

## J. Governance and Decision Making

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This chapter details the Vision Statement, goal, and strategies developed by the Governance and Decision Making Citizen Topic Group. They looked at one specific subtopic:

- Subtopic: Structure

The Governance and Decision Making Vision Statement is as follows:

***“Columbia’s governance is a model of transparency, efficiency, and citizen participation that enjoys the strong confidence of its residents.”***

Structure

Goal:  
Columbia’s governance is a model of transparency, efficiency, and citizen participation that enjoys the strong confidence of its residents.

Strategies and Action Plans

**Strategy 1: Create a responsive integrated City system with clear access points to direct inquiries, suggestions, and complaints.**

**Action Plan**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |   |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>   |
|   |   |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly advertise and promote access points</li> <li>A system that will record and identify each contact</li> <li>A system that will track delegation and progress</li> <li>A system that will respond within 3 business days</li> </ul> |

**Strategy 2: Create and implement a City customer service policy that includes a tracking system. Each department should tailor their plan accordingly.**

**Action Plan**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |   |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>   |
|   |   |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish customer standards for each service provided</li> <li>Evaluate compliance with published service standards</li> <li>Evaluate the standards twice a year</li> <li>Each department shall establish expanded hours of service to enhance public access</li> </ul> |

**Strategy 3: Enhance collaboration between City departments.**

**Action Plan**

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|---|--|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |  |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>  |
|   |  |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departments shall communicate to one another on an annual basis what is needed from other departments to ensure each department may achieve its mission</li> <li>Develop a list of services which require action from multiple departments</li> <li>Establish systems of interdepartmental cooperation which improves the delivery of the services to its citizens</li> </ul> |

**Strategy 4: Enhance and facilitate the use of neighborhood associations.**

**Action Plan**

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|---|---|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |   |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>   |
|   |   |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>  |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide technology</li> <li>• Provide a platform for neighborhood association newsletter (e.g. website)</li> </ul> |

**Strategy 5: Establish a system of ongoing reviews of the activities of boards, commissions, and task forces.**

**Action Plan**

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|---|--|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |  |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>  |
|   |  |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular progress reports on specific recommendations by the boards, commissions and tasks forces</li> <li>• Create a tracking system for specific actions recommended by boards, commissions, and task forces</li> <li>• Annual verbal public report by each board, commission, and task force to the City Council</li> </ul> |

**Strategy 6: Increase the size of the City Council and provide compensation and other support to council members.**

**Action Plan**

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|---|--|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |  |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>  |
|   |  |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the council appoint a committee to investigate increasing the number of wards</li> <li>• Encourage the council appoint a committee to investigate compensation for council</li> <li>• City should provide support staff and money to better enable council members to communicate with their constituency. This should include, but is not limited to, planned public constituency meetings</li> <li>• City should provide space for council to allow for office hours</li> </ul> |

**Strategy 7: Anticipate future needs, and review and determine the best way to finance City operations, improvements, and infrastructure over the next 20-25 years.**

**Action Plan**

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|---|--|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |  |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>  |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage council to appoint a broad-based study group to analyze best ways to finance operations, improvements, physical, social and economic infrastructure with a 25-year horizon. Present options to address needs and available revenue sources</li> </ul> |

**Strategy 8: Increase the accountability of the City administration to the City Council and the public.**

**Action Plan**

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|---|--|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |  |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>  |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an independent citizen review board for the Columbia Police Department</li> <li>Encourage City Council to take a more active role in the audit process</li> <li>Encourage the City Council to take control of its own agenda, work flow, and work load</li> <li>Encourage the council to make itself a part of the search committee to work with the City Manager in recruiting and hiring all Department Heads</li> <li>Develop and implement a plan to ensure racial and ethnic diversity within City administration</li> <li>Encourage City Manager to solicit input from City Council members on the performance of all Department Heads as part of the City Manager’s annual performance evaluation of all Department Heads</li> <li>Establish a storm water utility commission</li> </ul> |

**Strategy 9: Increase collaboration and coordination between the City and the County.**

**Action Plan**

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|---|--|
| <b>Who should take the lead:</b>        |  |
| <b>Who else should be involved:</b>     | <b>Potential roles:</b>  |
| <b>How to jumpstart implementation:</b> | <b>Other recommended action steps:</b>   |
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annually publish a summary of high level interactions between City and County</li> <li>Encourage similar City and County departments, boards, and commissions to meet, at least quarterly, to discuss common issues</li> <li>Encourage City and County to publicly communicate to one another on an annual basis what is needed from each other to allow each party to achieve its mission</li> </ul> |