
Goal and Strategies

Based on the research, public input, and significant discussion with the Steering Committee and other bodies, the consultants propose the following eight goals and strategies.

Cultural Organizations and Working Artists

Goal 1: A strengthened cultural “eco-system” that sustains large organizations, builds the capacity of small and mid-sized organizations, and provides a supportive environment for artists.

- 1.1 Establish a “cultural trust” that raises endowment funds in partnership with cultural organizations of all sizes.
- 1.2 Develop a comprehensive and on-going program of technical assistance for cultural organizations and working artists.
- 1.3 Develop a coordinated calendaring system that tracks cultural events and support activities.
- 1.4 Nurture the local professional arts scene by connecting local artist organizations and individual artists with local, regional, and national resources.
- 1.5 Develop coordinated and cooperative mechanisms to simplify back-office tasks of cultural nonprofits.

Cultural Education

Goal 2: An enlarged and enriched mix of opportunities for children and adults in Greater Birmingham and the region to engage in and appreciate arts and cultural experiences.

- 2.1 Establish a region-wide clearinghouse to facilitate the coordination of educational resources.
- 2.2 Maximize existing educational resources through a coordinated, privatized series of cultural educational offerings.
- 2.3 Establish mechanisms to bring supporters of cultural education together in a more effective advocacy role.

Cultural Diversity

Goal 3: Active engagement of all residents in cultural activities, events, and organizations regardless of race or ethnicity.

- 3.1 Coordinate a festival of performances, exhibitions, and lectures, building on the resources of Greater Birmingham's cultural sector, that focuses on racial reconciliation and unity, and is targeted at local, regional, and national audiences.
- 3.2 Create a centralized database of African-American and Hispanic business people, civic and religious leaders, and others who have an interest in serving on the boards of nonprofit cultural organizations.
- 3.3 Develop programs that assist larger cultural organizations to establish partnerships and mentoring relationships with small and emerging ethnically-specific groups.

Cultural Economic Development

Goal 4: An enhanced role for arts and culture in fostering the economic development of the region.

- 4.1 Develop and coordinate mechanisms to promote cultural attractions of all sizes and ethnicities locally, regionally, and nationally.
- 4.2 Give priority to completing visitor-related projects that highlight Birmingham's unique cultural environment.
- 4.3 Establish formal public art programs throughout the region to strengthen the role and presence of art and design in all communities.
- 4.4 Include arts and culture as an integral component of long-range revitalization strategies using outlying cultural attractions as well as those in downtown Birmingham.

Neighborhood and Community Cultural Development

Goal 5: Equitable access to arts and cultural experiences in neighborhoods and communities throughout the Greater Birmingham region.

- 5.1 As a first step, integrate the delivery of arts and cultural programming into existing public facilities.

- 5.2 Enhance the mix of cultural programming available in neighborhoods and communities throughout the Greater Birmingham region.
- 5.3 Long-term, develop a network of neighborhood-based community centers that focus on arts and culture.
- 5.4 As an initial focus for additional neighborhood facilities, examine potential sites for renovation (such as the McCoy Center and the Shields School) to house neighborhood-based programs (such as the West End Community and Youth Cultural Arts Center) or others.
- 5.5 Provide incentives to cultural organizations to develop neighborhood-oriented programming in partnership with social service organizations.

Cultural Facilities

Goal 6: A diversified inventory of high-quality cultural spaces accessible to everyone.

- 6.1 Coordinate planning for new and restored cultural venues within Greater Birmingham.
- 6.2 Develop a Community Cultural Center on the site of Boutwell Municipal Auditorium that provides opportunities for residents to encounter a range of cultural experiences.
- 6.3 Renovate the Lyric Theatre; coordinate development and management of the Alabama, the Carver, and a renovated Lyric; and foster the development of an educationally oriented performance space for the Alabama School of Fine Arts.
- 6.4 Develop “niche” performance venues in regions around downtown Birmingham, based on market demand.
- 6.5 Develop a cultural facility rental subsidy fund to help organizations and artists use professional-level spaces while building their capacity over a period of five to seven years.
- 6.6 Use vacant downtown spaces throughout the region for a range of culturally-oriented purposes, both temporary and permanent.

Cultural Infrastructure

Goal 7: A new entity to provide consistent and high-level coordination and leadership for the cultural sector in Greater Birmingham and the region.

- 7.1 Create a new nonprofit organization called the Regional Cultural Alliance (RCA) to serve as the regional umbrella organization for arts and culture, working with other local arts agencies in the region.
- 7.2 Develop consistent re-granting guidelines and programs for both public and private sector cultural funding.
- 7.3 Develop a coordinated approach to empower RCA, working with the City of Birmingham Arts and Culture Commission (BACC).

Public and Private Sector Funding

Goal 8: Meaningful increases in public and private sector support for arts and cultural activities, events, facilities, and organizations.

- 8.1 Set priority funding requirements, indicate where existing monies can be redirected, identify key prospects, and begin to lay the groundwork for funding.
- 8.2 Create incentives to increase public sector support.
- 8.3 Develop a dedicated revenue source to provide on-going operating support for cultural organizations in Jefferson County.
- 8.4 Create mechanisms for local private support to be increased.
- 8.5 Increase the earned income potential of cultural organizations.