vegetation, also serve to cool building interiors, and enhance the aesthetic quality of the City.
- F. The Committee recommends that the City support the development of the Historic Columbia Foundation's Cultural Landscape Master Plan that endeavors to transform its 14 acres of landscapes into gardens reflecting the historical and cultural context of the historic homes it manages. Specifically, the City could provide financial support, advice and expertise, and/or manpower, as well as assistance with promotion of the gardens as a destination point within the City.

6. THE CITY MUST DO ITS PART TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY.

Due to the failure of the Columbia area to meet the Clean Air Act's health-based standard for ozone in April of 2004, the area was designated "non-attainment" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The area subsequently entered EPA's Early Action Compact program, which allows the nonattainment designation to be deferred in exchange for a promise by local governments to take local action to address its ozone problem. Regional leaders did not succeed in this effort and we are now expecting to be designated a non-attainment area later this year. The dangerous levels of ozone and particle pollution in our area take a toll on our health and economy. Cooperation between local governments, citizens, business, non-profits and state agencies will be critical in facing this challenge. The City must lead this effort by example.

Objectives:

- A. The Committee recommends that the City create an Air Quality Advisory Board to include city staff, appropriate state officials, DHEC & members of public charged with developing an air quality plan.
- B. The Committee recommends that the City evaluate its air emission inventory previously completed by the City.
- C. The Committee recommends that the City promote a "Top Ten" list of actions residents can take to improve air quality, such as:

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- Tune up vehicle to increase gas mileage
- Encourage use of alternative fuels and alternative vehicles
- Use of gas powered/clean lawn equipment
- Reduce idling in vehicles
- Encourage carpooling/alternative modes of travel
- Reduce miles per vehicle by trip consolidation and telecommuting
- Reduce electric consumption
- Encourage citizens to bicycle and walk to work

D. The Committee recommends that the City encourage the addition of more bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways by endorsing a Complete Streets policy. A Complete Streets policy encourages the inclusion of bicycling paths into transportation planning and land use approvals. City Council will consider a Complete Street Resolution in the near future.

E. The Committee recommends that the City synchronize traffic signals to reduce vehicle emissions.

F. The Committee recommends that the City continue to replace traffic signals and street lighting with energy efficient lighting technologies, including light emitting diodes and other technology of equal or greater energy efficiency.

G. The Committee recommends that the City partner with the Palmetto State Clean Fuels Coalition to promote the use of low emission fuels and vehicles in the Columbia metropolitan area.

Priorities

Following the Committee's development of goals and objectives, the Committee placed each of the identified objectives into time-sensitive categories reflecting which of the objectives the Committee believes can be accomplished within a short time frame (Early Opportunities), within a timeframe of six to twenty-four months (Top Priorities) and issues that should be addressed at some future time.

EARLY OPPORTUNITIES (6-MONTHS)	Owner	Timeframe
Establish a committee or commission to gather public input and evaluate existing waste management practices, including household trash collection, recycling, the City's composting facility, and potential waste to energy opportunities. The Committee should be charged with recommending to City Council a goal of diverting a certain percentage of waste from landfill disposal.		6 months

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<p>Initiate a citizen “call to action” that identifies ways residents can help reduce waste, improve water and air quality, etc, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tune up vehicle to increase gas mileage • Use gas powered/clean lawn equipment • Reduce idling in vehicles • Encourage carpooling/alternative modes of travel • Reduce electric consumption • Encourage citizens to bicycle and walk to work • Encourage greater use of curbside and e-waste recycling programs • Encourage management of yard and organic waste through composting and grass cycling • Encourage civic groups to adopt a waterway for trash pick-up in partnership with Keep the Midlands Beautiful • Refrain from pouring grease into drains (trash the grease) • Reduce outdoor water use • Scoop the poop! Pet waste reduction • Report stormwater concerns to city hotline (hotline required under new NPDES MS4 permit) • Wash cars on lawns instead of driveways • Decrease fertilizer use on lawns 		6 months
<p>Create an Air Quality Advisory Board to include city staff, appropriate state officials, DHEC and members of public charged with developing an air quality plan.</p>		6 months
<p>Encourage the addition of more bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways by endorsing a Complete Streets policy.</p>		6 months
<p>Evaluate the air emission inventory previously completed by the City.</p>		6 months
<p>Adopt 10,000 Trees Program.</p>		6 months
<p>Partner with the Palmetto State Clean Fuels Coalition to promote the use of low emission fuels and vehicles in the Columbia metropolitan area.</p>		6 months
<p>Initiate a development roundtable process involving developers,</p>		6 months

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environmentalists and government to review and recommend reforms of the City's land use and development code and ordinances to promote improved environmental protection and sustainable development.		
Begin implementation of energy efficiency measures identified in the City's Energy Audit to improve energy efficiency in all city buildings where feasible.		6 months (ongoing)
Revisit the structure of Climate Protection Action Committee and give it a new mandate to implement public outreach of sustainability plan.		6 months
Partner and collaborate with watershed and water quality non-profit organizations to assist with water quality problems facing the City.		6 months (ongoing)
Commit to adoption of progressive, innovative stormwater management practices and design requirements such as use of permeable asphalt, vegetated swales, rain gardens, planted green roofs, and rain harvesting as part of the City's implementation of its NPDES stormwater permit.		6 months (ongoing in accordance with permit requirements)
Pursue grant funding under the Greening America's Capitals Program.		July 9 th deadline

TOP PRIORITIES (6-24 MONTHS)	Owner	Timeframe
Establish and empower a high-level Office of Sustainability with a Director position to raise the visibility of sustainability policies and lead sustainability efforts, including continued development of the City's Sustainability Plan.		1 year
Commit to and initiate consolidation of private wastewater utilities as recommended in Central Midlands 208 Plan.		Up to 2 years to create capacity to absorb
Complete the City connection to the Three Rivers greenway.		Up to 2 years
Establish a comprehensive Bicycle/Walk to Work Program and Carpool program for City employees.		Up to 2 years

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Develop a strategic policy or plan for water and sewer expansion that discourages inefficient land use patterns.		Up to 2 years to develop policy
Develop and implement a low cost loan program/tax incentives to fund residential & commercial energy efficiency retrofits, renewable energy improvements, including solar and wind energy, fuel cells, and biomass, and purchase of Energy Star appliances.		Up to 2 years to implement
Support the development of the Historic Columbia Foundation's Cultural Landscape Master Plan that endeavors to transform its 14 acres of landscapes into gardens reflecting the historical and cultural context of the historic homes its manages.		Up to 2 years
Consider use of green roofs on City-owned buildings, or provide incentives for green roof use on private buildings, in order to create additional urban green space.		Up to 2 years
Explore ways to promote community gardens as a way to enhance existing green space in neighborhood.		Up to 2 years
Identify and adopt improved incentives to developers, such as development density bonuses, to promote dedication of interconnected green space within infill development.		1 year
Examine feasibility of using City-owned properties for mitigation banking opportunities or other means of natural resource restoration.		Up to 2 years
Undertake reform of the City's floodplain management program.		1 year
Continue replacing street lighting with energy efficient lighting technologies, including light emitting diodes and other technology of equal or greater energy efficiency.		2 years
Identify and adopt improved incentives, such as development density bonuses, to promote conservation of green space and increased flexibility in sustainable development.		2 years
Review and improve the City's tree ordinance and urban forestry plan to enhance the City's tree cover and reduce the "urban heat island" effect.		Up to 2 years
Encourage citizen use of electric vehicles by installing recharging stations in parking garages.		2 years

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Meet LEED and LID standards in major city owned construction/renovation projects.		2 years
Establish a goal to derive certain percentage of City energy use from renewable and alternative sources by 2020.		2 years
Commit to exceeding expectations of compliance with the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the Columbia Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant.		2 years (ongoing)
Implement a recycling program at multi-family dwellings.		2 years
Expand materials collected through the City's recycling program (such as used cooking oil and increased variety of plastics) wherever financially feasible.		2 years
Establish a pilot program for public recycling in City parks and in one hospitality/retail district with eventual plans to expand recycling to all parks and all retail districts.		2 years
		Up to 2 years
Aggressively examine the City's wastewater collection system and repair or replace leaking pipes.		2 years (ongoing)
Expand the "trash the grease" outreach program to more actively seek behavior change.		Up to 2 years (ongoing)
Provide safe and secure bicycle parking at all city-owned facilities.		Up to 2 years

FUTURE CONSIDERATION	Owner
Synchronize traffic signals to reduce vehicle emissions.	
Implement policies for city vehicle fleet to include reduction in vehicle idling time for city vehicle fleet, including police, and develop schedule for phased replacement of the City's fleet with vehicles that are more fuel efficient.	
Establish leak detection and repair program for the City's water system.	
Establish a baseline inventory (from SCDHEC's Groundwater Contaminant Inventory) of known groundwater contaminants in Columbia and whether any are potentially discharging into a receiving body of water.	
Explore opportunities for unit based pricing or pay-as-you-throw programs that charge a variable rate for waste disposal based on the amount of trash residents throw away.	
Develop a plan for adoption of anaerobic digestion and other waste-to-energy	

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options wherever cost-effective and environmentally sound.	
Upon sale of the Bull Street (Department of Mental Health) property, negotiate a development agreement for the property that includes restoration of Smith's Branch. Upon sale of the Bull Street (Department of Mental Health) property, negotiate a development agreement for the property that includes restoration of Smith's Branch.	
Increase diversion of construction and demolition waste by encouraging the deconstruction rather than demolition of buildings and by developing incentives or requirements for the reuse, recycling or reprocessing of materials as part of the building permit and construction plan process.	

Government Operations &
Efficiency Committee

Government Operations & Efficiency

Overview

The Government Operations and Efficiency Committee met three times during the month of June to assess the current status of Columbia City operations. Several committee members also actively met with departments at the City of Columbia to better understand policies and procedures, sharing their findings with the full committee.

The team identified and prioritized a set of strategies for achieving 4 goal area objectives, and created an Action Plan with timelines for the prioritized strategies. A set of strategies the team called “early opportunities” were identified and timelines were assigned to each of those strategies.

After the initial SWOT analysis, the committee split into 4 subcommittees to closer evaluate their respective areas. The four subcommittees were defined as “Budget and Finance”, “Payroll and Human Resources”, “Information Technology and Business Process Assessment”, and “Public Works, Fleet, and Parking”.

These subcommittees used interviews with the City's Administration, as well as the City's EquaTerra Efficiency Assessment Report issued February 17, 2010, to assist in providing information for the development of the recommendations. The City has done an outstanding job implementing many of the EquaTerra Report recommendations within a short period of time. The Subcommittees' recommendations below provide ways that the City can reduce costs and improve efficiency of services.

In the following two meetings, the subcommittees gave reports on their evaluations of their respective areas of governmental operations and efficiency.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Fusco (Co-Chair)

John Adams
Darrell Black
Cynthia Clarke
Gary Cannon
David Campbell
David Dunn
Tony Dessausure
Angela Franks
Chuck Garnett
Alvin Hinkle

Jordan Freking, Intern

Ben Duncan (Co-Chair)

Don Herriott
Mark James
Susan Lake
Mickey Layden
Larry McDaniel
Earl Mcleod
John Mikula
Gary Penninger
Milton Pope
Mark Tompkins

Bessie Watson, Transition Leader

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High-level Issues (Situation Assessment)

The team identified the high-level issues the organization faces today.

High-level Issues

The City of Columbia faces many issues concerning governmental operations and efficiency. Between budgetary issues, process inefficiencies, and procedural inefficiencies, there are many opportunities for time and cost-saving changes to be made. Without making some of the more necessary changes, city government will continue to operate below its full potential.

Critical Assumptions Upon Which This Plan is Written

The team identified the following critical assumptions in preparation for planning:

- The City of Columbia has very little money to invest in new activities.
- Many will be resistant to necessary changes in procedure
- Many recommendations made are focused on cost savings rather than public opinion.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The team was asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Government Operations and Efficiency. In addition, they examined the external opportunities and threats to Government Operations and Efficiency. What follows are their responses.

STRENGTHS	BENEFITS
Strong support and leadership	Advantage of system of government
Public given the opportunity to voice opinions and the city is responsive to questions and concerns	Input from all stakeholders Citizen input used to prioritize city processes
Zoning department	Standard processes
Positioned in a great environment for leveraging resources and building collaborative efforts with other state/municipal entities, higher ed institutions, nonprofits, and the military base	Opportunity to outsource/consolidate some of the city services resulting in Cost savings
Strong focus on improvement and positive change and eliminating inefficiencies	Process improvements

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WEAKNESSES	IMPACT
Imbalance of interests of neighborhoods versus the interest of businesses	Non-responsive to the needs of the business community/neighborhoods
Departmental approach within government	Non inclusive of other departments and the overall mission of service provider
Business Licensing process	Difficult to attract and maintain new businesses within the city
Failure to tap available resources within the community	Lack of input from the citizens/non-responsive to the citizen's needs/alienation
Lack of succession planning	Loss of institutional knowledge/skills and competencies lost
Lack of translation of efficiencies all the way to the lowest level employee to carry it throughout the organization and embrace the theory at all levels of organization/government	Creates a negative response to efficiencies in lower level employees

OPPORTUNITIES	BENEFITS
Make City of Columbia a more business oriented/friendly environment	Attract new businesses to the city to improve the economy and create jobs
Take a service orientation in using a process approach versus a departmental approach	
Create a more formalized process of getting citizen input/expectations to help prioritize city processes	Input from the citizens to help prioritize city processes
Outsource/consolidate some of city services	Cost Savings
Use technology to institute efficiencies and use benchmarks to measure the cities performance to find further inefficiencies	Improved processes
Rebrand the City of Columbia with a more	Attract more businesses resulting in an improved

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positive image	economy
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THREATS	IMPACT
Water pollution in the rivers	Negative impact on economic development
Crime and Homelessness	Negative impact on economic development
Division of neighborhoods versus businesses	Loss of confidence
Loss of economic possibilities	Must improve to maintain current businesses and attract new ones
Loss of vision due to poor economy	Negative impact on economic development
Not being a "smart" community	Negative impact on economic development
Negative image	Negative impact on economic development
Community perception that needs to be corrected	Lack of transparency at city council and the resulting loss of confidence
Lack of Intergovernmental Cooperation	Negative impact on economic development
Base Closures	Negative impact on economic development
Lack of positive brand for city and carrying brand throughout the city services and government	Negative impact on economic development
Community Apathy	Not engaging the community
System of government/lack of strong mayoral system	Negative impact on economic development

GOAL AREAS, OBJECTIVES, CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS & BARRIERS

Based on the assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the team identified 4 goal areas, measurable objectives for each plus critical success factors and barriers related to implementing those measurable objectives.

What follows are the team's 4 high-level goal areas.

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High-level Goal # 1: Budget and Financial Efficiency			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Adopt a zero-based budget system for the city	New Process	X	
Leveraging other partners to provide services through an evaluation of current service partners, consolidation of services with counties where possible, and privatization of services where economically feasible.	Underway	X	
Create a prioritized list of services	New Process	X	
Annexation of existing unincorporated areas within the city through an examination of the effectiveness of either the county or the city providing the services.	New Process	X	
GOAL 1: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 1: BARRIERS		
Support from all critical parties	Turf battles		
Objective involvement from all areas impacted by promoting informed decision-making	Individual agendas		
Efficient and effective service at a lower cost	Current contract commitments		
Cooperation amongst partners	Current investments		
Green Initiative	County and city not cooperating		
County and city cooperation	Territory issues		

High-level Goal # 2: Business Process Assessment and Information Technology			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
The city should adopt a business process improvement methodology, such as the Baldrige Process for Performance Improvement	New Process		X
The city should continue work to centralize the administration, oversight and support of information technology, including the specification of requirements and purchasing. Information technology processes should be benchmarked against comparable enterprises.	Underway		X

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The city should expand the use of performance indicators, employing these to benchmark city operations against comparable enterprises.	Underway		X
The city should implement formal project management processes	New Projects		X

High-level Goal #3: Public Works, Fleet, and Parking

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
The city should develop a more centralized avenue to market the benefits and opportunities that the citizens of Columbia have accessibility.	New Project	X	
Promote the qualities and characteristics of our great City, as well as the opportunities that will benefit folks and encourage them want to live in Columbia such as our wonderful parks and recreational centers; grant funding and Loan programs to help citizens purchase or repair their homes; and the flexibility of living in a city that has everything			X
Find ways to encourage paying outstanding parking tickets.	New Project	X	

High-level Goal # 4: Human Resources and Payroll

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Update current system technology including an analysis of the current systems and recommendations for updates, modifications, or new systems			X
Centralize Human Resource Functions by consolidation wherever possible			X
Analysis of benefit plans and modifications as deemed necessary including a cross-entity evaluation of established plans and an assessment of self-funding and market plans			X

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Create and Implement a workforce succession plan through an evaluation of critical positions and a cross-training plan for continuity and effective knowledge transfer		X	
Establish new training and development program that assess current skill level as it relates to succession planning and make recommendations for in-house & external training needs			X

GOAL 4: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 4: BARRIERS
Cost benefit analysis	Cost
Clear understanding of efficiencies gained	Time
Commitment from management	Resources
Cost benefit analysis (not only monetary)	Resistance to change
Accurate data	Potential displacement of current employees
Non – biased evaluation	Employee discontentment
Change management	Potential limited loss of benefits
Difficult decision implementation	Change in cost
Commitment	Pool of qualified candidates
Employee participation	Job territorial issues
Succession Planning	Availability of promotional opportunities

PRIORITIES

The team identified a set of strategies related to each goal area and then separated them into Early Opportunities (6 months), later but important priorities (6-24 months) and recommendations for future consideration.

In the future, a team will identify specific potential strategies related each goal areas and action plans for their accomplishment which can be addressed in future planning sessions.

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Early Opportunities (Next 6 Months)

EARLY OPPORTUNITIES	Timeframe
Adopt a zero-based budget system for the city	New Budget Cycle
Consolidate city and county services whenever possible	90 Days
Create a prioritized list of services	6 months
Annexation of existing "Donut Holes" within the city	6 months
Find new ways to encourage citizens to pay parking tickets.	6 months
Create and Implement a workforce succession plan	6 months

Priority Recommendations (6 – 24 months)

6-24 MONTH STRATEGIES	Timeframe
The city should adopt a business process improvement methodology, such as the Baldrige Process for Performance Improvement	18 Months
The city should continue working to centralize the administration, oversight and support of information technology, including the specification of requirements and purchasing. Information technology processes should be benchmarked against comparable enterprises.	18 Months
The city should expand the use of performance indicators, employing these to benchmark city operations against comparable enterprises.	Next Budget Cycle
The city should implement formal project management processes.	Next Budget Cycle
Privatize services where it makes economic sense	2 years
The city should develop a more centralized avenue to market the benefits and opportunities that the citizens of Columbia have accessibility.	2 years
Begin a new advertising campaign with the purpose of highlighting all of the benefits of living in the City of Columbia	2 years
Update current system technology	1 year
Centralize human resource functions	1 year

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Analyze and modify current benefit plans	2 years
Establishment of new training and development program	1 year

Public Health Committee

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Public Health Committee

Mission

To provide a comprehensive administrative plan that identifies and promotes the best physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health and wellness environment for the residents of Columbia, South Carolina.

Vision

The Health and Wellness Advisory Committee will provide counsel and commentary on the goals of the City of Columbia's strategic plan for the well-being of its community.

Overview

The Public Health Committee met multiple times in June, assessing the status of the City and making recommendations to Mayor-Elect Benjamin for its improvement. What follows is the documentation from the Public Health Committee for Mayor-Elect Steve Benjamin's Transition Leader.

We are pleased to have had this opportunity to contribute to the future of Columbia and stand ready to help over the coming months and years.

Respectfully submitted,

Co-Chair: Dr. Gerald Wilson

Bert Bailey
Lynn Bailey
Dr. Pierre Barakat
Dr. Marc Berger
Dr. Suzan Boyd
Wallace Brown
Wallace Cunningham
Otha Dillihay
Dr. Lilly D. Filler
Dr. Bambi Gaddist
Dr. Burnett Gallman
Rev. Norvell Goff
Tracy Goodwin

Intern: Emily Burn

Co-Chair: Ken Trogdon

Dr. Ronald Johnson
Dr. Loretta Felder McKelvey
Dr. Ragin Monteith
Elizabeth Nkuo
Dr. Albert Odom
John Singerling
Dean Slade
Don Tomlin
Greg Torrales
Ken Trogdon
Joann Turnquist
Bessie Watson
Dr. Gerald Wilson

Bessie Watson, Transition Leader

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High-level Issues (Situation Assessment)

The team identified the four high-level issues the organization faces today.

High-level Issues
1. EDUCATION Education about Health Issues and Health Literacy; Promotion of Wellness
2. ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE Access to Healthcare, High Cost of Preventative Care, Access to Prescription Drugs, State Cuts to Healthcare Funding, Poverty
3. PREVENTABLE DISEASES Obesity, Unwanted Pregnancy, Teen Pregnancy, Tobacco Smoking, Alcohol/Drug Abuse, HIV Infection, Violence, Dental Carries, Health Disparities
4. DISEASE MANAGEMENT Cardiovascular Disease, Cancer, Diabetes, HIV/AIDS, Mental Health, Dental/Oral Health, Geriatric Care

Critical Assumptions upon Which This Plan is Written

The team identified the following critical assumptions in preparation for planning:

- Columbia is not a “healthy city”
- It is important to make Columbia a healthy model for the rest of South Carolina
- There needs to be a great deal of outreach to all parts of the diverse community
- Columbia needs to be the resource through which health and wellness information is channeled

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The team was asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Public Health. In addition, they examined the external opportunities and threats to Public Health. What follows are their responses.

STRENGTHS	BENEFITS
Colleges and Universities in Columbia -University of South Carolina (School of Medicine, College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy, School of Public Health)	Student involvement can be used to promote a healthier city; these colleges and universities train and educate many students in the healthcare and medical fields

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-Midlands Technical College -Columbia College -Benedict College -Allen University -South University	
LRADAC	
Columbia's Church Community	Provides outreach programs and community assistance, volunteers; means of communication
Private Non-Profit Organizations	Outreach to children and the community
Columbia-Area Hospital Systems -Palmetto Health (COPA) -Providence Hospital	Provide healthcare to the residents of Columbia
Medicaid HMO's	
Richland County Dental Clinic	Screenings, good care for children, educates children about oral health, prevents other diseases
Oral Health Clinic	Knowingly treats HIV/AIDS patients
Columbia Free Clinic	Provides access and care for limited amount of indigent patients
DHEC	Used more for a resource (has few funds); Source for information and statistics
Parks and Recreation in Columbia	There are 56 community parks in Columbia, they have community centers, can be used for health education outreach; Exercise Programs
Benefit Bank	
Professional Associations	Have the resources to assist the community
Volunteerism	Costs little to no money, there is a large number of people willing to help the community and city
Civil and Social Organizations	
Federally Qualified Health Systems	
Office of Research and Statistics (Budget and Control Board)	Can provide health and wellness data and information about Columbia and surrounding areas
Sisters of Charity Foundation	

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WEAKNESSES	IMPACT
Dental Care and Oral Health	There are fewer dental care options for adults
Volunteerism	Need to ensure that different groups of people are used as volunteers; cannot overuse certain groups
Lack of Sexual Health Education	High STD rates, preventative measures are not taught, high teen pregnancy rates
Funding	Lack of money in the city and the state, limits the amount of aid and progress that can occur
Cultural Stigmas and Stereotypes	Unwillingness to address tough and controversial issues (i.e. HIV/AIDS, Sexual Health)
Attitudes and Beliefs	Promotes public apathy, denial, and creation of laws and policies that inhibit health-seeking behaviors and early access to medical care and treatment
Awareness	There is a lack of awareness about the health problems that are present in the city
Information Distribution	If the public is unaware of health enhancing services that are being provided, then they are not helped
Lack of Transportation	Hurts people's access to healthcare and assistance

OPPORTUNITIES	BENEFITS
Social Networking, Web-Based Information	Free, Reaches many people
Use Community Gatekeepers	The Gatekeepers are able to reach out to the whole community, can conquer trust issues
Central Repository of Programs – Create a list of all of the Healthcare Options available to the community – screenings, mentoring, education, classes, clinics, etc.	Would allow the community to have better access to free or affordable healthcare because it would be an organized, coordinated, central information database
Identification of Community Leaders	Help for public awareness about healthcare
Grassroots Response	Widespread movement to improve local community-based partnerships that promote Columbia's health, would reach out to all communities, need to emphasize the importance of

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	good health to the community; hard data is needed for this "Opportunity"
Use established events to reach out to many members of the community	Sporting events, church meetings, community gatherings could also be used to inform the public about healthcare options and opportunities

THREATS	IMPACT
Lack of funding	Limits the success of public health reform
Bureaucracy Associated with Public Systems	The success of many of the public health reforms may be dependent on private organizations
Lack of awareness in the community that the Mayor has put together a "Public Health Committee" to address the city's health	If people are not aware that people are working to improve the health of the community, as a whole, then the improvements, changes, outreach, etc. will be less effective
Gang Presence	Increases violence; negative impact on the city's overall health and wellness; there is not enough counter-productive presence in public schools
Preventable and poorly managed diseases negatively impact the City of Columbia	Taxpayers and hospitals bear the burden
Lack of After-School Programs for the Youth in Columbia	Youth have too much free time; increases gang involvement; lack of positive mentors
Lack of Health Education and Awareness	Adversely affects all areas of Columbia's overall health and wellness
Rising Teen Pregnancy Rate	Negatively impacts both the youth and the community; zip code 29203 has the highest teen pregnancy rate in South Carolina

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GOAL AREAS, OBJECTIVES, CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS & BARRIERS

Based on the assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the team identified three goal areas, measurable objectives for each plus critical success factors and barriers related to implementing those measurable objectives.

What follows are the team's three high-level goal areas.

High-level Goal #1: Make Columbia a City with an Emphasis on Health and Wellness			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Make sure that the Health and Wellness Advisory Committee is successful			
Let the public know that the Mayor has put an emphasis on health and wellness			
Create Public Service Announcements (Web, TV, Radio) from the Mayor about important health issues			
Hit people with quick facts about the health of the residents of Columbia			
Put information about health and wellness on city pay stubs, water bills, unemployment checks, and the city Newsletter			
GOAL 1: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 1: BARRIERS		
Keep the public informed and involved	Lack of healthcare education and awareness		
Use volunteers to reach people	Make sure that people understand the data		
Create a City Web-Based community health assessment to gain feedback about the most glaring health concerns with City Council areas; compile the data for public review	Making sure to use different forums in order to reach different segments of Columbia's population		
Make sure that information is public and accessible			
Use radio, newspaper, etc. to inform the public			

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High-level Goal # 2: Establish a standing "Health and Wellness Advisory Committee" to assist the Mayor			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Name: Health and Wellness Advisory Committee			
Provide information to the Mayor and to the city about healthcare opportunities			
Work to educate the public			
1. Educate the public about healthcare issues 2. Increase public access to healthcare 3. Emphasize preventative care 4. Work to manage diseases			
Show/establish who the Health and Wellness Advisory Committee represents			
GOAL 2: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 2: BARRIERS		
Involve representatives of organizations with a vested interest in health and wellness, as well as lay public who are willing to work on the committee	Making sure that the members remain involved		
Ensure that the community knows that the Health and Wellness Advisory Committee exists			
Announce the purpose and goals of the committee in a public forum			

High-level Goal # 3: Create a Site on Columbia's Website that Provides Healthcare Information to the General Public			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Have a website with comprehensive information about healthcare opportunities for the city and	Could be implemented		

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places where people may access healthcare	quickly		
Outline the resources that are currently available in the community			
Use information and services that are already in place			
Assign people to keep it up-to-date			
The Health and Wellness Advisory Committee can serve as an editorial filter for information that is put on the website			
GOAL 3: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 3: BARRIERS		
Use students to work on the website and compile information	Ensuring that the information and material is easy to understand		
Have various people contribute to the website	Must keep the website up-to-date		
Have different people put the website together	Must make the website easy to use		
Information needs to be verified and sourced			
Ensure the creation of methods and messages that are culturally competent, and take into consideration pervasive challenges with reading comprehension			
Create links to other organizations within the city that provide information about health and wellness			
All policies should be reviewed for their health impact; issue a "Health Impact Statement"			

PRIORITIES

The team identified a set of strategies related to Goal Areas. They separated Goal Areas into those that could be accomplished within the coming 6 months from priorities that could be accomplished over a near-term of 6-24 months. Lastly the committee identified a set of important issues that should be considered as successes are achieved and circumstances change. This team will not

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initially produce either an action plan but recommends that in the future, a team should identify specific potential strategies related each goal areas and action plans for their accomplishment.

Early Opportunities (Next 6 Months)

EARLY OPPORTUNITIES	Owner	Timeframe
Create a website that coordinates all of the city's healthcare information in one, easy-to-access place		Immediate
Create a City Web-Based community health assessment to gain feedback about the most glaring health concerns with City Council areas; compile the data for public review		Immediate
Create a standing "Health and Wellness Advisory Committee"		Immediate
Create a "health section" on the city newsletter		Immediate
Review all healthcare policies for their health impact; Health Impact Statements for the policies		Immediate
Inventory the information and services available in Columbia		Immediate

Priority Recommendations (6 – 24 months)

TOP PRIORITIES (6-24 MONTHS)	Owner	Timeframe
Have a healthcare "Topic of the Month" to educate people; could correlate the Topic with the Calendar (i.e. October – Breast Cancer Awareness Month)		
Provide information in public places to educate the community i.e. barbershops, salons, schools, grocery stores		
Hold forum in various communities to deal with healthcare concerns, resources needed, and resources that are currently available; i.e. neighborhood associations		
Use a public event (attended or sponsored by the Mayor) to promote the importance of knowing one's Blood Pressure (BP) and Body Mass Index (BMI); BP and BMI are important to a person's health and wellness; at the event, attendees could have their BP and BMI tested; the collective information about the BP and BMI of the event's attendees would be released; provide a fact sheet about BP and BMI to the attendees and to the community; have a Media Campaign, with PSA's, to highlight the importance of BP and BMI		

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Recommendations for Future Consideration

FUTURE CONSIDERATION
Hold a health fair to provide healthcare assistance and information to the community
Compile data about the overall health and wellness of the City of Columbia, and use the data to improve the health of the city
Research information about other cities who have made healthcare a priority

Public Safety Committee

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Public Safety Committee

Overview

The Public Safety committee, a subset of the Transition Team under Mayor-Elect Steve Benjamin, met to discuss issues in the area of public safety. The committee gathered on June 10th, 17th, and 24th at the Owens Airport Building Conference Room. The committee consisted of leaders dedicated to ultimately improve the lives of citizens in the City of Columbia.

The most fundamental responsibility of a city is to ensure the safety of its citizens.

Public safety is a critical core function of government and a primary reason for its existence. The issues and challenges presented to the public safety community have placed greater emphasis on city government's ability to provide for safe and healthy communities throughout the City of Columbia.

The mission of the respective city departments including the Columbia Police Department, Columbia Fire Department, Emergency Response Services Center, and Homeland Security (recently reorganized under CPD) has evolved out of necessity to bring to bear the limited resources to address criminal behavior, natural disasters, and homeland security. Those who serve in the city's departments serve selflessly and stand ready to protect the citizens of Columbia and provide for improved quality of life for all citizens in the greater Columbia area.

The Public Safety Committee faced significant challenges in synthesizing the far ranging issues identified in the forum and arrived at a consensus in the findings contained in this document. The over-arching charge to the committee was to act as a "think tank" by strategically gathering information and prioritizing issues based on importance. A set time table was established to identify when issues could be addressed and solved. The most tangible (within the next few months) issues are represented under "low-hanging fruit," issues on the horizon are marked under "6-24 month projections," and future (3+ years) considerations are represented under the "Parking Lot." The committee deemed that there are those issues which can be addressed immediately and those which will take a period of time to further examine, plan, and implement.

Because this is a first-tier assessment, the findings and comments that might further enhance service delivery in the public safety area will be better served by a more in-depth analysis. Such analysis will continue through Mayor-elect Benjamin's term in order to quantify our findings and create a concrete approach to resolve public safety issues.

The methodology employed by the Public Safety Committee consisted of conducting several public meetings with information presented over a time period of weeks. Members represented recognized community and business leaders as well professionals from the municipal, county, state, and federal public safety sector. The information gathered from this group in the respective meetings resulted in the formulation of this report. The findings and comments found within this report represent the majority opinion of the Public Safety Committee.

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Finally, while a limited review of previous studies and reports were considered by this committee, it is clearly established in reports dating back close to a decade that the same problems and issues heard throughout the committee's work are recurring and have failed to be successfully addressed by leadership in the City of Columbia. (See Citizen Panel Report, March 12, 2008, as chaired by former Chief Justice Ernest Finney). These chronic issues must be addressed to allow the city to move ahead in a constructive manner and allow for improved service delivery to the citizens of greater Columbia.

Objectives - Gather information, prioritize issues and challenges, identify "low hanging fruit", and project strategic issues for consideration on a longer term basis in order to save taxpayers money, increase accountability, and improve services to the citizens of Columbia. Additionally, identify areas for partnerships and greater collaboration possibly leading to consolidation of services, and improve the environment to sustain and grow safe and healthy communities.

Scope of Work - The Public Safety Committee included a review of each department's: Mission, organizational structure and functional areas.

Areas Reviewed – The committee reviewed the public safety department cluster associated with City of Columbia including: Columbia Police Department, Columbia Fire Department, Emergency Response Services Center, and Homeland Security (recently reorganized under CPD).

Areas Not Reviewed – The compressed time frame to complete this review did not allow for a review of activity costing in relation to strategic or business plans. The committee review also did not review policies and procedures by which each department conducts operations. These areas are recommended for review at a later time.

Sense of the Committee - The sense of the committee is that any significant structural realignment of the public safety departments requires significant and careful deliberation. Additionally, immediate opportunities exist which could significantly impact the quality of life and safety of the citizens of Columbia. A failure to address these issues and take advantage of the opportunities at hand will significantly impact the quality of services provided by the respective departments and continue the downward spiral currently plaguing the city's public safety sector; primarily that of the police department. The committee expressed a belief that there is a sense of dedication and commitment by those who serve but significant challenges remain in the area of consistent department leadership which has produced a negative cascading effect on the respective departments. Much of the discontent and destabilization within the public safety sector appears to be attributed to a lack of leadership, support, and conflicting priorities which confound the strategic efforts of the respective departments.

*NOTE—the following report consists of findings based on the consensus of the committee as a whole and does not reflect individual interpretation.

Report of Mayor-Elect Steve Benjamin's Transition Team

Respectfully submitted,

Chair: Stephen Birnie

Adell Adams

Gail Baker

Michael Byrd

Mike Cosola

James Flowers

Harold Guyon

Marvin Heller

Melron Kelly

Victor Kemper

Jason Krusen

Reggie Lloyd

Jack Van Loan

Joe McCulloch

David O'Berry

Brenda Oliver

Walter Powell

Randy Scott

Robert Stewart

Rev. AV Strong

Bruce Trezevant

John Vanhouten

Chris Wuchenich

Tesh Gandhi, Intern

Hon. Luther Battiste, Transition Leader

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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Strengths

- Dedicated and committed public safety professions who demonstrate a strong desire to provide excellent service to the people of Columbia.
- Many issues can be addressed with the insertion of strong, sound leadership. Issues identified in the course of the committee meetings clearly indicate resourcing and funding limitations. However, strong leadership can begin to address the strategic direction of the public safety sector in a prioritized fashion.

Weaknesses

- Leadership/Management
- Collaboration between City and County
- Accountability
- Allocation of resources
- Transparency & Efficiency
- Communication
- Improved information sharing with public and media

The following paragraphs further detail the areas in which Columbia can improve its public safety.

Leadership and Management

Columbia public safety agencies have experienced significant disruption in leadership and management over the past several years. This has resulted in the hemorrhaging of qualified professional staff and the challenge of recruiting and retaining the best and brightest to serve Columbia. City leaders must vest full authority in respective department leadership without micro-managing the public safety agencies. The respective public safety agencies must each have a single leader to which staff can look for leadership, vision, guidance, and accountability without the undercurrent of city leadership interference. Staff in each public safety agency have a strong sense of duty and commitment and should be properly trained, trusted, and held accountable.

Collaboration

Greater collaboration between city and county public safety agencies is strongly recommended. The unified fire service appears to have worked well operationally and the aggressive pursuit of a city/county partnership in law enforcement is recommended and should result in greater accountability and efficiency, while yielding a stable and recognized leadership and management structure. These partnerships and collaboration should allow agencies to maximize the use of finite resources and expertise needed to develop capability and enhance capacity. Joint training, information systems/ information sharing, technical expertise, interoperable communications capability, and emergency response planning would all benefit—resulting in improved services to the citizens of greater Columbia. There should be an aggressive pursuit of progressive management and investigative/enforcement practices, while seeking technological solutions to public safety

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challenges. Additionally, consideration should be given to share capability between fire and emergency medical services to the extent they cross-train, operate, and develop a shared infrastructure environment.

Accountability

Develop a comprehensive process of accountability utilizing recognized professional metrics to set targets, objectives, and milestones for service and service delivery. Conduct periodic customer surveys and implement a more defined process for accepting and addressing complaints against the departments or personnel. Further increase the use of internal and external auditors of agency governance and operations.

Allocation of Resources

City leaders must commit to the review and restoration of the public safety agencies budgets. As an acknowledged critical core governmental function, public safety is the cornerstone to provide enhanced safe and secure communities fundamental to allowing for the education of city residents and providing the business community with an inviting environment to sustain existing businesses and expand business operations. Issues such as allowing for take home public safety vehicles would bolster greater visibility and serve as a force multiplier within the community.

Transparency & Efficiency

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of core service delivery of public safety to the citizens of Columbia should include an expanded use of information technology and improving communication, performance evaluation, quality assurance, and both strategic and short-term implementation planning. Greater use of shared planning capability, infrastructure, IT platforms, and radio communication systems should be viewed as opportunities to enhance services more efficiently within the public safety sector.

Communication

Inter- and intra -departmental communication was identified as a significant impediment within the public safety sector, particularly in the Columbia Police Department. Effective communication top to bottom and bottom to top was reported as severely lacking. Implement recognized processes to effectively address internal issues by the establishment of Police Officers Advisory Committee and Firefighters Advisory Committee, respectively. This approach will allow for “rumor and spin” control, the addressing of policy and procedure issues, matters of proper resourcing, and issues of fairness to be addressed directly and quickly by leadership at the very top of the respective departments. Consideration should also be given to establishing Citizen Advisory Committees across the public safety spectrum. This forum will allow for the input from business leaders, community leaders, and the general public while providing a forum to provide timely information on a regular basis outside the respective departments. It is imperative that department leadership

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actively participate in the process and demonstrate an investment to improve the institutional health of the departments, while enhancing the quality of life for the citizens of greater Columbia.

Improve information sharing with the public and media

A unified public safety strategy of communication is needed to address issues of timely dissemination of information. Establish better working relationships with the media to manage the dissemination of public safety information. Mediums such as Twitter and Facebook are avenues which have emerged in addition to traditional outlets for the timely distribution of information to the media and general public.

Opportunities

- City/County Collaboration
 - A collaborative environment between the city and county public safety entities to ensure quality and professional services to the public.
 - Shared services model
 - Shared infrastructure
 - Shared training/certification
 - Agencies will have the opportunity to improve old business models in order to construct innovative models that boost efficiency, productivity, and overall gains in the public safety environment * **Low-hanging Fruit**
- PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY PANEL(S)
 - Committees formed under the various Public Safety departments to assist with and play an advisory role in overall health of the departments
 - Regularly scheduled meetings with active participation from department leadership to ensure open lines of communication internally and externally to ensure a timely and accurate exchange of information. ***Low-hanging Fruit**
- DEPARTMENT POLICY INSITUTIONALIZATION
 - An open dialogue and opportunity to communicate cross-functionally between departments relies on progressive leaders who can produce in the dynamic environment of today's metropolitan areas—the formation of new policy is vital in changing the “same old” business practices/ methodology/culture by which departments currently operate.
 - Such policy/procedure can be utilized to advance innovative and progressive “Best Practices” identified within the city's department as well as from other jurisdictions —***6-24months**

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Threats

- PUBLIC PERCEPTION
 - Departments face significant high demands for service from citizens

- PRESENCE OF CRIME AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY
 - The growing/developing metropolitan area is likely to increase chances of crime within and along city/county lines
 - A new face of crime –particularly gang activity
 - Crime affects all areas of a city's growth (business development, livelihood, infrastructure, etc.)

- CONSEQUENCES OF LIMITED VIEW LEADERSHIP
 - Conflicting and inconsistent guidance from leadership could possibly leads to dysfunctional systems and departments within the public safety sector
 - Immediate solutions, in a planned and prioritized fashion, must begin to address public safety problems before they become too large and complex to solve with the finite resources available to the city. The city must take seriously the ability to identify critical core public safety capability, identify critical capability gaps, and make prioritized investments in the public safety sector

- LACK OF COOPERATION
 - Cooperation first within own, respective department—then other departments
 - Many departments in metropolitan areas use cross-functional methods in policy, procedure, planning, strategizing, and implementing
 - a. without a joint effort in protecting the citizenry—departments will suffer from stagnancy and miscommunication

Early Opportunities (Next 6 Months)

EARLY OPPORTUNITIES
Immediate consideration of a collaborative working arrangement with county law enforcement to ensure a strong framework of leadership, vision, and direction is infused in the culture of the Columbia Police Department.
Immediate consideration for professional consultation for review of policies, procedures, and training requirements for the entire public safety sector.
Immediate consideration to sustain a group of community, business, and public safety professionals to further explore in detail chronic recurring issues.
Immediate consideration to engage in a methodical assessment of core public safety capability and begin the process of identifying capability gaps, most important to least important, to allow the city

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to make well informed decisions of where to invest their very finite resources against ever competing and perceived infinite needs.

Priority Recommendations (6 – 24 months)

TOP PRIORITIES (6-24 MONTHS)

Develop a Comprehensive Public Safety Strategic Plan to include an annual accountability report for each agency and function within the public safety sector.

Revisit previous compensation studies and update as necessary to make recommendations to address public safety sector recruiting, retention, and promotion opportunities.

Recommendations for Future Consideration

FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Possibility of Merger with other entities

Cross-functional Departmental Stabilization

Uniform Procedure across Departments

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Public Safety Committee Report—Outline—(brief-skimming format)

- Overarching Themes
 - Leadership
 - Accountability
 - Allocation
 - Transparency
 - Efficiency
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
- Public Safety—Primary concern→ *Safety of Citizenry*

Gang Violence and Crime

Ex: Increase in activity in 5 points area

Concerns

- Development of new organizations/gangs in growing metropolitan area
- Allocation of CPD resources to deter such development
- Response time in Area

Solutions

- Have leaders utilize a new deployment strategy
- Extend resources to victims upon incident to increase public awareness
- Revamp protocols to make effective and efficient use of resources
- Quarterly quarantines/sweeps at “hot spots”

Perspective of CPD

Concerns

- Issue of Perception→ Citizen's perception vs. actual account of incident
- Sheer volume of cases
- Public must know how enforcement will take care of problems
- Dynamic shift in crime in this state—issue of handling such a threat that is more-so long term because of growing population and city development
- PR problem—public distaste
- City-council members are not making appropriate decisions due to lack of immersion in the various fields related to public safety
- Unity of Command
 - “Ripple Effect”—differing opinions and methods of daily operations in various departments
 - Standard procedure shifting—officers are used to older methods

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- At the lower chain of command, communication is easier between officers—as you climb the ladder, communication begins to become blurred due to conflicting opinions
- Use of traditional (reactive) model as opposed to proactive model
- Retention
 - Since 2004, the department has hired 303 officers and within a 10 year span the department had full turnover (all new re-hiring of officers)
- Due to finite resources budgetary issues must be re-examined to properly distribute funds to areas of importance (rectifiable now—short term projects) to that of least importance (rectifiable later—long term projects)

Solutions

- Publicly address issues
 - (i.e. public concerns about crime rates and the ability to solve such cases)
- Deputy Advisory Report
 - 80% of changes made are handled through such a report (line officer suggestions to higher command)
- Call-in Incident Telephone Report System
 - Decreases radio cars, costs, and doesn't remove officers from their duties on the street
- Communication
- Low-hanging fruit—tackle immediate concerns before they develop and cause greater problem
- Hire individuals to serve in leadership roles with a consistent vision

Vision of Consolidation and Eventual Merger

Concerns

- Ineffective collaboration
- Law enforcement officials are adrift regarding issue of jurisdictional lines (only affects city—not state or county)
- Accustomed to current methodology and instructions from command unit

Advantages

- Hybrid working arrangements (duties are distributed among different departments whereas no single functioning body will have ALL responsibility)
- Shared services model
- Agencies will have the opportunity to tear down old models in order to construct innovative models that boost efficiency, productivity, and overall gains in the active environment

City and County Communication/Perception (Community Watch + CPD)

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Concerns

- Demographics—areas of crime
- Ability to express public/community concerns
- Communities prone to gang violence are fearful of contacting local law enforcement to resolve issues due to threats from gang members
- City and county miscommunication and lack of transparency when solving criminal cases
- Local law enforcement should have an understanding of gang-related activities surrounding their areas of security—it is not the citizen's duty to contact local enforcement
- Lighting issues in recreational/park areas
- More reports must be published so problems and solutions may be considered—raises overall awareness

Solutions

- Community policing concept
- Citizens must be actively aware and involved in measures taken by local law enforcement in order to maintain security
- Neighborhood groups must be better equipped, active, and communicative with local departments to maintain effective links
- Increase neighborhood watch associations

Fire Department/Services and EMS

Concerns

- Broken system
- Issue of Public Perception → Idea that they MUST save all lives—as seen on TV
- Layering and duplication of services must be removed
- We do not have integrated EMS like most other metropolitan areas
- Lack of ambulances providing services to large areas in SC is affecting response time
- High command within department does not have final say in decision making and the primary role should not largely be occupied with budgetary concerns
 - Only one Fire Chief necessary
- Substantial pay cuts for employees and services
 - Two years ago the budget was \$22million—now \$19.4million—while the department grows, budget shrinks
 - 1.8million of funds for fire services were diverted to parks and recreation
 - A stimulus grant of \$1.4million intended for parks and services was given to parks and services this year
 - State training academy remains depressed of proper and up-to-date tools and services
- Compensation Discrepancies
 - Firefighters are working many hours that continue to increase annually, yet not fairly compensated

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- City must be more responsible with taxpayer dollars—budget is constantly decreasing, resulting in less resources to allocate in an already exhausted environment
 - If resources are specifically granted for a particular department then said resources must be given and remain in that departments budget
- “tit for tat” mentality involving city managers
- Training
 - Recertification—can’t become recertified because facility is drained
 - 200hrs of recertification required per year/p/firefighter and 20hrs of basic training cannot be completed due to insufficient funds
 - Outstanding tests, classes, and certification examinations attended and taken off duty without pay
 - Video/Remote Training Systems for reaching Stations across district
 - No funding for specialized training that is required by OSHA
- Attrition
 - Cost over the 3 years→ \$1.75million
 - In the last 6 months the department has lost 20+ people
 - It costs an additional \$400,000 to replace the last 20 people
 - Experienced loss of 65 firefighters
 - Availability of qualified personnel to fit leadership capacities are lacking
 - Losing best and brightest—remain for short period of time; then leave for greater opportunities in larger metropolitan areas (CLT, ATL)
 - Incentive Programs to retain and/or attract best people
- Healthcare
 - Ex: Irmo has recently upgraded to provide fully paid healthcare for retention purposes

Solutions

Ex: Charlotte—Mecklenburg Merger

- Form a Metropolitan fire unit
- Direct- line services
- Consolidation of fire services and EMS
- Priority spending actions
- Have private business cooperate with local fire services to assist in fundraising and donations
- Recruitment
 - Update website with employment information
 - Streamline hiring process
 - Incentives to attract the best employees
 - Advertising techniques
- Healthcare
 - ISO Improvement Plan/ Strategic Plan (Station 5 and 10)

Police—Internal body

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Concerns

- Over 300 years of tenured experienced officers have removed themselves of their roles in law enforcement due to
- Experienced officers (13+ yrs) are occupied training young officers (- 3yrs), resulting in lack of seniority in the field of duty
- Salary compression issues
- Police agencies are last at updating their tools and services
- Problem of losing civil service
- Feasibility of a merger in the future—the Charlotte/Mecklenburg unification took 6 years to complete
- Investigative units have been decentralized lifting causing major concern because of stagnancy
- Lack of communication within the body, itself
- Ability to be promoted within department is slim
- Trust and confidence issues in Leadership
- Police chief is required to address council body when issues revolve around the destruction of adjudicated evidence
- Officers question use of force in action because of liability and force reports (question of safety)

Solutions

- Task city manager with developing
- Council must act as a policy making body and consolidate their leadership
 - Ex: Los Angeles has a population of 5 million and they have 5 assistant managers whereas the city of Columbia has a population of 128,000 and have 4 assistant managers (Why so disproportionate?)
- Let family of officer maintain health insurance

City Council

Concerns

- Change the culture of newly-elected city council
- Raw talent of Columbia are leaving to serve other areas because there is a lack of opportunity—negating potential progress
- So many layers within council, affecting transparent communication and flow of information (bureaucracy)
- Must step away from micro-management
- Emphasis solely focused on accreditation
- Sense of undermining authority of chiefs/higher command of the various public service departments

Professional Public Safety Consulting

- Evaluation of services

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- Hire consultant (to assist with assessment, review, and planning)

**In order for such a method to become realistic and institutional the following must occur:

- Must have individual(s) *capable* of rectifying situation (leading)
- Hit re-occurring/historical/chronic problems and assist
- Recognize limitations due to finite resources and conduct proper assessments
- Adjust organizational structures in the departments
- Review fiscal reports to assist with restructuring and conduct internal surveys

Public Safety—Encouraging our Youth

Every area of government's responsibility

Solutions

- Youth training academies
- Youth development programs
- Foster the growth of programs for the homeless

Agencies

- Interoperability
- Structure
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Remove blockades
- Enable the community
- Commoditize what you have
- Enhance ability to control and share information

Supporting Documents

1. Citizen Panel Report (Finney Report)—March 12, 2008
2. Municipal Association Compensation Report

Regionalism & Intergovernmental
Relations Committee

Regionalism & Intergovernmental Committee

Overview

The Regionalism and Intergovernmental Relations Committee met multiple times in June and worked to draft a report focused on better connecting the governing entities within the Midlands. They followed a SWOT and first-tier assessment approach in developing their recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Damon Jeter, Co-Chair

Charles Appleby
Carey Campbell
Ellen H. Cooper
Jim Darby
Sidney Evering, II
Stephen Fitzer
Donald Fowler
Anton J. Gunn
Cecil D. Hannibal
Candace C. Jackson

Emily Burn, Intern

Donald Gist, Co-Chair

Valinda Littlefield
Joshua McDuffie
Kyle Michel
Stewart Mungo
Lynn S. Murray
Pat Noble
Hamilton Osborne, Jr.
James Smith
John Stucker
Boyd Summers

Hon. Luther Battiste, Transition Leader

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High-level Issues (Situation Assessment)

The team identified the high-level issues the organization faces today.

High-level Issues
Public Transportation – need mass transit from the boundary areas of Columbia
Must identify leaders to network with, and how to benefit from these relationships; Regional Approach; Regional Networking Team; Improve networking
Who are the leaders in the boundary areas that the Mayor can work with?
The problems associated with the Columbia Metropolitan Airport
Need for the consolidation of services
Necessity of a Joint Planning Commission and City/County Relationships

Critical Assumptions upon Which This Plan is Written

The team identified the following critical assumptions in preparation for planning:

Regionalism:

- Define what the “region” is; a “region” will differ depending on the issues
- Municipal and county governments sharing a vision and working together
- Combination of social and economic values
- Midlands – Richland, Lexington, Kershaw, Lee, and Fairfield counties
- Areas with a Columbia zip code
- Areas included by the Columbia water system
- Columbia, surrounding counties, municipalities
- Service coordination and cooperation is important

**Dialogue builds relationships, which then build trust.*

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The team was asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Regionalism and Intergovernmental Relations. In addition, they examined the external opportunities and threats to Regionalism and Intergovernmental Relations. What follows are their responses.

STRENGTHS	BENEFITS
Columbia Metropolitan Airport	Convenient to travelers, whether on business trips or personal trips; opportunity to grow and attract more business

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Fort Jackson and McEntire	Large military base; brings many out-of-state people and their families to the area
Colleges and Universities	Influx of visitors, students, and their families; research industries; funding
State Government	State politicians and leaders meet in Columbia; brings attention, revenue, etc. to the city
Location – central to South Carolina	Central to South Carolina and other areas
Interstates and Highways	Connect Columbia to the rest of the state, and to surrounding states and large cities; I-26, I-20, I-77
University Economic Development Clusters	Insurance Technology; Public Health Research; Nuclear Research; Fuel Cell Technology
University of South Carolina	Resource for economic growth (i.e. Innovista)
Relatively Stable Economy	Attractiveness to outsiders; beneficial to military and government entities
Tech Schools, Colleges	Provides job training to South Carolinians
Weather	People lose few work days as a result of extreme weather; 9 to 10 months with pleasant weather
Public Schools (K-12)	Attract families, especially young families
Parks	Improve quality of life; many located in Columbia
WEAKNESSES	IMPACT
Relatively Stable Economy	Challenges entrepreneurs and their businesses
Public Education and Schools (K-12)	Negative perception of the City of Columbia's schools; many people do not move directly into the city, but into surrounding areas for the "better" school districts
Lack of a shared vision for the city	A multi-lateral perspective is needed for growth and improvements to Columbia
Columbia Metropolitan Airport	Columbia lost a deal with Southwest Airlines to Charleston and Greenville; lack of cooperation by local and legislative leaders; as the Capital City, Columbia needs a strong, viable airport
Fractured local governments	Duplication of services
Realtors	Perception that there is no quality housing in the

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	city of Columbia and that the quality of the public school system is inferior in the city; important and influential people live outside the city
Lack of effective public transportation	Not sustainable and inclusive; high levels of traffic;
Competition from other cities	Columbia is not as competitive as it needs to be in comparison with other cities – Charlotte, Greenville, Charleston, etc.
Air Quality	Hurts economic development; the Midlands is a non-attainment area according to the EPA

OPPORTUNITIES	BENEFITS
Public Transportation	Good public transportation will positively benefit many different people; environmentally friendly; reduce traffic; reduce stress levels; trains, buses, shuttles, etc.
Trains and Railways as Transportation	There are already modern railways located near the interstates and highways around Columbia; reduction of traffic; can easily shuttle people into the city
The Mayor is the leader of the Midlands	He can be the face of many different projects to improve the city of Columbia
City/County Consolidation of Service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Law Enforcement 2. Opportunity for a Director of Transportation 3. Garbage Collection 4. Sewer Services
In-House Planning Committee	Employees could outline low-hanging, accessible and attainable goals for the Mayor
Parks and Recreation i.e. Congaree National Park	Can develop a plan to support the local park systems for residents and to attract tourists
Retirement Age Population Growth	Columbia has a large population of retired residents who contribute to the well-being of the city
Columbia Metropolitan Airport	If the airport and local political and business leaders realize/recognize the problems with the airports, and the negative impacts of these problems, the airport could be transformed into a positive asset to the city of Columbia

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THREATS	IMPACT
Lack of understanding of the need for public transportation	Cultural bias (associated with the poor); people do not realize the benefits of efficient public transportation
Lack of central in-house planning system	This is not in the best interest of the city or the counties; have been using consultants instead of city employees; great strategies but nothing happens
Competition from Charlotte and other large metropolitan cities	Many Columbia-area residents travel to Charlotte (and other cities) for work, for airports, for business opportunities, etc.
Lack of Efficiency	Columbia is not the most efficient city in South Carolina, despite being the capital city
Columbia's Image and Branding – currently inferior for the capital city of South Carolina	As the capital city, Columbia should be the defined brand of South Carolina; should reflect who and what is great about S.C.; must contrast the negatives and foolishness of recent months and years
Annexation Laws	County vs. City; emotional investment in certain issues; hurts local cooperation
Lack of a “Strong Mayor” i.e. Charleston's Mayor	The mayor is not the true Chief Executive but is held accountable for the operations of Columbia
Redefinition of the Mayor's job from “part-time” to “full-time”	The City Council could redefine the position; this would cause political problems, and likely would not be changed until after the next election(s); Columbia's Mayor works more than part-time for the city
Air Quality	Hurts economic development and threatens new business opportunities
Permits and Purchasing	The counties and the city conflict; it is hard for new businesses to get licenses and permits; the infrastructure for new businesses is not effective
Private Sector Growth	Private Sector growth has only been incremental in the past
Lack of Infrastructure for Businesses	There needs to be a tool or mechanism for which

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	local governments and municipalities raise and store funding for new businesses; will attract companies and businesses to the area; very important for the rural areas, because currently it is not monetarily feasible for business to move to rural areas around Columbia
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GOAL AREAS, OBJECTIVES, CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS & BARRIERS

Based on the assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the team identified four goal areas, measurable objectives for each plus critical success factors and barriers related to implementing those measurable objectives.

What follows are the team's four high-level goal areas.

High-level Goal # 1: Effective Public Transportation System			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Create more convenient and efficient routes (i.e. Direct lines from periphery to Columbia)			
Creation of economic opportunities and recreational benefits to encourage public transportation			
Show how beneficial public transportation will be to the environment			
Use trains/railways that are already in place as a form of public transportation			
The Midlands is a non-attainment area, according to the EPA; this rank can be an opportunity for dialogue about the need for better public transportation to improve the area's air quality			

GOAL 1: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 1: BARRIERS
Overcoming cultural biases	Association of public transportation with the poor
Making the routes efficient; a 21 st century bus system is needed	Lack of funding for public transportation – is federal money/funding available?
Realization that all public transportation systems operate at a loss, but are hugely beneficial	Lack of support from the public

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Work with the University bus systems	
The IRS provides Tax Codes for businesses that provide group transportation for their employees	

High-level Goal # 2: Consolidation of Services			
MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Consolidate Garbage Collection – the city uses employees, which are more expensive; the counties use contractors, which are less expensive			
Consolidate Solid Waste Collection			
Storm Water Run-Off, Water, Sewer			
Collective Purchasing			
Consolidation of Law Enforcement – there is a lot of duplication of services with the USC, Columbia, and Richland County police departments			
Director of Transportation			
Permits and Purchasing – intergovernmental agreements with local municipalities to save money, reduce duplication, and make it easier for new businesses to apply for permits and licenses			

GOAL 2: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 2: BARRIERS
Cooperation between city and county leaders	Must prove that consolidation saves money
Closing donut holes; preparing counties for the growth of the city	Director of Transportation dependent upon the passing of the proposed 1¢ sales tax
Must identify if the consolidation needs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agreement between administrators 2. A change to city or county codes 3. Change of city or county laws 4. Change to S.C. Laws or the S.C. Constitution 	The election of the Richland County Sheriff occurs every four years; consolidation of the police forces is contingent on who the Richland County Sheriff is; it would require changing S.C. Laws or the S.C. Constitution to change how the police system works in Columbia and Richland

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Must reestablish the credibility of the City of Columbia as an effective and functioning government	It would be necessary to bring in an outside planner to evaluate how to consolidate certain services
Must consolidate services that can be consolidated with easier methods (i.e. not changing S.C. laws)	
Show how well Columbia is doing with the already consolidated services (i.e. Fire Dept. and Animal Control) to justify consolidating other services	

High-level Goal #3: City and County Cooperation – Joint Planning Commission

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Building relationships that lead to city/county cooperation			
Joint city and county planning			
Having efficient customer service i.e. 911 dispatch			
Can reduce friction and close donut holes			

GOAL 3: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

GOAL 3: BARRIERS

Show that past cooperation was successful i.e. Colonial Center	Establishing goals that can be completed quickly without costing a lot of money
Must create lasting and effective relationships	Need a reduction of the “we vs. them” ideology
Driving economic development, sustainability, and quality of life in Columbia	

High-level Goal #4: Columbia Metropolitan Airport

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES	BASELINE	6 MONTHS	2 YRS
Columbia needs a viable airport			
Need low-cost carriers, lower fees			

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A better airport will attract businesses and airlines			
To be a first-class city, Columbia needs a first-class airport			

GOAL 4: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	GOAL 4: BARRIERS
Competition = lower prices	High parking prices
Business, Government, Public Cooperation	Many people drive to Charleston, Greenville, Charlotte, etc. for cheaper flights
Must recognize problems and the negative impacts	Lack of relationships between community leaders
Must pull groups together from Lexington and Richland counties	
Must involve local and state politicians to improve the Airport and make it more viable	

PRIORITIES

The team identified a set of strategies related to Goal Areas. What follows are the Early Opportunity Fruit Strategies with suggested timelines, the Top Priorities which could be initiated very good but completed in 6 – 24 months, and Recommendations for Future Consideration, a series of good ideas to consider as successes are achieved and circumstances change. This team will not initially produce either an action plan.

In the future, a team will identify specific potential strategies related each goal areas and action plans for their accomplishment which can be addressed in future planning sessions.

Early Opportunities (Next 6 Months)

EARLY OPPORTUNITIES	Owner	Timeframe
Consolidation of Services (i.e. Solid Waste, Garbage Collection)		Immediate
Mayor becoming a prominent spokesman on behalf of the many positive aspects of the city of Columbia		Immediate
City/County Joint Planning Commission		Immediate
Emphasize local parks and recreational opportunities; joint cooperation and intergovernmental agreements needed; eliminate		Immediate

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duplication of parks and recreation services; study the area's recreational needs		
Create a list of around 50 area leaders to work with the Mayor to make strategies, work together, and improve cooperation		Immediate
Develop a strategy to support operations with the Columbia Metropolitan Airport; gather support from other area leaders		
Begin a dialogue about the importance of improving public transportation		
Have City Council Meetings in the evenings to allow more people to attend and be involved in the community; improves transparency and accountability; have live streaming video of the meetings		
Use the Central Midlands Council of Governments (COG) to make leadership be more regional; improve the community's understanding of issues and the city's stance on issues		
Have the Mayor work with the Mayors of cities such as Orangeburg and Sumter, which are farther away from Columbia, but still directly impact Columbia; know what such cities contribute to Columbia (in terms of business, workers, commerce, tourism, etc.)		

Priority Recommendations (6 – 24 months)

6-24 MONTH STRATEGIES	Owner	Timeframe
Use Columbia's business relationships with outlying communities to improve Columbia (i.e. workers from Camden working in Columbia)		
Must make Columbia the most military-friendly community to ensure continued success and cooperation with Ft. Jackson and McEntire i.e. affordable housing near bases		
City and County Joint Economic Development Office -Hire an economic manager		
Public Transportation – Must be Effective, Inclusive, Efficient		
Creation of Water/Sewer Districts – the system needs repair; there is much growth around Columbia/the Midlands		
Transformation of Columbia from a strong City Manager		

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<p>government, to a strong Mayoral government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strong Chief Executive with a staff to implement ideas and changes; -fulltime Mayor with executive authority -the Mayor is accountable for carrying out what the Council approves -create a desire for a strong Mayoral system amongst voters; must be an informed discussion; will be personality-driven 		
<p>Emphasize the Congaree National Park both locally and nationally</p>		
<p>Find a model for sharing, responsibility, and authority in government that works; decide how each local government pays for services</p>		

Recommendations for Future Consideration

FUTURE CONSIDERATION	Owner
<p>High-Speed Railways connecting Columbia with other large cities</p>	