



8147 Delmar Boulevard  
Suite 218  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
314.727.2880  
fax 314.727.0348

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## *Memorandum*

From: Arthur Greenberg, AMS Planning & Research  
To: MD Isley, Executive Director, and Board of Directors  
BRAVO Greater Des Moines  
Date: November 21, 2008  
Subject: Cultural Assessment – Cultural Plan “Pre-Planning”

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AMS Planning & Research was engaged by Bravo Greater Des Moines to undertake a Pre-Cultural Planning Cultural Assessment. The intent of this planning effort was to conduct an intensive series of small group meetings and interviews with a cross-section of civic, community, and arts/cultural leadership, prior to embarking on a comprehensive cultural plan for the Des Moines region.

The consultant facilitated small group meetings with more than 100 individuals in Des Moines during the week of November 10, 2008, and conducted a series of follow-up telephone interviews subsequent to the on-site visit. (A complete list of those interviewed can be found at the end of this memorandum). Invitations to meeting participants, and meeting logistics, were capably handled by Bravo’s Executive Director, MD Isley.

The meetings included a series of general questions on the state of arts, culture, and heritage in Des Moines; specific interests and needs for cultural programs and services such as might be offered by a Regional Arts Council; the vision for Bravo’s role(s) in the future; and how to position and pursue a Comprehensive Cultural Plan for the Greater Des Moines region.

It should be noted from the outset that the use of the term “cultural” is intended to imply arts, culture, and heritage, throughout this document. Where appropriate, specific references to “entertainment” and “commercial cultural businesses” are also made.

This memorandum summarizes input from the group meetings, and proposes a series of Key Strategic Areas that the consultant believes would represent the focal areas of a cultural planning process. (It is important to note that, while a comprehensive Community Cultural Plan would focus on goals and objectives for the entire arts/culture sector, it would also address the role(s) of Bravo in implementation.) A specific proposal from AMS Planning & Research, to undertake the proposed cultural planning tasks, has been submitted to Mr. Isley under separate cover.

## The Current Situation

Bravo Greater Des Moines (Bravo) is a nonprofit organization committed to strengthening the metro area's arts and cultural community. Established approximately four years ago, and having hired its first full-time Executive Director in the summer of 2008, Bravo's mission is:

*“To provide Greater Des Moines with an enriched quality of life by increasing cultural awareness, advocacy, and funding as well as fostering collaboration among cultural organizations.”*

Bravo's specific goals are to:

- *Provide a forum where the cultural needs of Greater Des Moines can be discussed*
- *Develop sources of private and public funding to assist the cultural community*

In an effort to stabilize funding for arts and cultural organizations, local governments have committed a portion of their hotel/motel tax revenues through the establishment of 28E agreements with Bravo.<sup>1</sup> All funding received from the 28E agreements goes directly to support cultural organizations. In 2008, approximately \$2.3 million was made available, and re-granted to 48 separate not-for-profit arts, cultural, and heritage organizations. Bravo supports its administrative costs with private funds raised through Winefest Greater Des Moines events and the Bravo Awards Annual Gala.

## Key Themes from Cultural Assessment Meetings

There is a general consensus among those who participated in the meetings that Bravo is well-positioned to assume a more comprehensive role as a Regional Arts Council for Greater Des Moines, and that the organization, arts/cultural community, and region as a whole, would benefit from a comprehensive cultural plan

**A.** Among the first topics covered was the **need for a Comprehensive Cultural Plan** in Greater Des Moines. Meeting participants provided a number of reasons for, and anticipated benefits of, conducting such an effort in the region:

- There is a strong sense that the arts/cultural community could benefit from on-going coordination, and from research (both qualitative and quantitative) pursued in collaboration with each other. Many discussed the benefits of collaboration and partnerships, both among the arts-cultural-heritage organizations themselves, and between the cultural sector and other segments in the community. Some spoke of a “shared vision and consensus on future direction” that would emerge from a thorough cultural planning process.

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<sup>1</sup>Municipalities that currently commit a portion of their hotel/motel tax revenues include Altoona, Ankeny, Clive, Des Moines, Johnston, Urbandale, and West Des Moines. Although the community of Windsor Heights collects no hotel/motel tax revenues, it has made a direct financial contribution to Bravo's re-granting program.

- While the existing 28E agreements have recently been renewed for a three-year period, there is a continuing need to make the case for 28E funding, with municipalities that currently contribute to Bravo’s re-granting program, and perhaps with others that might be encouraged to contribute in the future. “Growing the [funding] pie” was a common sentiment in the sessions.
- Prior to the establishment of Bravo, the Des Moines Cultural Alliance reportedly served as an informal networking opportunity for executive staff of cultural organizations; its existence was credited as one of the reasons Bravo was able to be formed. Later disbanded after Bravo’s birth, several individuals lamented its loss and the valuable networking function it served. They spoke of the hope that a cultural plan for Des Moines could provide a platform (both initial and on-going) for the important networking role formerly played by the Cultural Alliance. Several people referenced the Iowa Arts Council’s CHAT (Culture, Arts, History Team) effort, a series of regional forums around the state, with Polk County’s “CHAT Team” having begun a series of meetings and discussions.
- Since Bravo’s primary role is that of a re-granting agency, and by law its grants are limited to non-profit groups, some spoke of opportunities that a cultural plan might afford to strengthen relationships with commercial (for-profit) cultural businesses (i.e., galleries, book stores, coffee houses, art supply shops, etc.), and related cultural industries (e.g., architects, graphic designers, advertising agencies, etc.). Given national and regional interest in furthering a “creative economy,” pursuing a regional cultural plan could address the provision of programs and services that go beyond funding of non-profit organizations, and embrace the full spectrum of the region’s creative industries.
- A few people referenced the Des Moines area’s history of good planning, mentioning specifically the prioritization of Vision Iowa projects in a three-tiered system (around 1998). They further commented that Bravo represents a real opportunity for a regional approach to arts, culture, heritage, and related sectors such as tourism, entertainment, and creative industries (economic development). It was felt that a cultural planning effort would not only serve the cultural sector, but provide another platform for regional cooperation among cities, counties, government and non-governmental agencies.<sup>2</sup>

**B. A major topic of several meetings was that of funding for arts and cultural organizations, and for individual artists.**

- Fresh on the minds of many meeting participants was the defeat of a proposed sales tax referendum (Project Destiny) that would have provided additional public funding

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<sup>2</sup>The consultant inquired about cities and/or regions considered as “peers” or “benchmarks” for Des Moines. Most frequently mentioned were Omaha and Columbus. Those involved in the tourism industry noted that Des Moines competes most often with Minneapolis, Kansas City, Indianapolis, and St. Louis. Others reported that Greater Des Moines Partnership visits have been undertaken to a wide variety of cities including, besides some noted above, Portland, Madison, Indianapolis, Austin, Louisville, and the Research Triangle area of North Carolina.

for arts and culture, and for other purposes. While assessing the reasons for the measure's failure in a public vote (i.e., low turnout in July election, some opposed sales tax as regressive, arts funding was packaged with other non-cultural issues, etc.), some suggested that a revised attempt should be considered, focused more on providing arts and cultural educational programs for the region's young people, or ensuring a more focused approach to arts/cultural funding without other non-arts monies as part of the package. In the words of one cultural organization leader, "Perhaps we should be asking a different question, such as, 'what would it take [in terms of funding] for all of the region's cultural attractions to have free admission always for all children?'"<sup>3</sup>

- The concept of a United Arts Fund (UAF) was introduced in several meetings, in the context of a "United Way" (combined private fundraising campaign) for the arts. While some smaller and mid-sized organizations were favorable to the idea, those affiliated with the larger (i.e., Block 1) organizations were more skeptical of the potential for a UAF in Des Moines to be effective in generating more contributions than they currently raise. One participant speculated that a UAF might have more appeal if specifically tied to support of arts/cultural education programs.<sup>4</sup>
- "Growing the pie" by expanding the [geographic] scope of 28E agreements was mentioned by several. Given that the nine municipalities that have 28E agreements with Bravo are all located in Polk County (albeit some have portions of their cities in adjoining counties), the question was posed as to whether or not this funding mechanism could be expanded to adjacent counties, taking an even wider approach to regional arts funding.
- Meetings with smaller and emerging arts groups included comments about priorities among the community's private funders. It was noted that corporate funding priorities are shifting more toward health and human services and education, mirroring a national trend, and to agriculture/agricultural education, an Iowa-Great Plains phenomenon. Many lamented corporate and foundation funding that is often tied to projects and new initiatives, making it difficult to grow capacity through administrative and operating support.

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<sup>3</sup> The consultant made reference to two well-known public arts funding models, the property tax-funded Zoo-Museum District in St. Louis County, and the sales tax-financed Scientific and Cultural Facilities District in the Denver region, both have which have extensive provisions for free public admission as part of their funding agreements. In the St. Louis case, the "big five" generally offer free admission to all members of the public, but charge for special exhibits, parking, and ancillary services like Zoo train rides and the like. In the case of Denver, all SCFD Tier 1 institutions offer a series of free admission days in exchange for receiving 67% of the total SCFD funding allocations.

<sup>4</sup> The consultant noted that there are some 75 UAFs in the U.S., with the top 10 (in terms of total dollars raised) generating in the range of \$5-12 million annually, with a sizable portion from workplace giving (i.e., payroll deduction programs, like United Way). Among these top 10 (Cincinnati, Louisville, Milwaukee, Charlotte, etc.), eight are at least 30+ years old, with two of the newest UAFs being established in Orlando and Richmond (VA). It was also mentioned that the united arts fund in Memphis has a provision for workplaces to target their giving; the public school teachers are able to earmark their funds for arts education programs.

- Regarding Bravo's funding allocations, a few smaller groups commented that a modest increase in funding for Block II and Festival organizations would “go a long way.” An additional \$150,000 would have fully funded 33 more organizations based on their 2007 grant requests.

**C. Opportunities for partnerships, among arts/cultural groups themselves, and between the arts and other community sectors, was a major focus of discussion in several meetings.**

- A number of people commented about existing and potential arts education partnerships, focusing on some particular challenges of working with the Des Moines Public Schools (and other districts in the region), and offering widespread praise for the Connecting Kids & Culture program. A number of national trends were cited as barriers to school-based arts education residencies and programs, including more mandated testing and the increased cost of buses for field trips. Some meetings focused on specific ideas for leveraging school-based Art and Music Coordinators in an effort for more coordination and to aid in identifying residency opportunities with visiting artists and authors being presented by area arts groups and the public library.
- The role of higher education institutions in the region's overall cultural ecology was of interest to several meeting participants. In addition to Drake, Grandview and Simpson colleges/universities, several public state institutions (Iowa State, University of Northern Iowa, University of Iowa) have a local presence, and the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) is widely respected and seen as being involved in a range of partnerships with the arts/cultural sector. Some cited a specific opportunity to further a relationship with the University of Iowa's Writers' Workshop given its prominent national reputation.
- Partnership between arts organizations and local corporations are often relationship-based, and spearheaded by individual board members. In addition to funding and sponsorship relationships, some discussion was held about promotional efforts through corporate human resources departments, such as providing special offers and discounts to employees. While these promotions do occur on an occasional or regular basis (at companies such as Principal Financial through its Employee Discounts Board, Meredith, and at Pioneer HiBred, which made a challenge grant based on new subscription dollars raised), some business community representatives were intrigued by the idea of expanding the scale and scope of such offers.<sup>5</sup> A few other specific arts-business partnership opportunities were discussed, including the potential to leverage/extend the Pappajohn Business Incubator concept for artists and creative industries.

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<sup>5</sup> The consultant referenced a few model programs that had taken place in Columbus, Atlanta, and some other communities whereby corporations, along the lines of matching employee contributions to non-profits, provided matching subscriptions to performing arts companies and/or matching memberships to museums and cultural attractions. The rationale behind such programs is to aid in driving attendance and participation, not just giving, with an eye toward long-term sustainability of cultural groups, while at the same time providing employees with attendance benefits.

- How to work more closely with the region’s print, broadcast, and internet-based media providers was a question posed in a few meetings. The focus for many arts/cultural organizations is on increasing overall coverage and, specifically, more critical writing and reporting. It was noted that the region’s public radio station is located in Ames, perhaps making it more difficult for Des Moines-based groups to leverage this often “culture-friendly” resource.
- A meeting with representatives of the Des Moines Public Library revealed a range of existing arts-focused collaborations with organizations such as DMAACC, the Civic Music Association, and Des Moines Playhouse (Page to Stage program). Library staff noted they could do more, but cited the “need for more coordination to be a bigger player.” The library reports some 110,000 card holders, representing up to 70% of households. It regularly sends e-mail blasts to a list of some 25,000 addresses. Key contact people at the Library would be the Marketing and Children’s Program Coordinators.
- The opportunities afforded by extending Iowa’s and Des Moines’ cultural tourism branding and promotion were mentioned in several meetings. While there are existing working relationships between regional arts groups, the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), and State Tourism office, there was general consensus that more can be done to further promote cultural and heritage tourism. Model programs such as training and familiarity tours for hospitality industry workers (e.g., New Orleans’ Jazzy Cabby, etc.) were mentioned as ways to leverage the resources of both cultural and tourism sectors.
- A range of existing partnerships among arts/cultural organizations were cited as examples of success. An ad hoc Greater Des Moines Cultural Educators Group involves some 18 staff members of arts, cultural, and heritage organizations who meet regularly to share information and resources. Publicity and marketing staff also hold regular meetings. There are real benefits that come out of these networking forums, such as cooperative summer camps and professional development programs for area educators. The Blank Park Zoo, Science Center, and Living History Farms have a joint membership at \$199 for families. The Des Moines Music Coalition was also cited as a successful model.

D. Given that increasing cultural awareness is a cornerstone of Bravo’s mission, ways to reach and involve more citizens as audiences, visitors, members, and volunteers, all fall under the general heading of **Audience Development**. As the consultant noted, we can quite simply consider the goal of this topic area as “involving more people, more often, in more meaningful ways” with arts, cultural, and heritage experiences in greater Des Moines.

- The topic that came up most often in relation to audience development was the need for a single, centralized web-based calendar to serve both advance scheduling needs and to provide a one-stop information source for the public. The fact that there are several existing sites (i.e., Des Moines Register’s Metromix, CVB’s SeeDesMoines, etc.) makes it complicated for arts groups to input and update information, and for

the public to find a comprehensive listing of arts, culture, entertainment, recreation, and sports. The Cedar Rapids-Iowa City Cultural Corridor model was heralded as a great success.

- Ways to leverage the increasing role of social networking web sites, and to capitalize on the social aspects of arts participation, were also pondered in some of the small group meetings. One aspect of this discussion focused on reaching the region's young people, and some cited last summer's 80/35 Festival and a recent Halloween event (sponsored by Des Moines Social Club) as good examples of innovative programming, and marketing. The Des Moines area Young Professionals Network was mentioned as a possible resource in this area.
- Since "Programming" is one of the "Four Ps" of marketing, there was some discussion about what programs are offered, and whether or not they're reaching the intended audiences, or in some cases, perhaps over-saturating the market. In particular, the wide range of special events and festivals presented a concern for some who suggested that perhaps several smaller events could be re-packaged into a larger festival to better attract major sponsorship dollars and larger audiences.<sup>6</sup>
- The changing demographics of the metro area's suburbs, in particular, beg for some coordinated market research, and some targeted marketing efforts to reach new and younger residents. As one person articulated it, "*We've not done a good job of connecting with people in the suburbs. We need to hear from the grass roots – are we offering what you want? We need to understand their cultural interests and needs, and their definitions of culture.*" The notion of an updated "Welcome Wagon" program for middle managers and other new residents could help spread the word about arts/cultural opportunities and resources.
- The consultant observed that Des Moines and Iowa have a rich tradition of civic engagement when it comes to the quadrennial Presidential caucuses, and wondered if this appetite for involvement in the political process could be translated into engagement with creative/cultural pursuits. There are some national model programs, such as "The Big Read," that have been successful at involving broad swaths of the public in a common reading/book discussion pursuit, or other programs such as Americans for the Arts' Animating Democracy. Meeting participants speculated on ways to channel the audience development message through this uniquely Iowa tradition.
- The geographic scope of arts/cultural programs in the region was important to some participants who expressed concern that often the focus of audience development efforts is only on the downtown area. People referenced vibrant programs and populations on Des Moines' South side, and in the nearby suburb of Ankeny (with an increasingly culturally-involved population who support the Ankeny Art Center,

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<sup>6</sup> Some of the Des Moines area's numerous festivals were reported to be: Asian Heritage Festival, Des Moines Art Festival, I'll Make me a World In Iowa, Latino Heritage Festival, Two Rivers Art Festival, 80/35 Music Festival, Juneteenth, Artstop, and others.

Crafts Fair, Evening of the Arts, Community Chorus, and other groups located in the growing town).

- E. In a number of meetings, the issue of the need for new **cultural venues**, primarily to serve smaller and emerging arts groups, was a focus of discussion. A related topic involves the Des Moines area’s “**built environment**,” or ways to promote, celebrate, and leverage the community’s outstanding architecture and its major new public art project.
- One specific concept for a performing arts/cultural center project has received attention from funders, elected officials, and has generated some momentum in the arts community. A cursory inventory of performance spaces suggests a gap in the 200-300 seating capacity range. Two independent proposals to address this need were being pursued when Bravo (along with other stakeholders) began to explore if a shared facility might serve groups such as the East Village Art Coalition (and its “umbrella,” Visual & Performing Arts Des Moines), and the Des Moines Social Club (and its related organization, Subjective Arts Theater). A meeting involving representatives of these organizations reached consensus around the need for a feasibility analysis of the project from market, usage, and sustainability perspectives.
  - The consultant observed that Des Moines is often recognized nationally for its collection of world-class architecture, not the least of which being the “architectural triptych” Des Moines Art Center. The city has a tradition of valuing its built environment, and in commissioning signature projects such as Chipperfield’s central Public Library building in the downtown core. Some examples of public programming that promotes and stimulates public discussion about the built environment were discussed, as sponsored by American Institute of Architects (AIA) chapters in cities such as Philadelphia and Chicago, as well as educational programs introducing school children to architectural and landscape concepts. It was noted that the Des Moines AIA chapter is moving its offices to Capitol Square, and has recently published a book on the 100 most significant buildings in Iowa. There was strong interest in pursuing programs and a coordinated approach to incorporating architecture along with arts, cultural, and heritage, as a focal area of a cultural plan.
  - There is a palpable excitement brewing about the newest addition to the Des Moines landscape, that being the \$30 million Pappajohn Sculpture Garden, occupying a prominent site in the Gateway project. On the other end of downtown, the Principal Riverwalk represents another exciting public amenity that is likely to become a major focal point for recreation, leisure activities, and cultural programming. Meeting participants suggested that public education programs (around art in public places, for instance), and other “animating” activities (e.g., usage for festivals, etc.) would add value to these new community jewels.
  - Opportunities for a focused, active cultural district were described in some sessions, with one participant making reference to the successful First Fridays program in Fairfield, Iowa, where a concentrated area of activity adds to the excitement of the event. Des Moines’ artist spaces (e.g., galleries, live-work studios, etc.) are more

widely scattered and may not lend themselves well to focused programming and activity.

- F. Another cornerstone of Bravo’s activities, as articulated in its mission statement, is that of **advocacy**. From making the case for arts/cultural funding with municipalities through the 28E agreements, to on-going “positioning” of the cultural sector as a vital force for economic development and overall quality of life, the need for effective approaches to advocacy was often discussed in the planning meetings.
- Several initial efforts have been taken in this area; Bravo board members in particular are often called upon to articulate the nexus between public funding through 28E agreements, and the benefits of financial support to arts, cultural, and heritage organizations. It was noted that some initial “mapping” of audiences was helpful in securing funds from suburban communities as the cultural sector could demonstrate the broad geographic scope of the audience base. Many strongly encouraged continued activity in this area and more sophisticated tools to sustain and grow the public funding sources.

A few other topics arose during the course of the planning meetings:

- The subjects of multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion were discussed across several meetings, under a wide range of topics, from funding to technical assistance and audience development. Representatives of several culturally-specific festivals reported a range of challenges in sustaining and growing their programs, from attracting sponsorships to avoiding scheduling conflicts. Other issues revolve around the need for board development (e.g., deepening the reach into culturally diverse communities beyond “the same ten people”), professional development and, specifically, grant writing workshops and consultancies.
- The growth of the state’s film and video industry is being aided by state tax credits for film production, and other factors. Without a specific focus at this time, some general discussion took place about how to work more closely with this sector.

## Key Strategic Planning Areas

In all, 18 separate meetings and a series of telephone interviews incorporated the views of more than 100 individuals representing the sectors of arts/culture, business, philanthropy, media, government, education, human services, tourism, and other related areas. Typically, comprehensive cultural planning processes commence with a series of opportunities for public input, from town meetings and focus groups, to public surveys and leadership interviews. AMS believes that the Cultural Assessment undertaken by Bravo in November 2008 represents a “jumpstart” on such a planning process, resulting in the identification of some key strategic areas that we believe could represent the focal areas for a Cultural Plan. Based on the input summarized above, the following six topic areas (and a more catch-all “Other” category) emerge as an organizing structure for a series of research and planning tasks, leading to the creation of a Community Cultural Plan. Following the summary of topic areas, a brief discussion of how such a plan might proceed is provided.

The Key Strategic Planning Areas arising from the Cultural Assessment can be described as follows:

1. Collaborative Marketing & Audience Development

Opportunities to stimulate attendance, participation, membership, and other ways for the public to interact with the region's arts, cultural, and heritage organizations, are abundant, but would benefit significantly from a coordinated and collaborative approach. From shared scheduling and promotional web-based calendars, to a concentrated market research effort (aimed at suburban and younger populations, as well as benchmarks for overall audience development), to the possibility of a shared mailing/e-mailing list database, a collaborative marketing focus of a cultural plan would provide groups with actionable tools and have outcome-based objectives to grow the audience/visitor base. This topic represents a logical platform for collaboration among the arts, cultural and heritage organizations, and between this sector and other community organizations and agencies (e.g., Library, State agencies, public schools, etc.). Cultural tourism development could also be a component of this theme.

2. Technical Assistance & Professional Development

Often considered a cornerstone of local arts agency functions, there is a clearly identified need for workshops and consultancies to assist the region's cultural organizations and individual artists. From fundraising and marketing, to board development and helping multicultural groups form partnerships with larger organizations, there is no shortage of topics that could be offered in group and small consultancy settings.

3. Multi-Disciplinary Cultural Center

The arts community has put forth proposals for a new facility that would include one or more small (100-300 seats) performance venue(s), exhibition space, administrative and support functions. A cultural center of this nature is envisioned as serving several smaller organizations and providing a community focal point ("node of cultural activity") with on-going activities. A formal feasibility study should be undertaken that explores market potential, usage projections, capital and operating costs, and strategies for sustainability.

4. Civic Engagement with the Built Environment

As noted earlier, with the advent of the Pappajohn Sculpture Garden and the community's history of investment in quality architecture, there is an opportunity to build on the bricks and mortar (and sculpture and landscape) assets through community educational and promotional efforts that celebrate Des Moines' built environment. A series of case studies with model programs and best practices in this area, and meetings to enlist the support of logical partners (e.g., American Institute of Architects, relevant state and local government offices, etc.), would represent initial steps to leverage the community's sizable investment and stimulate civic engagement.

## 5. Arts & Entrepreneurialism

There is a national trend afoot, sparked not only by growing interest in “creative industries” as an economic development strategy, but also in evidence at some colleges and universities in the form of “Arts & Business” programs, to explore and leverage the nexus between artists, cultural organizations, and entrepreneurialism. There is already movement in this area in Des Moines in the form of the Des Moines Music Coalition, the upcoming Crossroads festival/conference, and in the state when it comes to film and video tax credits. Moreover, the Des Moines area has a track record of investment in the business incubator model manifest in a 1998 project, the “Entrepreneur College” co-sponsored by DMACC, the Golden Circle Business Center and the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce. As well, the John and Mary Pappajohn Education Center (JMPEC), part of the University of Iowa’s Division of Continuing Education, may have a role to play. In order to leverage and expand on these initial efforts, it would be logical focus of cultural planning in Des Moines to articulate programs and services to further opportunities for artist entrepreneurs.

## 6. Cultural Budget & Community Benchmarking

Successful cultural planning should include a benchmarking component to measure giving and attendance patterns, and other aspects (i.e., seating capacities, gap analysis, etc.) against a group of peer and/or “best practices” cities/regions. The Pre-Planning Cultural Assessment has not included a quantitative dimension; hard data would prove useful in measuring the region’s supply and support of arts/cultural organizations. A “cultural budget” and community benchmarking component is strongly recommended as a basic element of a comprehensive Cultural Plan.

## 7. Other

A few other specific issues could represent additional focal areas of a planning process:

- Sponsorship Development – A session with festival producers revealed that only one has pursued a formal “sponsorship audit” which is a costly, yet productive, undertaking in evaluating “properties” (i.e., fairs, festivals, and events) and matching them with potential sponsors. A packaging approach whereby a bundled series of festivals and events might be marketed to potential sponsors could yield real outcomes and new funds.
- Cultural Tourism – While it would be addressed as a component of audience development and collaborative marketing, the areas of cultural and heritage tourism could represent a stand-alone component of a Plan by delving more deeply into product, packaging, promotion, and taking advantage of a wide range of best practices in this field (e.g., familiarity tours, concierge liaisons, and so on).
- Media Relations – An in-depth exploration of print, radio, television, and “new media” coverage of arts and culture, in terms of both critical and feature journalism, is of interest to several civic and community leaders.

## **An Approach to the Planning Process**

AMS envisions a cultural planning process for Greater Des Moines that would involve specific research tasks, opportunities for public and leadership input, and planning sessions with appointed Task Forces. Our strong recommendation would be to ensure that the Plan resulted in credible research findings, actionable strategies, measurable outcomes, and the provision of tools and resources that could be implemented both short- and long-term.

To this end, we imagine that each proposed key strategic area described above would involve a custom mix of research and planning steps; each would include a specific implementation timeline that addresses budgets, potential funding sources, and so on. There would be efficiencies in that certain tasks (e.g., organizational surveys) could be undertaken once while serving the separate strategic areas. As noted earlier, we have submitted a proposal for consulting services to Bravo that further details these approaches, but summarize our initial thinking briefly here:

### 1. Collaborative Marketing & Audience Development

- Market research with current and prospective audiences
- A combined file analysis to measure reach, penetration, and market potential for arts, cultural, heritage, and other related organizations
- Situation analysis of existing and potential resources
- Best Practices research on collaborative audience development and marketing models
- Planning meetings with prospective partners, arts/cultural organization representatives

### 2. Technical Assistance & Professional Development

- Organizational and artist surveys to identify needs and interests
- Situation analysis of existing and potential resources
- Best Practices research on technical assistance programs and delivery systems
- Planning meetings with prospective partners, arts/cultural organization representatives

### 3. Multi-Disciplinary Cultural Center

- Market analysis
- User needs and projected schedule of use
- Model case studies with comparable venues
- Building program and capital cost estimate
- Management and governance assessment and recommendations
- Sustainability and earned income strategies
- Implementation (and phasing) strategy

4. Civic Engagement with the Built Environment

- Situation analysis of existing and potential resources
- Best Practices research on programs and delivery systems
- Planning meetings with prospective partners

5. Arts & Entrepreneurialism

- Situation analysis of existing and potential resources
- Best Practices research on programs and delivery systems
- Targeted research with institutions of higher learning statewide
- Planning meetings with prospective partners

6. Cultural Budget & Community Benchmarking

- Organizational and artist surveys
- Research with peer and model communities
- Benchmarking report on “state of arts and culture in Des Moines” in comparison with other similar markets

7. Sponsorship Development

- Organizational and artist surveys
- Situation analysis of existing fairs, festivals and events (inventory, calendar, attendance factors, etc.)
- Planning meetings with prospective partners, arts/cultural organization representatives
- Engagement of sponsorship broker sub-consultant

8. Cultural Tourism

- Situation analysis of cultural tourism programs, services, packages, etc.
- Research with peer and model communities
- Planning meetings with prospective partners, arts/cultural organization representatives

9. Media Relations

- Situation analysis of media coverage, critical writing, “new media” resources
- Research with peer and model communities
- Meetings and interviews with media representatives
- Planning meetings with local/regional media, prospective partners (e.g., institutions of higher learning), arts/cultural organization representatives

## List of Meeting (and telephone interview) Participants

Andrew Allen	Bill Konnath
Lenola Allen-Sommerville	Ron Lambert
Saul Amdursky	Jack Lashier
Jana Anderson	Brian Laurenzo
Matt Anderson	Mary Lawyer
Betty Andrews	Tim Leach
Leisha Barcus	Tracy Levine
Margaret Borgen	David Losure
Bob Brownell	Mary Losure
John Busbee	Stacy Lovan
Jay Byers	Proctor Lureman
Mary Chapman	Mary Madison
Jeff Chelesvig	Zach Mannheimer
Carrie Clogg	Anthony Marinaro
Vicki Comegys	Elvin McDonald
David Dahlquist	Matt McIver
Preston Daniels	Alissa McKinney
John Phillip Davis	Carl Metzger
Jim Dietz Kilen	Jim Miller
Jim Duncan	Michael Morain
Richard Early	Kent Newman
Greg Edwards	Joe Nolte
Jeff Fleming	Marlene Olson
Robert Ford	Shirley Patterson
Penny Furgerson	Alba Perez
Tom Garton	Mary Polson
Dawn Goodrich	Jeff Pomerantz
Sherry Gupta	Dell Radcliffe
Cat Hall	Terry Rich
Kimberly Hansen	Jim Riesberg
Ryan Hanser	Janis Ruan
Aaron Harpold	Lorenzo Sandoval
Ruth Haus	Steve Schaff
Caleb Hegna	Kris Schechinger
Robin Heinemann	John Schmidt
Liz Henry	Barbara Sletto
Christine Hensley	Kent Sovern
Liem Hua	Mary Sundet Jones
Larry Hulse	Tiffany Tauscheck
David Hurd	Carole Tillotson
Libby Jacobs	Barb Vaske
Dan Jones	Stacy Warren
Larassa Kabel	Karrie Weindhardt
Tamara Kenworthy	Eric Wickes
Steve King	Connie Wimer
Colleen Kirkwood	San Wong
Kristi Knous	