



## Create Columbus Commission (Columbus' Young Professionals Commission)

### 2007 - 2008 Annual Report

#### Background

In April of 2007, Rebecca Ryan of Next Generation Consulting recommended a work plan for Columbus that highlighted three strategies related to the young professionals demographic: "convince the convincibles; connect YPs to each other and to the City; and build a City that's a Talent Magnet for Young Professionals." Under the latter strategy, she recommended that "Mayor Coleman appoint a YP Commission – including transplants from large cities outside Ohio – to serve as his 'pulse' and sounding board on city quality of life issues."

The YP Commission, now referred to as the Create Columbus Commission, was formed on May 24, 2007 by Mayor Michael B. Coleman, City of Columbus, City Council Member Kevin L. Boyce, City of Columbus, and Ty D. Marsh, President and CEO, Columbus Chamber.

The members of the Create Columbus Commission (Commission) are defined as those who are "young" (e.g., 40 and younger) artists, entrepreneurs and professionals, and who are residents or employed in the Columbus metropolitan area. In addition, the Commission consists of individuals that are representative of the broad and diverse community of businesses, organizations and governments, as well as social, ethnic, and arts groups throughout the Columbus region.

#### Purpose, Mission and Vision

**Purpose** | *identify strategies and tactics to better attract and retain young and talented individuals in Columbus*

**Mission** | *identify what already makes Columbus a great place to live, work and play; identify what else needs to be done to expand upon the city's positive attributes; plan it, make it happen, then market it; be champions for issues of importance to the young professional community – so that we can make Columbus an even better place for talented young people to live, work and play*

**Vision** | *for Columbus to both be a great place to live, work and play, and to be perceived externally as a great place to live, work and play*

#### Accomplishments and Activities

In its first year, the Commission has already made several accomplishments and participated in various activities:

- Participated in a half-day centering retreat to brainstorm how to be more effective by:
  - drafting purpose, mission and vision statements
  - establishing four focused working groups (Arts and Culture, Communication and Collaboration, Economic Development and Transportation)
- Renamed itself the Create Columbus Commission to better reflect its purpose, mission and vision
- Established a collaborative relationship with the leaders of local young professionals organizations

More information about the Create Columbus Commission can be found at [www.columbus.org](http://www.columbus.org).

- Met with Mayor Coleman following the streetcar public meeting on March 27, 2008 where he charged the Commission to plan and execute a citizens' streetcar advocacy campaign
- Partnered with OSU urban and regional planning graduate class to redevelop East Franklinton
- Adopted by-laws to guide its operations at the April 7, 2008 meeting

## Looking Ahead

Now in its second year with 35 re-committed Commissioners serving a two-year term from May 2008 until May 2010, the Commission is focused to improve Columbus for young professionals in the areas of **Arts and Culture, Communication and Collaboration, Economic Development and Transportation.**

- The objective of the **Arts and Culture** working group is to promote and encourage arts and cultural initiatives in Columbus. Currently, this group is dedicated to promoting the Artspace initiative that will bring more artist live/work space to the area. This group has brainstormed future project ideas such as board/volunteer facilitation at local arts and cultural organizations and filling vacant downtown storefronts with local artwork.
- The objective of the **Communication and Collaboration** working group is to serve as a Commission connection to the YP community. In addition, this group will manage all external communications on behalf of the Commission and tell a compelling story of Columbus so that our specific YP audience, those we want to attract and retain, are engaged. Currently, this group is committed to host monthly welcome events for recent relocatees in partnership with YP organizations. Also, this group will assist the Columbus Chamber's YP Ambassadors Program advisory board with executing the pilot program.
- The objective of the **Economic Development** working group is to support, promote and raise the profile of young entrepreneurs in Columbus. Future projects this group will explore include: seeking ways to create mentorship opportunities for young entrepreneurs, hosting meet-and-greet events and leadership development seminars and establishing a young entrepreneurs advisory board.
- The objective of the **Transportation** working group is to explore and advocate alternative modes of transportation for the Columbus community. This group focused on developing a citizens' streetcar advocacy campaign and will continue to build support through grassroots methods. Individuals in the working group have helped to assemble various citizen groups to be educated on the streetcars proposal.

In addition, other focus areas include **East Franklinton and Recycling.**

- The **East Franklinton** working group partnered with The Ohio State University's urban and regional planning graduate class to produce plans to redevelop East Franklinton. The students presented their recommended redevelopment plans on May 21, 2008 to Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Ty Marsh, developers, other community leaders and residents. John Carney led this effort in partnership with OSU students. Other members of the Commission played a role in the East Franklinton project as well.
- **Recycling** in the downtown area continues to be a focus for Elizabeth Lessner. She has worked with Capital Crossroads/Special Improvements District to pilot a downtown recycling program. In June 2008, Elizabeth and John Carney met with Councilmember Tyson, Councilmember O'Shaughnessy, Public Service Director Kelsey, Mayor Coleman's Environmental Steward Susan Ashbrook, Mike Long of SWACO and others to discuss adding recycling receptacles to downtown and City parks. In addition, they discussed designated drop-off locations for cardboard and glass along High Street, and from downtown through Clintonville. Elizabeth has been involved in the GreenSpot launch and implementation.

## Current Create Columbus Commission members

**Lourdes Barroso de Padillia**

Executive Director  
City Year Columbus

**Robert Bickis, Jr.**

Real Estate Consultant/Broker  
reSource Real Estate

**Justin T. Bickle**

Corporate Site Location Manager  
Columbus Chamber of Commerce

**Haley Boehning**

Vice President, Internal  
Communications and Events  
Limited Brands

**Michael S. Brown**

Urban Ventures Coordinator  
City of Columbus, Office of Mayor  
Michael B. Coleman

**John Patrick Carney (Co-chair)**

Health Care Attorney  
Porter, Wright, Morris & Arthur

**Brian Cheek**

Tourism Sales Manager  
Experience Columbus

**Kate Christobek**

1<sup>st</sup> year Law Student at the Moritz  
College of Law  
The Ohio State University

**Darci L. Congrove**

Director, Tax & Business Advisory  
Services  
GBQ Partners LLC

**Joel Diaz**

Outreach & Marketing Manager  
Wexner Center for the Arts

**Walker Evans**

Founder  
ColumbusUnderground.com

**Abdirizak Farah**

Coordinator, New American Initiative  
City of Columbus, Community  
Relations Commission

**Nicole L. Farrell (Co-chair)**

Director of Development, Office  
of External Relations  
Fisher College of Business at  
The Ohio State University

**Maurice Hall**

Sports Analyst and Executive  
Team Leader  
NBC-4 and Target Corporation

**Stefphanie Renee Harper**

Outreach Manager, TechStart  
Tech Columbus

**Shanda R. Harris**

Project Specialist  
Small Business Development  
Center

**Chuck Hootman**

Owner and Operator of  
CycloSPACE, Co-owner of Tip  
Top, Property Manager

**Regina K. Johnson**

Principal & CEO  
Afire Enterprises LLC

**Elizabeth Lessner**

CEO  
Betty's Fine Food and Spirits,  
Dirty Franks, Surly Girl Saloon  
and Tip Top Kitchen and  
Cocktails

**Jon Myers**

Designer, Entrepreneur,  
Business-owner  
Texture Media Group

**Yakima Nelson**

Legislative Analyst  
City of Columbus, City Council

**Cinnamon D. Pelly**

Vice President, Community  
Relations  
JPMorgan Chase

**Karac Ruleau**

Promotions Director  
CD101

**Greg Schultz**

Legislative Liaison, Department of  
Administrative Services  
State of Ohio

**Oyango A. Snell (Co-chair)**

Attorney, Government  
Affairs/Insurance  
Bricker & Eckler, LLP

**Liz Sonnanstine**

Manager, Programming and Small  
Business Council  
Columbus Chamber of Commerce

**Heather Starck**

Director, Grange Insurance Audubon  
Center  
Audubon Ohio

**Kelly Stevelt Kaser**

Manager, OSU Urban Arts Space  
The Ohio State University

**Emily Swartzlander**

Director of Marketing and  
Communication  
Greater Columbus Arts Council

**Long Xuan Tran**

Associate Producer  
trilogy 333

**Mike Valo**

Investment Consultant  
Huntington

**Josue Vicente**

Executive Director  
Ohio Hispanic Coalition

**Antone White**

Communications Specialist  
City of Columbus, Office of Mayor  
Michael B. Coleman

**Kalitha Williams**

Campaign Finance  
Ohio Secretary of State

**TyKiah Wright**

Executive Director  
WrightChoice, Inc.