

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the long-term welfare of the citizens of a municipality can only be achieved when local governments provide a framework that offers direction and focus on issues that are critically important to improving the city and that also set priorities and determine a course for progress. Recognizing this need, the City of Columbia has created a three-year strategic plan that charts a course for success by providing a blueprint that will determine Columbia's future.

This strategic plan has been developed in collaboration and in partnership with the Columbia community. It is a carefully planned effort to advance Columbia toward the future we envision for our community. The strategic plan offers direction and focus on issues that are critically important to improving our city. The plan sets priorities, determines a course for progress and includes indicators that measure progress for each of the strategic goals. This strategic plan is a methodical way to go about achieving the vision and goals set by the Mayor and City Council.

As we move forward to implement the direction offered by this strategic plan, the Columbia City Council affirms its commitment to the plan's goals, objectives and initiatives. Council directs that City staff consider the strategic plan when developing, implementing or reviewing the delivery of public services, and in presenting requests for fiscal resources. Any investment in the City's financial resources, physical infrastructure, and staff must be directed by the plan outlined in this document. To maintain a strong economic base and fund reserve by ensuring that the provision of government services is done responsively, responsibly, and cost-effectively, the City of Columbia's strategic planning will play a crucial role in the annual budget process. These goals also assist the City Council in assessing the impact of local decision-making on the City.

Each strategic plan goal addresses specific issues and is measured by specific outcomes, which (in part) provide an outline for what must be done to realize the goal. Each goal will be implemented by strategic initiatives that specifically state measurable objectives.

The City of Columbia has a vision for the future. This document is a comprehensive listing of the goals, objectives, strategies, tasks, and performance targets the City will strive to meet to assist with bringing the Mayor and City Council's vision to life.