

The Y in Central Maryland. For a better us.

Vision 2025: All in on Community

Introduction

The work on this strategic plan began in earnest in January of 2020 (with a comprehensive new youth development strategy having been developed the year before). In March of 2020, the world was essentially shut down due to COVID-19, and so all work on this plan was put aside while we scrambled to both serve the community in new ways and survive the devastating financial impact that the pandemic wrought.

While this pandemic isn't by any means over, it's fair to say that the world and this community isn't focused on it on a daily basis. For better or worse, we are all living with it and navigating all that it's wrought over the past two plus years. While it could be argued that developing a multi-year strategic plan even now is ill-advised, it seems there is nothing that helps clarify purpose quite like emerging from the eye of the storm. We believe that we need to put a stake in the ground and declare a clear direction forward. As such, a group of volunteer and associate leaders of the Y in Central Maryland have worked diligently since the beginning of 2022 to chart a path forward for our Y, one that meets the moment in a big way.

As we look across our country and community, we see several clear challenges, among them a lingering public health crisis, growing income and opportunity inequality, too many children and youth who are struggling academically, socially and mentally, rising levels of violent crime, inflation and a looming recession, significantly changed consumer habits, an implosion in the labor market, and, obviously, an increasingly polarized, intolerant and isolated political and social landscape.

As we look at our Y, we see a corresponding set of clear challenges as well, including continuing financial challenges leading to resource constraints and a need to do more with less, escalating costs and diminished operating margins, higher levels of consumer price sensitivity which is placing real limits on discretionary spending, escalating labor costs,

high associate turnover, hundreds of open positions, and significant associate burnout, and our most publicly visible offering – membership – at only 75% of previous levels and not generating appreciable operating margins. Our Y continues to experience negative cash flows due to the wreckage the pandemic has wrought on our business model, and so we have significant work to do to return to the level of financial performance that will give us confidence that we can meet all of our financial obligations both in the present and into the future.

Not a pretty picture, as they say.

Yet it is this very landscape which informs this plan and cements our resolve to meet this moment. Why? We have unrivaled scope, scale and human capital in our service to Central Maryland's communities, families and youth. Our brand remains as strong as ever, and our work throughout this pandemic has only enhanced our brand equity. We have attracted significant new donors and governmental funding over the past year, adding to our already strong base for support. Despite the extreme financial impact of COVID, we have seen members, families and youth return to the Y in impressive numbers. Market research and our on-going feedback systems have underscored consistent themes of the Y's importance to people's and families' lives, and their need for community, safety and well-being. And, most importantly, we have a unique offering – Y membership – that we can elevate to both meet the community's need for a greater sense of inclusion and belonging in this moment as well as to accelerate our return to financial health.

Throughout this plan you will see that we keep coming back to the Y's unique ability, through all we do, to create a real sense of belonging and inclusion in our community. It is a clarion call for Y membership to take the next step and for it to become, through clear intentionality and a change in the way we think and operate, the unifying hub of Y community life. Everything we do can and will lead to membership, a springboard for the tightening of human connections; for building and strengthening richly diverse, inclusive and supportive communities.

So, why are we placing Y membership at the core of our strategy? There are many reasons for that. It is our least transactional offering (it isn't time-limited and designed to meet one specific need) that best addresses the crisis of a lack of a connected and inclusive community, as it brings people of all ages and walks of life together over long periods of time and meets people's and family's needs as they evolve and age over the years. Additionally, it is one our most "inclusive" offerings today, serving the broadest segment of the community across social, economic and racial lines. When you think about it, Y membership meets many of the needs of families and youth that we're serving in most of our youth development programs beyond the time when they access a particular program, and is the logical next step from "program-specific Y engagement" to "long-term

Y engagement." There is also an economic reality about Y membership. Due to the nature of the "business model" associated with Y membership, it has historically driven our organization's economic engine and will need to do so again in the future as we are to return to sound financial footing in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

This plan calls for a heightened focus and investment in the happiness, success and well-being of Y associates, on which the success of this plan rests. At the same time, this plan recognizes the limitations of our resources and therefore requires that we build on existing core assets rather than thinly stretching ourselves into new territory, whether geographic or programmatic. Finally, this plan requires absolute fidelity and transparent accountability to our mission, values, resources, to one another and to the world around us.

The Current Landscape: The Context for Our Work

We reviewed a range of social and economic data to better inform our work in developing our new strategy. Some of those data points include:

Disparities in Access to Health Services

A gap of up to 160%* in metro Baltimore vs surrounding counties for those with/without health insurance

* a particular problem among males and African Americans

• An Unprecedented, Sustained Public Health Crisis

Confirmed Cases of COVID in Central Maryland: 480,000+ (as of 6/15/22)

High Rates of Poverty

From 3-25% of all residents of Central Maryland live substantially below or near the federal poverty level

• A Deep Need For Community in a Time of Increased Social Isolation

48% of Marylanders cite the need for greater human connectivity and community (May 2022 Market Survey); 36% of all Americans—including 61% of young adults and 51% of mothers with young children—feel "serious loneliness." (Harvard School of Education, 2021)

Rising Levels of Racism

The overall number of reported incidents of hate crimes increased by 949 in 2020, contributing to a total of 8,263 hate crime incidents against 11,126 victims in 2020. 62% of victims were targeted because of the offenders' bias toward race/ethnicity/ancestry, which continues to be the largest bias motivation category. (FBI Hate Crimes Report 2021)

A National Workforce Crisis

A Y employment vacancy rate of 29% (as of 6/11/22) reflects a national trend and hiring crisis. Particularly acute workforce challenges are seen in the Y's licensed youth development programs like Head Start, preschool and Before & After School Enrichment, with hundreds of open positions. Nationally, labor force participation rates are down to levels not seen since the late 1970s.

Recovering From and Rising to the Challenge of a Global Pandemic

Just as the challenges this plan aims to address are not new, neither did the Y's focus on them suddenly arise. In fact, over the last two plus years so many of the issues cited here have become even more pronounced, significant new work has been undertaken which begins to address them and which form the basis of this plan, building on more than 15 years of investment in our community. A few of the highlights of that work include:

- The development of a major food distribution program including the opening of two food pantries, with more planned, and over one million meals distributed to those throughout central Maryland who struggle with food insecurity
- The launching of a Y based Covid vaccine program enabling over 3,000 community members to receive free vaccinations against this deadly virus
- During the March June 2020 pandemic shut-down, 15 Y sites were repurposed as care sites for the children of first responders and other essential workers, so their parents could care for others.
- Recognizing that children weren't meant to learn virtually, the Y opened 20
 Academic Support Centers across the region providing safe, in-person support for virtual lessons
- Bringing together more than 13,000 people in real community to participate in the 2021 Y Turkey Trot Charity 5K, the Y also raised over \$700,000 to support more participation in Y community life
- Fighting back from a 50% decline in membership due to the pandemic, the Y has welcomed back over half the number of those members that left since our low point in February 2021, uniting people from all walks of life, ages and backgrounds in community, health, purpose and belonging.

Strategic Planning Process

As noted above, the Y in Central Maryland began a strategic planning process in early 2020, but that planning process was abandoned in the face of the Covid pandemic and the need for the organization to pivot and respond to current conditions. As the organization

and the world began to re-emerge from the pandemic, the Y Maryland was determined to relaunch its strategic planning process.

In anticipation of restarting the strategic planning process, the Y's board discussed and then approved five guiding principles to use as a focus for the strategic plan. Those were as follows:

- We will continue to uphold and promote our core values in everything we do
- We will expand our and the community's notion of what Y membership means; emphasizing its critical role in creating connected, inclusive, and healthy communities
- We will invest in and seek support for our core:
 - Our existing youth development programming
 - Our existing Y family centers
 - The neighborhoods and communities we're already serving
 - Our associates
- We will continue to rebuild our financial capacity and model to ensure that we are less susceptible to future unexpected economic and/or public health challenges
- We will be a better, more equitable, inclusive and nimble organization

Due to the criticality of setting a course for the future, it was decided that the planning process should take no more than six months and that the plan should cover the remainder of 2022 through the end of 2025 (roughly three and a half years). Additionally, it was agreed that the plan would remain "dynamic," so that it can be regularly revisited and updated on a real-time basis as we move forward.

With the board's blessing, the strategic planning process was relaunched in January 2022, with the Y's Chief Strategy Officer Derryck Fletcher serving as the internal lead, supported by consultant Ann Quinn from Quinn Strategy Group. The strategic planning process included the following:

- Convened a committee of 17 Y associate leaders to move the work forward
- Conducted an environmental scan and data analysis identifying the macro external challenges impacting the Y's near term future
- Did a SWOT Analysis of the organization
- Designed a visioning exercise to identify mission strategies
- Facilitated multiple input sessions with the Y's board and all of the board committees, Y associates, and external stakeholder groups
- Involved the Y's senior leadership team at key points in the process to incorporate ideas and receive feedback

Mission, Vision and Focus

Mission Statement

As this work began, we stepped back and looked at the Y in Central Maryland's longtime mission statement to determine whether it warranted change or not. Despite everything that has changed in our community, our world and our Y over the many years since it was last changed, we agreed that it remained relevant, inspiring and appropriate. As such, our mission statement remains as is:

The Y is a charitable organization in Central Maryland dedicated to developing the full potential of every individual through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Vision Statement

The Y's current vision statement, developed as part of the Impact 2020 strategic plan developed in 2015, reads as follows:

Impacting over 350,000 Central Marylanders, the Y will provide bold leadership in advancing a holistic approach to well-being that strengthens the community's commitment to healthy living, youth development and social responsibility. We will actively engage the community to measurably improve well-being and the value of the Y in the lives of families, individuals and communities throughout Central Maryland.

While there is much about this vision statement that remains relevant, it became clear that a new one was needed to meet the most pressing needs of our community and our Y. A new vision statement was developed, which is broken up in two sections, one that is appropriate for all audiences, including the public, given that it describes "what" our vision is, with the second section describing "how" we intend to achieve that public vision. The second section will be reserved, from a communications perspective, for internal audiences.

New Vision Statement - Public Portion (the "what"):

The Y will build a more inclusive and connected Central Maryland community in which Y membership creates a sense of belonging, engagement, empathy, health, and well-being for all. This inclusion and connection will impact people and families more deeply across all of the Y's points of access.

Additional Wording for Internal Purposes (the "how"):

We will optimize our core strengths and assets, creating a workplace culture which values the well-being of our associates and motivates, appreciates and rewards their work. This will all be achieved in a manner which enables the sustainability of the organization well into the future.

Statement of Focus

As part of our previous strategic plan, Impact 2020, we developed a statement of focus, which we publicly display in all of our sites, to publicly communicate what it is that we believe, focus on, and are trying to deliver to the community. That reads as follows:

At the Y, we are committed to providing family-oriented, affordable, high quality programs that focus on Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility.

The Y is a place for everyone. People of all races, ages, faiths, genders, abilities, backgrounds and incomes are welcome and financial assistance on a sliding scale is available to those who would otherwise be unable to participate.

We believe that this statement of focus remains largely on target. However, we've rewritten the final sentence to more clearly indicate that we will be more intentional in ensuring that the Y is a place for everyone.

<u>Updated Statement of Focus</u>

At the Y, we are committed to providing family-oriented, affordable, high quality programs that focus on building inclusive, connected communities through Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility.

The Y is a place for everyone. People of all races, ages, faiths, gender, abilities, backgrounds and incomes are embraced and financial assistance is provided to actively engage the entirety of the community.

Values

The Y's longstanding values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility have been and will remain the bedrock of our culture, both in how we engage with the community and how we treat each other. As such, we do not believe that there should be any change in the Y's values. However, as we worked through this strategic plan, we realized that our Y values were both necessary but also insufficient in communicating externally and internally what this new strategy is about and what we need to emphasize culturally to achieve our ambitions. As such, once the plan was largely finished, we came back to the issue of what we're calling "cultural norms" and have developed a set of five norms that we believe need to be called out. The first cultural norm is "living by our core values," reinforcing that these are not in conflict, but rather start with our longstanding core values.

Please see below where we landed on cultural norms.

Mission Strategies, Objectives and Measurements

After reflecting on the board-approved guiding principles that are the foundation of this plan, the newly developed vision statement, the external and internal factors discussed above, and the clear agreement that our strategy needed to be built upon expanding our notion of membership in order to create a greater sense of connectedness in the communities we serve, we developed four mission strategies and an associated set of objectives and measurements for each strategy that form the core of this strategic plan. They are as follows:

Mission Strategy 1: Membership in the Y will create a stronger sense of belonging, inclusion and well-being

Y Membership is the terminology used to describe everyone who engages with the Y across all programs and sites, reflecting the Y's fundamental belief that belonging to a supportive, diverse and caring network of people is core to creating strong communities and well-being.

Objectives:

- We will redesign Y membership to be our universal offering; everyone who engages with the Y programmatically will be a member and will be treated as such;
- Y membership will support the central vision of inspiring in people and families a strong sense of belonging to a connected, inclusive, and healthy community;
- Y membership will become far more "sticky" by being more essential to families and people; those who initially become members through a youth development program will find Y membership so compelling that they will see the value of and remain a Y member well beyond that initial Y experience;
- Through more intentional outreach, engagement and programming, the Y membership community will more fully reflect the rich diversity of the Central Maryland region we serve;
- We will align our organizational culture, systems and processes to reinforce the centrality of membership and the interconnectedness of all our Y programmatic offerings.

Measurements:

- We will develop an index that measures the relationship between the diversity of our membership compared to the diversity of the community we serve by 12/31/22. We will establish a baseline by 12/31/23 and then establish a goal to improve that metric by 12/31/25
- We will add a question to our Listen360 surveys in late 2022 that measures members' feeling of the Y being a connected, inclusive, and healthy community for

- them, establish a baseline metric in 2023 and then establish a goal to increase that metric by 12/31/25
- Increase membership retention from 67% (as of 4/30/22) to 72.0% (as of 12/31/25)
- Increase drafting membership units from 33,416 (as of 6/30/22) to 42,000 (as of 12/31/25)
- Increase the three month retention of members who currently receive "complimentary" memberships due to their participation in a youth development program (i.e. preschool, before & after school enrichment, Head Start and mentoring) from 3.3% (as of 6/30/22) to 25% (as of 12/31/25); for those participating in youth development programs that don't currently receive a "complimentary" membership but will starting in 2023 (i.e. community schools, etc.), we will establish a baseline retention rate in 2023 and then establish a goal to significantly increase that retention rate by 12/31/2025.

Mission Strategy 2: Optimize and Grow our Core Assets and Resources

We will optimize and grow our core by building on our existing work and assets, replicating and scaling our successes, focusing on serving the full diversity of the communities we already serve, and making resource decisions that evaluate return on investment in the context of strategic, financial and equity considerations.

Objectives:

- Have a growth mindset by focusing not on new programs or facilities, but rather by scaling and replicating existing programs and strategically investing in our existing facilities to improve their impact;
- Focus our limited investment resources on systems, infrastructure, and associates that leverage our ability to accomplish and measure our strategy;
- Fully adopt and implement the Y's previously developed youth development and health equity strategies across all of the Y's points of service, ensuring that we are nimble enough to address the differentiated needs of the diverse communities we serve;
- Evolve our quality and outcome metrics to better manage the efficacy of our work and to enhance our investment decision-making process;
- Manage the organization in a manner that emphasizes that healthy living, youth development, and social responsibility are not programmatically separated activities but rather tightly integrated, mutually reinforcing, and foundational pillars that inform all of our work.

Measurements:

- (Process) Identify 3 to 5 key outcome measures that will quantify mission impact for use in ROI and growth metrics (by 12/31/22).
- Establish baseline metrics for youth development work in the areas of health/safety, relationships/belonging, achievement/character, and meaning/giving (by 12/31/22). Improve metrics by 20% (as of 12/31/25).
- Establish baseline indicators of health and well-being for members enrolled in relevant Y programs (by 12/31/22). Improve metrics by 20% (as of 12/31/25).
- Grow number served in our core programs and/or services by 20% (as of 12/31/25)

Mission Strategy 3: Become the 'Go-To' Workplace to Make Change and ThriveThe Y will be a trusted, fair employer in the Central Maryland region that successfully attracts, retains, and develops a diverse talent pool reflective of the communities we serve while providing a work environment that consistently and equitably motivates, values and rewards its associates.

Objectives:

- Boldly articulate the Y's employment brand and align organizational policies and practices to unequivocally stand for social responsibility, equity, community building and well-being; one that is inclusive of and relevant to all sectors of the communities we serve;
- Develop and implement an internal workforce development strategy that allows us to hire diverse and "non-traditional" candidates, including many of the young people we already serve, and support them in building a career at the Y;
- Focus the Y associate experience on creating an equitable sense of belonging and well-being while having the opportunity to make positive change;
- Continuously focus on the development of the Y's supervisor-level leaders as a primary means of improving the Y associate experience;
- Ensure that the Y's compensation and recognition approaches are competitive in a rapidly evolving labor market while also aligning with the strategic vision and objectives.

Measurements:

- Increase the % of the workforce that is full-time from 29% (as of 4/30/22) to 50% (as of 12/31/25)
- Reduce associate turnover

- Reduce the full-time associate turnover rate from 32.9% (as of 5/31/22) to 20.0% (as of 12/31/25)
- \circ Reduce the part-time associate turnover rate from 63.4% (as of 5/31/22) to 40.0% (as of 12/31/25)
- Improve associate engagement:
 - \circ Increase the mean Gallup associate engagement score from 3.72 (as of 4/30/22) to 4.25 (as of 12/31/25)
 - Increase the mean Gallup supervisor engagement score from 3.76 (as of 4/30/22) to 4.25 (as of 12/31/25)
 - Increase the associate NPS score from 0 (as of 4/30/22) to 15 (as of 12/31/25)
- We will develop an index that measures the relationship between the diversity of our workforce compared to the diversity of the community we serve by 12/31/22. We will establish a baseline by 12/31/23 and then establish a goal to improve that metric by 12/31/25.

Mission Strategy 4: Rebuild Our Financial Health by Evolving Our Business Model We will be highly disciplined in leveraging our scarce resources to align with our mission, strategic priorities, and commitment to justice and equity because this will afford us the organizational capacity to have meaningful mission impact.

Objectives:

- Rebuild our membership base, but with a much broader concept of what membership is and who it serves; membership is the strategic and financial bedrock of our organization and in the wake of COVID it will be through reimagining it that we return it to its financial viability;
- Increase philanthropic giving (particularly undesignated giving) through a strengthened base of support aligned with the repositioned, more inclusive Y membership experience;
- Optimize the financial and operational opportunities of creating a more engaged membership base; one that doesn't view themselves as purchasing services needed for the short-term but rather as engaging in the Y's recast membership experience for the long-term;
- Invest in capital assets with a primary focus on ensuring the long-term quality and viability of our existing services and facilities, while avoiding capital investments that will not yield positive returns in the relative near term;
- Continuously evaluate all of the Y's programs, sites, partnerships and operational practices, and never shy away from making difficult decisions regarding the continuance of financially and/or strategically dubious work or the re-engineering of operational inefficiencies.

Measurements:

- Increase our GAAP-adjusted operating margin from \$0.7M (budgeted for 2022) to \$7.0M (as of 12/31/25)
- Increase cash flow from operations (excluding capital) from -\$1.36M (budgeted in 2022) to \$5.0M in 2025
- Exceed all debt service coverage requirements (will not meet them in 2022)
- Increase unrestricted annual giving from \$4M (budgeted for 2022) to \$6M in 2025
- Fund capital depreciation on an annual basis with at least \$2M in investment from cash flow (excluding equipment)

Cultural Norms

As noted above, after working through this strategic plan and thinking about how our organization will need to evolve in order to make this strategy come to life, we identified five cultural norms that we think will need to be front of mind for all of the Y's associates and volunteers as we move forward. We also believe that for most of those who engage with this plan, these cultural norms may end up being the thing that they remember most. It's hard for most people to remember vision statements, strategies or objectives, but five clear and concise cultural norms will be harder to forget and, perhaps, a simpler way to move our strategy forward. They are:

Living by our core values

Everything we do will continue to be guided by our core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Equity

As an organization founded on the unshakeable belief in the great human potential that lies within each of us, we will work toward equity and inclusion in all we do.

Community

Building diverse, collaborative and happy communities is the principal way we will accomplish our mission and strategy as strong communities are the foundation for all facets of health and well-being, for all.

Stewardship

Our core values compel us to always be good stewards of our resources and knowledge, of the world around us, and of each other.

Accountability

We believe in being accountable and transparent in how we engage with the community and each other, and we do so with grace and humility.

There are going to be myriad implications for our organization due to this strategic plan,

perhaps far too many to innumerate here. However, some critical ones that are readily apparent as we embark upon the beginning of the process of utilizing this vision and strategy as the clear framework for how we run the organization include the following:

- This will represent a significant shift in the Y's delivery and pricing model and we will need to further refine our analytical tools to ensure that we do that well
- It will require a shift in the language, operational approach, processes and, over time, systems we use to support our work
- We will need to actively embrace cultural norms that build upon, and expand beyond, our four core values; these norms are actively exhibited today by many, but we need to be more intentional in "baking" them into our culture
- We will need to move away from thinking about our "product lines" as distinct service offerings with somewhat overlapping audiences, but as a means to an end – which is to build a more diverse, inclusive and larger membership community
- We will need to reinvent "Open Doors" to ensure our promise of inclusion, and raise more unrestricted funds to pay for it
- We will need to be diligent in identifying underserved and/or underrepresented groups within the Y community and be more imaginative in how we reach out to them and achieve our vision of inclusion and belonging for all
- We will need to continue to ensure that our board is representative of the community we serve and that our committees are structured to intentionally support the successful implementation of this strategy
- We will need our board to continue to help us identify ways we can increase philanthropic support and civic engagement through individual, corporate, foundation and governmental channels

Thanks and Recognition

A special thanks goes to the Y's board of directors for their insight, support and guidance as this plan was developed, as well as to the 17-person cross organizational Y associate team that took the board's overall direction and fleshed those out into specific strategies, objectives, measurements and actions. Finally, we would like to thank Ann Quinn, from Quinn Strategy Group, for facilitating the overall process, keeping us on task, and moving this work forward when we got stuck. This was hard work, but it was done in a highly collaborative manner and there is lots of thanks to go around!

The Y in Central Maryland Board of Directors

- Mo Jishi (Board Chair) (M&T Bank)
- Stephanie Baker (Worldwide Assurance for Employees of Public Agencies WAEPA)
- Dr. Kevin Banks (Morgan State University)
- Tony Brandon (American General Media)
- Tom Brandt (Community Volunteer)

- John Bremer (CIMED International Healthcare)
- Cornell Brown (Harford County Public Schools)
- Alan Cason (McGuireWoods)
- Frank Cullota (Dex Imaging)
- Annette Danek-Akey (Penguin Random House)
- David DiPietro (T. Rowe Price)
- Dr. Toni Draper (AFRO-American Newspapers)
- Drew Flott (Community Volunteer)
- Joe Foss (Community Volunteer)
- Barbara Gassaway (The Research Group)
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- Katie Watson (Maxor)
- Barry Williams (Curio Wellness)
- Gary Williams (Williams Asset Management)
- Darleen Won (Lifebridge Health)
- Steve Lambertson (Ex-officio) (Community Volunteer)

The Y in Central Maryland Associate Strategic Planning Taskforce

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- Mya Davis (Senior Executive Director, Youth Development Continuous Quality Improvement & Compliance)
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- Matt Freedman (Chief Development Officer)
- Ashley Funk (Senior Executive Director, The Weinberg and Druid Hill Ys)
- John Hoey (President & Chief Executive Officer)
- Sara Milstein (Chief Marketing & Brand Experience Officer)
- Sherrie Rovnan (Chief Financial & Administrative Officer)
- Keisha Sitney (Chief People Officer)
- Kenneth Wang (Senior Executive Director, Operations Analytics and Optimization)
- Chip Warner (Chief Operating Officer)
- Dr. Lisa Williams (Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)
- Heather Wilson (Senior Vice President, Membership and Health Innovation The YMCA of Central New York - former YCM leader)

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