

# PROCESS

In August, 2011 City Council members and staff made the decision to update the strategic plan guiding the City of Columbia. A consultant with expertise in strategic planning (Colleen Bozard, ccbozard consulting) was engaged to facilitate the process. Each City Council member, staff leadership member and the Mayor were given the opportunity to meet individually with the consultant to convey their thoughts and concerns relating to the future of Columbia. In addition, community stakeholder input was solicited by the Mayor's office. An email request was distributed via the Mayor's email list serve to over 10,000 email accounts. Stakeholders responded to four basic questions:

1. What is your vision for the City of Columbia?
2. What factors exist that will help us succeed in achieving that vision?
3. What are the top three barriers to the City of Columbia's success?
4. What are the top three priority issues facing the City of Columbia today?

The input from this strategic analysis helped to guide the planning process. A two-day retreat was held September 12-13 to initiate the strategic planning process. In addition to reviewing the stakeholder input, Council recognized that much has changed in recent years that significantly affects the City. The national economic downturn, the slower pace of residential and commercial development and the City's ability to afford and deliver critical services has changed within the new fiscal environment. This strategic planning process considers these "new realities," and seeks the best path forward for the community.

As part of the process, the existing vision, mission and value statements were reviewed and modified to ensure ongoing relevance. Those in attendance then identified critical issues for the city, based on this input, and then created a three year strategic goals based on the data and information presented. Staff then participated in crafting strategies and measurements to achieve these goals. The goal statements, strategies, and indicators of performance included in this strategic plan result from that input. Once approved by the Council, staff will develop action plans to identify how each department will work to support achieving the goals appropriate to their work on an annual basis.

There are four goals included in this Strategic Plan. Each goal is intended to support the larger vision for the City and to point the way of progress toward that vision. The goals for Columbia are frequently interrelated. Success achieved in any one goal area likely has a corresponding positive effect in another goal area.