

# BLUEPRINT BIRMINGHAM

A GROWTH STRATEGY FOR THE SEVEN-COUNTY REGION

## BLUEPRINT BIRMINGHAM

It is the most comprehensive, regional strategic plan ever developed for the seven-county Birmingham region, providing a clear direction for economic prosperity.

The vision of Blueprint Birmingham is to provide abundant economic opportunities, excellence in education, and an unparalleled quality of life for all its citizens.



**birminghambusinessalliance**

THE CHAMBER FOR REGIONAL PROSPERITY

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## INTRODUCTION

The July 2009 merger of the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Metropolitan Development Board into the Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA) presented the community with a tremendous opportunity to capitalize on the momentum and capacity of these organizations. The BBA is using that window of opportunity to engage the Birmingham region in defining fresh goals and creating a holistic approach to achieve those goals. With the new economic development organization leading the way for the seven-county region, the creation of this strategy can turn that potential into reality.

Blueprint Birmingham provides regional leaders with a clear understanding of the community's strengths and challenges and helps create a holistic strategy for moving the region forward and increasing its competitiveness. A Steering Committee, made up of business and community leaders, guided the efforts, known as the Blueprint Birmingham Regional Economic Development Strategy.

As in much of the country, the Birmingham region is facing unprecedented challenges. The "Great Recession" has hit Alabama and the New South very hard. The current state of the economy highlights the need for the region to plan not for today's challenges, but for future opportunities. Blueprint Birmingham provides the region an opportunity to reassess the direction and goals in light of current community and economic realities in order to effectively plan for the future.



## VISION STATEMENT

Based on a significant amount of stakeholder input, including focus groups, interviews, an online survey, and steering committee meetings, the Birmingham region's residents and community and business leaders have a clear picture of their vision for the future. The subsequent **vision statement** is a representation of that consensus.

**“The Birmingham region will provide abundant economic opportunities, excellence in education, and an unparalleled quality of life for all its citizens.”**

The vision statement encompasses the main objectives of this Blueprint. Achieving this vision will take hard work, focus, and dedication to the four main Blueprint goal areas of Public and Private Leadership, Workforce Development, Economic Prosperity, and Community and Regional Stewardship.



## Public and Private Leadership

**Goal Statement:** “We will expect and support capable leaders who govern and manage responsibly thereby earning our residents’ trust. In addition, we will aggressively develop the next generation of leaders who are capable, visionary, and ethical.”

**Objective 1: Organize the Birmingham region’s business community to serve as a powerful, proactive, and definitive voice for a unified, progressive, regional vision.**

**ACTION 1.1: Leverage local and national media to change internal and external perceptions of the Birmingham region.**

**METRICS:**

- Increase by 5% per year the number of positive media stories as measured through the VOCUS software program
- Increase by 5% per year the number of perception survey respondents rating the region's overall leadership as "favorable" or "very favorable"

**TACTICS:**

- Work with regional media to encourage balanced reporting on regional issues and events. **(P1.1 – Year One)**
  - **METRICS:**  
Improvement in awareness/impressions of Birmingham via an annual survey of regional residents
- Fund internal and external media relations campaigns. **(P1.11 – Year Two)**
  - **METRICS:**  
BBA annual budget modified to cover DCI contract



- Leverage the Blueprint Birmingham process as a platform for business to communicate the urgency for strategic regional transformation.
  - METRICS:  
BBA annual budget modified to cover DCI contract

**ACTION 1.2: Using BBA tools and resources convey a call to action throughout the region for governments to partner for effective change.**

**METRICS:**

- Completion of website redesign by 10/1/10 **(completed)**
- Launch of public awareness campaign by 9/9/10 **(completed)**

**TACTICS:**

- Utilize an enhanced Blueprint Birmingham website as a public-information tool related to regional strategic efforts and actions of implementation partners
  - METRICS:  
Completion of website redesign by 10/1/10 **(completed)**
- Launch a comprehensive public-awareness campaign (the “I’m OPEN” campaign) associated with Blueprint Birmingham efforts. **(P1.21 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Launch of the “I’m Open” public awareness campaign by 9/9/10 **(completed)**

**ACTION 1.3: Produce annual state and federal legislative agendas.**

**METRICS:**

- BBA Public Policy Committee rating of effectiveness of execution of legislative agenda issues



## **TACTICS:**

- Develop state and federal agendas working with existing BBA committees focused on public policy and governmental affairs. **(P1.31 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Completion of the federal and state legislative agendas
- Actively publicize the legislative agendas in all regional media. **(P1.32 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
No measurable metric
- Charge staff and contracted lobbyists with aggressively pursuing legislative priorities. **(P1.33 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

**ACTION 1.4: Consider developing a regional political action committee (PAC) to support candidates who will best serve the interests of the Birmingham region.**

## **METRIC:**

- Decide by 1/1/12 whether to develop the PAC.

## **TACTICS:**

- Coordinate forums and information sessions to assess candidates' positions on key issues of concern. **(P1.42 – Year Three+)**
- Determine if the scope of the PAC should be inclusive of all federal, state, and local elections relevant to the Birmingham region. **(P1.41 – Year Three+)**
- Structure the PAC such that it is not a direct subsidiary of the BBA. **(P1.43 – Year Three+)**
  - METRICS:  
PAC created as a stand-alone entity by 1/1/12



**BEST PRACTICE:**

Lansing Regional Chamber Political Action Committee (Lansing, Michigan)

**ACTION 1.5: Support capable private sector leaders-in public sector leadership roles**

**METRIC:**

- Number of private sector leaders who run for office in local and state elections, by county, by elections cycle.

**TACTICS:**

- Reach out to the community to begin the process of identifying potential private sector leaders with interest in public sector positions. **(P1.51 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Provide opportunities for private sector leadership to elevate their voices on issues of regional significance. **(P1.53 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

**Objective 2: Achieve a renewed spirit of regional collaboration and cooperation between the public and private sectors.**

**ACTION 2.1: Establish forums for dialogue between public and private sector leadership.**

**METRIC:**

- Number of private/public sector leaders attending BBA hosted meetings annually



## **TACTICS:**

- Host meetings, forums and events for local government and state government officials with representatives of the business community. **(P2.11-2.13 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Number of private/public sector leaders attending BBA hosted meetings annually

**ACTION 2.2: Promote efficiencies of city, county, and regional services to the full extent possible, including the use of online and new media tools to foster greater government transparency.**

## **METRIC:**

- Secure funding for and conduct a cost-benefit analysis by 7/1/12

## **TACTICS:**

- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of merging key departments and services in the City of Birmingham and Jefferson County and, potentially, certain regional counties, focusing on areas that may be a good starting point (including but not limited to 911 services, first-responder services, and fire/rescue operations). **(P2.21 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Produce a cost-benefit analysis and complete by 7/1/12
- Support the implementation of eGovernment practices to optimize Government-to-Citizen (G2C) communications in the Birmingham region. **(P2.22 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Determined by local governments if applicable



**Objective 3: Ensure all regional constituencies are reflected in positions of leadership and influence.**

**ACTION 3.1: Broaden minority and ethnic participation across the community on boards and commissions.**

**METRIC:**

- Metric to be determined by PPL Advisory Group

**TACTICS:**

- Conduct a full assessment of top-appointed boards and commissions in the Birmingham region to determine the degree to which they represent local demographics, and identify individuals with interest in serving on public and/or private boards and commissions. Share findings with major boards and commissions receptive to the assessment. **(P3.11 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Assessment conducted and individuals identified by 12/31/12; Findings shared with major boards and commissions by 4/1/13

**ACTION 3.2: Fully engage young professional individuals and groups as positive influences for regional change.**

**METRIC:**

- Number of persons in the region, ages 24-39, with a bachelor's degree or higher

**TACTICS:**

- Assist local chambers of commerce in development of young professional leadership groups throughout the region. Work with these groups to encourage their participants to become fully knowledgeable of and active in issues of regional significance.
  - METRICS:  
Number of young professional leadership development programs in the region, measured annually



- Encourage the programs' graduates or members to volunteer in progressive local improvement efforts, run for elected office, and become public advocates for good government practices, regionalism, inclusiveness, and boosting of citizens' perceptions of the Birmingham region. **(P3.21 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
None
- Work with young professional leadership to schedule candidate and issue forums for key local races, policies and referenda. **(P3.23 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Number of forums held in each local/state election cycle
- Arrange meetings with young professionals and elected officials to communicate on critical policies, programs and votes. **(P3.23 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Number of meetings held in each local/state election cycle

**BEST PRACTICE:**

Tulsa's Young Professionals (Tulsa, Oklahoma)



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Goal Statement:** “We will develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce by promoting educational excellence in the Greater Birmingham region through targeted improvements in pre-K–12 education, higher education, and training and support programs.”

### **Objective 4: Improve pre-K–12<sup>th</sup> grade education in the Birmingham region.**

**ACTION 4.1: Create a Birmingham Regional Education Partnership to leverage partnership opportunities for the benefit of regional school systems.**

**METRIC:**

- Creation of the BREP by 1/1/12

**TACTICS:**

- Bring together regional educational leaders to discuss educational best practices and partnership opportunities for the Birmingham region’s K–12 districts. **(W4.31 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Create the BREP by 1/1/12
- Promote strong linkages with all public education foundations in the Birmingham region. Explore funding and programmatic partnership opportunities with the Birmingham Education Foundation to help achieve public education goals. **(W4.14 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

**BEST PRACTICE:**

Mobile Education Foundation (Mobile, Alabama)



- Identify appropriate mechanisms by which the Birmingham region's business community can support public education improvement
  - METRICS:  
Numbers of support opportunities identified by BREP members (local school superintendents)
- Create a best practice database using the best practices provided in Blueprint Birmingham as the foundation.
  - METRICS:  
Initial database completed by 7/1/12
- Determine the potential to provide full-time staff support for the BREP Partnership.
  - METRICS:  
Determination made by 7/1/12
- Utilize the BREP Partnership to develop regional education assessments (i.e. high school dropout rate) and reports on issues impacting school performance in the Birmingham region.
  - METRICS:  
Regional education assessment completed and distributed to BREP members annually
- Host an annual Birmingham Regional Education Summit under the auspices of the BREP Partnership. **(W4.31 – Year Three)**
  - METRICS:  
One summit produced per year

**ACTION 4.2: Promote the implementation of innovative programs and policies in the Birmingham region's under-performing school districts.**

**METRIC:**

- Percentage of adult population (age 25+) with a high school diploma



## **TACTICS:**

- Communicate the availability of alternative education models and campuses. **(W4.21A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
  
- Support the development of career academies in under-performing systems. **(W4.11 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
  
- Form a public/private coalition in the Birmingham region with the cooperation from other stakeholders throughout the state to support legalizing the development of charter schools in Alabama. **(W4.21B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Introduction of Charter Schools legislation in 2012;  
Passage by the end of 2013 Alabama legislative session.
  
- Support the incremental implementation of student leadership programs such as “Leader in Me” in all Birmingham City elementary schools. **(W4.12 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

## **BEST PRACTICE:**

Leader in Me: A.B. Combs Elementary School (Raleigh, North Carolina)

- Support the development of a pilot early-college high school in the city of Birmingham. **(W4.13 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

## **BEST PRACTICE:**

North Carolina Early College High Schools



- Enable parents to more effectively impact their children’s educational experience by supporting the development of the I-parent system and the launch of a Parent’s Academy in under-performing school districts. **(W4.14 to W4.15 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

### **BEST PRACTICES:**

Parent Institute for Quality Education (California)  
Parent University (Mesa, Arizona)

- Lobby for optimal teacher training and incentives policies at the local and state levels. **(W4.23A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Introduction of appropriate legislation in 2012 general session.
- Lobby for effective funding for early childhood education for all eligible students by requesting additional state pre-K funding. **(W4.24A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Introduction of appropriate legislation in 2012 general session.
- Support efforts to fund partnerships and grants to help expand access for early childhood education for all eligible students. **(W4.24A – Year One).**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



**Objective 5: Assess the skills needed to satisfy regional workforce demand and attract and retain talent; optimize the potential of the Birmingham region's two- and four-year colleges and universities to meet those needs.**

**ACTION 5.1: Encourage two-year and four-year degree programs that support the Birmingham region's target business sectors.**

**METRIC:**

- Number of 2 and 4 year college graduates with degrees applicable to target sectors

**TACTICS:**

- Coordinate with Target Sector leadership on college and university curriculum development (see also action item 8.2). Enable regional businesses to inform curriculum and program-development efforts, leveraging recommended sector leadership councils. **(W5.11 – Year 1)**
  - METRICS:  
Initial reports issued to colleges/universities by 12/31/11.

**ACTION 5.2: Leverage regional colleges and universities in talent retention and attraction efforts.**

**METRIC:**

- Number of alumni from regional colleges and universities living in the region

**TACTICS:**

- Align internship and career placement programs at regional colleges and universities with available positions in the region's businesses. **(W5.21 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Development of internship best practice model by 7/1/12



- Seek partnerships with the region’s higher educational institutions to further talent-attraction programs through expatriate/alumni outreach. **(W5.22 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
To be determined by BSHRM Leadership Academy

**ACTION 5.3: Increase coordination and cooperation between the Birmingham region’s education and training institutions and systems.**

**METRIC:**

- Annual usage of the STARS transferability website by students in 2 and 4 year public colleges within the region

**TACTICS:**

- Work with regional employers in Jefferson County to improve awareness of the training services supported by the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board, including the Incumbent Worker and Rapid Response programs.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Market to the business community the availability of course credit transferability protocols between higher education institutions in the region. **(W5.31 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Annual usage of the STARS transferability website by students in 2 and 4 year public colleges within the region



**Objective 6: Address barriers to accessing training and employment destinations.**

**ACTION 6.1: Ensure regional constituents have access to adequate transportation options.**

**METRIC:**

- Number of opportunities provided during 2012 to all Target Sector Leadership Councils and to Parent Academies to comment on transportation needs

**TACTICS:**

- Maximize opportunities for the workforce and employers to provide feedback regarding transportation needs and challenges by leveraging the newly-created Parent Academies (see Action 4.2) and Target Sector Leadership Councils (see Action 8.2).
  - METRICS:  
Number of opportunities provided during 2012 to all Target Sector Leadership Councils and to Parent Academies to comment on transportation needs.

**ACTION 6.2: Increase the capacity and improve the quality of local child care and after school programs.**

**METRIC:**

- Production and distribution of annual Childcare Resources assessment and database

**TACTICS:**

- Working with all relevant partners and providers, conduct a full assessment of licensed child care services, and build a database of available providers. **(W6.23 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Link to annual survey conducted by Childcare Resources included on BBA website



- Encourage regional governments to acquire any additional personnel necessary to review all current and new child care facilities and providers for licensure. **(W6.24 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Communication with regional governments completed within 90 days of release of Childcare Resources' assessment and database
  
- Work with large regional employers and institutions to encourage them to provide on-site child care facilities for students and employees. **(W6.25 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Coordinate with Childcare Resources to make available to regional employers the assessment document and database within 90 days of release



## ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

**Goal Statement:** “We will develop a more prosperous region by focusing on business retention and expansion, marketing and recruitment, and small business development and entrepreneurship. We will encourage a culture of innovation by supporting research, development, and technology transfer at UAB and other higher education institutions in the region.”

**Objective 7: Maximize the economic impact of UAB and the Birmingham region’s full complement of innovators and research-focused entities.**

**ACTION 7.1: Partner with UAB on the design, development, and launch of a comprehensive statewide and national economic-impact awareness campaign.**

**METRIC:**

- Increase UAB annual state funding to support economic development to \$30M over 5 years

**TACTICS:**

- Initiate outreach with the Birmingham region’s business leadership to best understand the economic development potential of UAB-generated research and innovation. **(E7.11 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Campaign launched and publically released in Fall 2010
- Craft a message aimed at increasing recognition of UAB’s local and statewide economic impact and its status as a leading research institution nationwide. **(E7.12 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Message crafted and shared during 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2010



- Secure funding support for the campaign from regional governments, non-profits and large employers. **(E7.14 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Determined by UAB
- Use these campaigns as a platform to advocate for increased UAB funding and support with the University of Alabama System Board of Trustees, the Governor, Alabama Development Office, and the state legislature.
  - METRICS:  
Increased support for UAB from State Economic Development Funds.
- Work with UAB administrators, key private sector leadership, and the BBA Governmental Affairs Committee to develop a coordinated and aggressive lobbying effort to encourage state support for and contributions to the Eminent Scholars Trust Fund. **(E7.11 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Inclusion in state budget

**BEST PRACTICE:**

Eminent Scholars Program – Georgia Research Alliance (State of Georgia)



**ACTION 7.2: Enhance UAB’s research, technology transfer, and enterprise-development support capacity.****METRIC:**

- Increase annual UAB licenses from 230 to 300 over five years

**TACTICS:**

- Develop a public/private partnership with UAB to establish a “proof of concept” center at the University that supports the development of new startups from University-generated research. **(E7.21B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
UAB annual active licenses (year #1 – 230; year #5 – 300)

**BEST PRACTICES:**

Deshpande Center for Technological Innovation (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

**William J. von Liebig Center (University of California, San Diego)**

- Recommend the development of a commercialization assessment of the University of Alabama at Birmingham Research Foundation’s (UABRF) resources compared to the output, processes, and employment impact of the Georgia Tech Research Corporation in Atlanta and other research administration functions at competitive institutions with research areas that closely align to those of UAB, including but not limited to the University of North Carolina, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Massachusetts.

Consider forming a collaborative Commercialization Advisory Committee to guide the development of the commercialization assessment and provide qualitative input. **(E7.21A to E7.22A – Year One)**

- METRICS:  
Completion of assessment by UABRF and BBA by 7/1/12



- Utilizing the findings of the aforementioned commercialization assessment, work with UAB administrators and key departmental leadership to evaluate the potential benefits of creating an Office of Corporate Alliance and Strategic Partnerships (OCASP). **(E7.21 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Completion of the evaluation process by 1/1/12

**BEST PRACTICE:**

Temple Research Administration (Temple University)  
Office of Research Alliances (University of Rochester)

- Work with UABRF and University administrators to develop an “Innovation Fund” to support the patent portfolio at UAB, sustained by the return on active licenses. **(E7.23B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Development of the fund by 12/31/12. Fundraising will be ongoing
- Continue to lobby for state and federal appropriations that support the acquisition of top faculty and the facilities necessary to maximize their impact on research and development activities at UAB. Provide assistance when requested in helping University administrators identify potential new faculty with track records of extramural funding, technology development, and job creation.
  - METRICS:  
Increased state and federal funding to UAB for economic development of \$30M annually by 12/31/15.

**ACTION 7.3: Develop entrepreneurial districts in the region supported by growth of research/resource centers and facilities.**

**METRIC:**

- Number of graduates from research/resource centers in the region
- Number of jobs in research/resource centers in the region



## **TACTICS:**

- Study best practice entrepreneurial districts that have been developed in recent years around the country, including but not limited to the CORTEX district in St. Louis, Missouri and the Piedmont Triad Research Park in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
  - METRICS:  
Completion of study by 7/1/13

## **BEST PRACTICE:**

CORTEX District (St. Louis, Missouri)

- Create a Master Plan for an Entrepreneurial District in partnership with UAB's Development Office, Facilities Division, Innovation Depot, and other key partners. **(E7.31 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Completion of planning process for Entrepreneurial District Master Plan 12/31/13
- Leverage the Master Plan to design, fund, and develop new facilities in the Entrepreneurial District.
  - METRICS:  
Development of new facilities by 12/31/15
- Identify research/resource centers across the region that could potentially form the core of additional entrepreneurial districts. **(E7.31 – Year Three+)**
  - METRICS:  
Completion of identification of resource centers by 12/31/12

## **ACTION 7.4: Maximize the region's research capacity for the benefit of the target sectors. **(E7.41 – Year Two)****

### **METRIC:**

- Target sector employment growth (as a % of total employment)



## **TACTICS:**

### **Healthcare Services; Biological and Medical Technology:**

- Utilize and expand new, up-and-coming biological and medical technology programs at UAB, and explore potential approaches to facilitating collaboration with other local institutions.
  - METRICS:  
100 new jobs in this sector by 12/31/15
  
- Encourage the Southern Research Institute (SRI) to optimize the value of its \$14.7 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to become a production site for a national collaborative research network designed to expedite drug development.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
  
- Work with the Lakeshore Foundation to determine the potential to focus research and development monies on its efforts to provide therapeutic and recreational opportunities for physically disabled clients.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

### **Metal and Steel Manufacturing:**

- Promote the integration of research and development conducted at UAB's Materials Processing and Applications Center with target development efforts.
  - METRICS:  
Number of Industrial Collaborators
  
- Investigate potential partnerships with SRI in its variety of activities related to the engineering fields.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



## **Trade and Distribution:**

- Determine if the Birmingham region's strong information technology capacity in regional universities and companies can be directed towards opportunities in logistics.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Investigate potential synergies between the Birmingham region's Healthcare Services and Biological and Medical Technology sectors and the region's Trade and Distribution sector.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

## **Diverse Manufacturing:**

- Pursue opportunities to leverage the Birmingham region's traditional production economy into employment growth in "green" manufacturing.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

## **All Sectors**

- Collaborate with faculty and staff at the region's colleges and universities to provide value-added research of interest to firms in the region's core sectors and emerging opportunities.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

## **Objective 8: Effectively leverage existing businesses for the growth of the Birmingham region's economy.**

### **ACTION 8.1: Enhance and expand the BBA's business retention and expansion (BRE) program.**

#### **METRIC:**

- Announced new jobs
- Announced capital investment

## **TACTICS:**

- Transition from a volunteer-based to a professionally staffed program. **(E8.11B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Hire of staff complete
  
- Partner with the Existing Business Team to redesign regional business retention and expansion efforts based on the newly staffed BBA program. **(E8.11B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Redesign plan by 3/31/12; ongoing
  
- Optimize BBA’s volunteers in economic development support roles.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
  
- Determine the potential to develop memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between BBA and the Existing Business Team partners related to BRE protocols. **(E8.12B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
  
- Formalize the components of the staffed regional BRE program, including the acquisition of industry-standard BRE software and the formalization of outreach and follow-up processes. **(E8.13C– Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Business retention staff hired and work plan in place by 12/31/11
  
- Work with medium to large employers (greater than 250 employees) to map supply chains and identify potential recruitment targets that could benefit from co-location near existing businesses in the region. **(E7.11 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



- Work with small and minority-owned businesses and other large employers to identify businesses within their supply chain or that are frequent contractors that could benefit from co-location near existing businesses in the region. Pursue targeted recruitment of identified firms.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

## **ACTION 8.2: Establish business leadership councils in the Birmingham region's priority target sectors.**

### **METRIC:**

- All Target Sector Leadership Councils formed and functioning by 11/30/11

### **TACTICS:**

- Leverage the councils to support the development of formal sector networks, inform BRE and business development efforts, assist with the coordination of regional talent development efforts, and inform new enterprise development opportunities.
  - METRICS:  
TCLCs recruited and first meetings held before 11/30/11; ongoing
- Determine if an existing industry group, council, or board can serve as the basis for a sector leadership council affiliated with the Blueprint plan.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Determine the optimal membership levels and dynamics, meeting frequencies, and strategic roles and responsibilities of the councils during their development phase. **(E8.21 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



- Utilize the councils to develop cross-industry linkages that could benefit the development of the Birmingham region’s target business sectors.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Encourage representation from private businesses, education and training institutions, public-sector officials, and non-profit leadership on leadership councils, as appropriate. **(E8.22 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Staff each leadership council with a BBA staff member. **(E8.23 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Coordinate workforce needs specific to each economic target sector with college and university curriculum development personnel. **(W5.11 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Number of new curricula developed.
- Leverage the sector leadership councils and affiliated groups to determine the media, messages, and markets to prioritize for advertising investments.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

**BEST PRACTICE:**

Nashville Health Care Council (Nashville, TN)



**Objective 9: Provide the support and coordination necessary to enable small businesses to launch and succeed in the Birmingham region.**

**ACTION 9.1: Augment and better coordinate regional small business and entrepreneurial assistance by establishing the Birmingham Regional Enterprise Council (BREC).**

**METRIC:**

- Number of small businesses (< 250 employees) in the region

**TACTICS**

- Initiate discussions with members of BBA’s small business councils to establish an omnibus, holistic model branded as the Birmingham Regional Enterprise Council (BREC). Ensure that all existing councils are included in discussions, including the African American Business Council, the Entrepreneur’s Roundtable, the Executive Women’s Roundtable, the Hispanic Business Council, and the Small Business Council. **(E9.11A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
BREC created/launched by 12/16/10
- Develop a small business seed-capital fund overseen by selected BREC members. **(Portion of E9.14A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Seed capital fund developed by 12/31/12
- Aggregate all existing small business development programming under the auspices of the BREC, while maintaining the independent operations and strategic initiatives of the BBA’s various small business councils. **(E9.13A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Completed at the time of BREC launch; ongoing



- Leverage the Birmingham SCORE chapter and assist the chapter in expanding their volunteer base and small business development programs.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Implement a program in the Birmingham region to better coordinate regional small business support services.
  - METRICS:  
Implement coordination program by 12/31/12

### **BEST PRACTICE:**

KCSourceLink (Kansas City, Missouri)

- Expand the Entrepreneur’s Roundtable Program to serve a broader regional constituency.
  - METRICS:  
Number of roundtable participants, tracked annually

### **ACTION 9.2: Establish and support targeted, minority business development programs.**

#### **METRIC:**

- Number of minorities in executive/leadership positions

#### **TACTICS**

- Support and enhance operations of the South Region Minority Supplier Development Council and the Minority Business Opportunity Center. **(E9.21 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Support minority business mentorship programs that engages the regions minority business leaders.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



- Actively promote existing minority entrepreneurship education programs. Consider developing new educational programs that target minority students in collaboration with high schools and higher education institutions. **(E9.22 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Number of new minority entrepreneurial education programs established annually
- Provide distinct networking opportunities to support the development of strategic partnerships between major regional corporate executives and emerging minority business owners. **(E9.23 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Number of networking opportunities provided annually

## **Objective 10: Market the Birmingham region for the purpose of recruitment of domestic-foreign based businesses.**

### **ACTION 10.1: Host inbound marketing events and participate in outbound marketing events that are aligned with the region’s core sectors and emerging opportunity sectors.**

#### **METRIC:**

- Measured by attainment of annual announced jobs and announced capital investment goals.

#### **TACTICS**

- Orient external visits and attendance at business sector events around regional target priorities. **(E10.11 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Positively influence relocation prospects and site consultants through a best practice inbound marketing program. **(E10.12 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



**ACTION 10.2: Market the Birmingham region as a top destination for innovation, research, and technology commercialization.**

**METRIC:**

- Job growth in the innovation, research and technology commercialization sectors

**TACTICS**

- Work with the recommended Commercialization Advisory Committee (see Action 7.2) to identify the highest-value markets and media for advertising placements. **(E10.21 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Marketing plan developed including markets and media by 3/31/12.
- Develop a protocol for following up with leads and prospects generated by the campaign. **(E10.22 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

**ACTION 10.3: Enhance the Birmingham region’s marketing collateral, new media, and public relations efforts.**

**METRIC:**

- Announced new jobs
- Announced capital investment

**TACTICS**

- Create a new Birmingham Business Alliance website. **(E10.31A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Completed by 9/1/10; ongoing

**BEST PRACTICE:** Greater Richmond Partnership, Inc. (Richmond, Virginia)



- Capitalize on the reach and relevance of Birmingham Magazine as a prime communication channel to promote the region's quality of life as a key ingredient of successful economic development.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
  
- Develop targeted marketing materials for talent recruitment efforts.
  - METRICS:  
Materials designed and produced by 7/1/12
  
- Create a monthly BBA e-newsletter for external audiences to complement the existing internally-focused product.
  - METRICS:  
Launched in 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2010; re-issued bi-monthly; ongoing
  
- Develop a branded PowerPoint template and slide library that can be drawn from to create custom sales presentations. **(E10.31B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Completed on 10/1/10
  
- Produce a regional overview brochure highlighting the Birmingham region's key business-competitiveness advantages and resources. **(E10.32B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Production of brochures by 3/31/12
  
- Create target audience datasheets highlighting the region's assets specifically to the profiled sector. **(E10.33B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Creation of datasheets by 3/31/12



- Develop datasheets for each of the Birmingham region's component counties. **(E10.33B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Creation of datasheets by 3/31/12
- Invest in additional software and online tools to facilitate contact and sales cycle management.
  - METRICS:  
Integration of software by 7/1/12
- Contract with a top public relations firm or individual to promote the Birmingham region in the local, state, and national press. **(E10.31C – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Contract entered into 5/1/11 and with option to renew annually
- Continue to utilize the Birmingham-Jefferson Film Office to promote the region as a destination for film production.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

## **ACTION 10.4: Evaluate and promote export opportunities for existing companies.**

### **METRIC:**

- Increased regional export activity
- Announced new jobs
- Announced new capital investment

### **TACTICS**

- Utilize BBA's existing business program to leverage relationships with the region's businesses with overseas headquarters, affiliates, and buyer/supplier networks for regional benefit. **(E10.41 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



- Best leverage international trade support capacity from the state of Alabama by continuing to expand and develop new partnerships. **(E10.42 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

## **ACTION 10.5: Continue to aggressively promote the Birmingham region as a tourism destination.**

### **METRIC:**

- Number of tourists, by county, annually.
- Tourism dollars, by county, annually.

### **TACTICS**

- Create a Regional Tourism Council as a partnership of the BBA, Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), hospitality businesses, event programmers, and state tourism officials to optimize the development and marketing of the Birmingham region’s tourism economy. **(E10.51 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Creation of council by 12/31/12
- Enhance efforts to promote the Birmingham region’s most popular tourist attractions.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Work with hospitality and tourism development staff and regional company representatives to help advocate for optimization of the city of Birmingham’s business climate and promote development incentives that enable investors to complete projects in Downtown Birmingham and other regional activity centers.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



- Offer visitors the opportunity to bundle entry fees for multiple Birmingham area attractions into one purchase price.
  - METRICS:
    - 1) Determine the feasibility of “bundling” fees for multiple regional attractions by 7/1/12
    - 2) Increased attendance at regional attractions

## **Objective 11: Ensure that the Birmingham region’s business climate is competitive for existing and future companies.**

### **ACTION 11.1: Optimize development, review and permitting processes in the region.**

#### **METRIC:**

- Review and assessment of permitting processes completed by 12/31/12
- Recommendations submitted to cities/counties for consideration by 7/1/13

#### **TACTICS**

- Work with local governments to effectively co-locate planning, development, and permitting offices and staff in a single location to improve customer efficiency and oversight. **(E11.11 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Support local governments in efforts to enable clients to apply for, review, and receive permits online to the highest degree possible. **(E11.12 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Support local governments in their efforts to leverage technology to enable city inspectors to send reports wirelessly from the field. **(E11.13 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



- Support local governments in their reviews of departmental permitting processes. **(E11.14 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Produce a seminar for all local governments in the region highlighting best practices in municipal government management.
  - METRICS:  
Produce seminar during 2012

**ACTION 11.2: Ensure the region’s tax and incentives climate is competitive.**

**METRIC:**

- Announced new jobs
- Announced new capital investment

**TACTICS**

- Pursue the potential development of a regional “super authority” that would include cooperation among all counties and municipalities to allow for the creation of competitive incentives on a regional level. **(E11.21 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Creation of regional super-authority by 12/31/15
- Engage the BBA’s Finance and Taxation Committee to develop a plan to promote a competitive taxation structure in Jefferson County. **(E11.22 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Legislation passed and signed into law; local ordinance pending and due by 12/31/11



- Continually collect qualitative and quantitative assessments of the region’s tax climate from external audiences and perspectives. **(E11.23 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Continually discuss tax and incentive issues with existing businesses as a component of BBA’s staffed BRE program. **(E11.24 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

**ACTION 11.3: Improve prospect-management processes with counties and municipalities in the region.**

**METRIC:**

- Increased number of projects in the region leading to additional jobs and capital investment

**TACTICS**

- Encourage partnerships between economic developers and municipal and county staff that provide value to prospects. **(E11.31 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



## COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP

**Goal Statement:** "Building a highly-attractive quality of place is central to Blueprint Birmingham. In order to develop a more attractive region for existing and future residents and businesses, we will support improvements in physical infrastructure, affordable public transportation, public safety, environmental quality, entertainment options, and cultural amenities."

### **Objective 12: Provide competitive infrastructure capacity in the Birmingham region.**

**ACTION 12.1: Promote development of priority regional road transportation and transit system projects.**

**METRIC:**

- Travel congestion index (% of daily travel in congested conditions)
- Mean travel time to work

**TACTICS:**

- Support the process of determining the long-term potential to expand the geographic scope of the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to include Bibb County. **(R12.11A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Build consensus on the critical need for local and regional transit capacity in the Birmingham region, including but not limited to key transit elements of the Long Range Transportation Plan and the In-Town Transit Partnership. **(R12.11B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Consensus reached by 12/31/15 with state and regional decision makers



- Leverage ongoing Regional Planning Commission and Metropolitan Planning Organization efforts to coordinate transit route planning based on employment and training demand.  
**(Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Fully leverage the BBA's Finance and Taxation Committee and Governmental Affairs Committee to proactively and positively impact transportation-improvement projects.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Advocate for the timely and efficient completion of Interstate-22 as a means of improving transportation congestion and enhancing economic development opportunities in the Birmingham region.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Support the Coalition for Regional Transportation's efforts to fund and develop the Northern Beltline as consistent with planning priorities regionally, statewide, and nationally.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Aggressively pursue alternatives to the mitigation of traffic congestion on U.S. 280 through metro Birmingham.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Consider developing a formal working group of public, private, and non-profit leaders to support the RPC and MPO in advancing priority road-infrastructure projects throughout the region.  
**(R12.12A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



**ACTION 12.2: Support actions to enhance the competitive position of Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport.****METRIC:**

- Number of passengers served annually at Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International airport (2.9M in 2010)
- Number of daily flights (130 in 2010)
- Number of cities served by non-stop routes (22 in 2010)
- Air cargo shipped/received in tons per year (2,099 in May 2011)

**TACTICS:**

- Seek BBA representation on the Birmingham Airport Authority Board to provide business community input on the strategic plan to upgrade the airport's passenger and cargo facilities to best-in-class standards. **(R12.21A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
BBA representative on BAA board by 12/31/14
- Maximize opportunities to locate aerospace companies in the Birmingham region.
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Support efforts to upgrade the arterial gateways to and from the airport. **(R12.21B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Support efforts to increase passenger demand at Birmingham-Shuttlesworth. **(R12.21 – Year Three+)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



**ACTION 12.3: Ensure regional communications infrastructure remains a competitive advantage.****METRIC:**

- Combined deployment of broadband communications facilities in the seven county region by providers in the Connect Alabama Broadband Taskforce.

**TACTICS:**

- Leverage ongoing business retention and expansion visits to determine regional businesses' needs and concerns related to broadband wireless and wire-line communications capacity. **(R12.31 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Maintain partnerships with communications providers to best manage companies and institutions' technology needs and performance demands. **(R12.32 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Completion of infrastructure/demand maps by May 2012. Ongoing as new data becomes available.

**Objective 13: Improve the Birmingham region's "quality of place" amenities.****ACTION 13.1: Continue efforts to enhance the Birmingham region's cultural and entertainment amenities including the ongoing development of the major Downtown Birmingham entertainment district.****METRIC:**

- Number of tourists, by county, annually
- Tourism dollars, by county, annually



## **TACTICS:**

- Work towards the development of a Downtown entertainment district.
  - METRICS:  
Development of district according to City of Birmingham timeline
  
- Participate on planning committee with Operation New Birmingham; integrating district planning into overall Downtown development plans, and; pursuing available funding mechanisms to support district development. **(R13.14 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Planning process complete; hotel and entertainment district under construction

## **BEST PRACTICE:**

The Power & Light District (Kansas City, MO)

- Partner with the Cultural Alliance of Greater Birmingham to most effectively implement the Cultural Master Plan of Greater Birmingham. **(R13.11 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
  
- Support continued expansion of the Birmingham Zoo, elevating its reputation as a best-in-class location for tourism in the United States.
  - METRICS:  
Expansion project (“Trails of Africa”) completed in 2Q11; Zoo entrance and work on Cahaba Road entrance under way and will be complete Summer 2012.



- Partner with regional cities and counties, educational institutions, and other key partners to promote and link to a comprehensive events, activities, and resources website for the Birmingham region.
  - METRICS:  
Website (“Birmingham 365.org”) online 3Q11

## **ACTION 13.2: Promote and expand the Birmingham region’s outdoor recreational opportunities.**

### **METRIC:**

- Metric to be determined by CRS Advisory Group

### **TACTIC:**

- Complete the design and development of the Railroad Park Master Plan. **(R13.21A – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Initial construction completed – park designed and opened on 9/16/10; Completion of Phase I funding of master plan.
- Proceed with fast-tracked planning, funding, and development of Red Mountain Park. **(R13.21A – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Planning complete and capital funding raised by 12/31/12
- Work collaboratively to support ongoing efforts to implement the region’s bicycle, pedestrian and greenway projects. **(R13.21B – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Work collaboratively to support the “Our One Mile Greenway Master Plan” in Jefferson County.
  - METRICS:  
50 miles constructed in 5 years



## **BEST PRACTICE:**

Atlanta's PATH Foundation (Atlanta, Georgia)

- Design and build bike and pedestrian trails around the Birmingham Zoo/Botanical Gardens that will connect with Lakeshore/Jemison Park/Railroad Park and Red Mountain Park.
  - METRICS:  
Completion of project by 12/31/13

## **Objective 14: Improve public safety in the Birmingham region.**

### **ACTION 14.1: Promote regional public safety coordination.**

#### **METRIC:**

- Violent crimes per 100,000 population
- Property crimes per 100,000 population
- Number of law enforcement jurisdictions participating in Crime Stoppers.

#### **TACTIC:**

- Expand Crime Stoppers to include representatives from the BBA, law enforcement, campus police, City Action Partnership, neighborhood watch entities, corporate security representatives and others from the region. **(R14.11 – Year Three)**
  - METRICS:  
Expansion complete by 7/1/13
- Leverage Crime Stoppers to discuss comprehensive, coordinated region-wide public safety solutions. **(R14.12 – Year Three+)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Evaluate the idea of establishing a community court system in Birmingham.
  - METRICS:  
Decision on community court implementation made by 7/1/14



- Assist the proposed public safety task force (Crime Stoppers) in researching and developing plans to establish a community court in Birmingham. **(R14.21 – Year Three+)**
  - METRICS:  
Decision on community court implementation made by 7/1/14
- Support the establishment of community courts in other regional jurisdictions, as needed. **(R14.22 – Year Three+)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

**BEST PRACTICE:**

Downtown Austin Community Court (Austin, Texas)

**Objective 15: Effectively remediate the Birmingham region’s environmental quality and protection issues.**

**ACTION 15.1: Promote efforts to improve regional air quality and achieve Environmental Protection Agency attainment status for the region in an appropriate and timely manner.**

**METRIC:**

- Ozone and PM (particulate matter) standards as adopted by the Alabama Partners for Clean Air

**TACTIC:**

- Initiate constructive dialogue with key regional stakeholder entities to determine the necessary steps to achieve attainment status. **(R15.11 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Dialogue initiated by 12/31/11



**ACTION 15.2: Work with governmental officials to remediate Brownfields and Greyfields in the Birmingham region.**

**METRIC:**

- Brownfield/Greyfield sites to be inventoried by jurisdiction; remediation efforts to be tracked by project/parcel

**TACTIC:**

- Recruit public and private leaders to adopt and participate in remediation efforts. **(R15.21 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Recruiting completed by 12/31/12
- Pursue and administer a Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund and other grants from the EPA and other government agencies.
  - METRICS:  
Creation of loan fund by 12/31/12
- Work closely with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to leverage their expertise and support for site assessments, clean-up assistance, and technical support in repositioning properties. **(R15.23 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing
- Actively market brownfield and Greyfield properties in the region. **(R15.22 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing

**BEST PRACTICE:**

Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)



**ACTION 15.3: Emphasize best practices for maintaining and enhancing quality drinking water in the region.****METRIC:**

- Annual water quality rating as provided by Birmingham Water Works Board

**TACTIC:**

- Assemble a working group of private sector leaders, academic and private sector researchers, and representatives from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to produce recommendations for short-term improvements in, and long-term maintenance of, water quality standards in the region. **(R15.32 – Year One)**
  - METRICS:  
Recommendations complete and report issued by 7/1/12

**Objective 16: Work to make the Birmingham region’s residents and businesses strong advocates for its existing businesses and future prospects.****ACTION 16.1: Design and implement an internal marketing campaign to elevate and improve community pride and perceptions.****METRIC:**

- Percentage of annual image survey respondents having a favorable impression of the region

**TACTIC:**

- Reach out to regional constituencies and leadership to capture stories that speak to the Birmingham region’s unique people, places, programs, and partnerships. **(R16.11 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Ongoing



- Create an interactive website associated with the internal campaign. **(R16.12 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Website redesigned and online by 9/1/10; Phase II of project to include enhanced data and search capabilities
- Leverage a multi-channel approach to marketing the internal campaign. **(R16.13 – Year Two)**
  - METRICS:  
Increased awareness and favorable impression of the region as measured by an annual online survey

**BEST PRACTICE:**

MyLouisville/Friends of Lou (Louisville, Kentucky)



## APPENDIX: BEST PRACTICES

This Appendix provides a brief description of a number of national best practice programs that are referenced throughout the body of the Blueprint Birmingham Regional Economic Development Strategy.

### Public and Private Leadership

#### Lansing Regional Chamber Political Action Committee (Lansing, Michigan)

The Lansing Regional Chamber Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) is a voluntary, non-profit, non-partisan, unincorporated committee with membership open to all individuals that are members of the Chamber and wish to make contributions to support candidates with a pro-business attitude. Contributions typically range from as low as \$25 to as much as \$1,500. The LRC-PAC is run by a volunteer Board of Directors with an elected Chairperson.

The LRC-PAC stays involved in monitoring many election races including races for Lansing City Council, Michigan State Representatives, Michigan State Senators, the Lansing Area School Board Members, local Township Board Members, and Ingham County Commissioners. Each year the LRC-PAC surveys Chamber members regarding their views on current issues and upcoming elections online. From those responses a questionnaire is put together and sent out to every registered candidate for particular upcoming elections. Based on candidate responses, LRC-PAC Board members conduct candidate interviews and review candidates backgrounds before making recommendations to the full LRC-PAC Board. A majority vote from the LRC-PAC Board is required for a candidate to receive endorsement.

The United States Chamber of Commerce has recognized the LRC-PAC as a national best practice.

<http://www.lansingchamber.org/lrc-pac/index.html>

#### Government Transparency (Tulsa County, Oklahoma)

Tulsa County, Oklahoma's website was one of only 14 government websites out of 5,000 evaluated to earn a perfect score for its "transparency grade," as judged by Sunshine Review, whose "Transparency Checklist" analyzes websites for information about



budgets, meetings, elected and administrative officials, permits and zoning, audits, contracts, lobbying, public records, and taxes. The "Checklist" measures what content is available on government websites against what should be provided.

"Sunny Award winners deserve recognition for making information available to citizens and for setting a transparency standard that all governments can, and should, meet," said Mike Barnhart, President of Sunshine Review. "Access to information empowers every citizen to hold government officials accountable for the conduct of the public's business and the spending of taxpayers' money. Official accountability is the corner stone of self government and liberty."

Since its inception in 2008, Sunshine Review has analyzed the websites of all 50 states, more than 3,140 counties, 805 cities, and 1,560 school districts.

Tulsa County's list of positives, as it relates to government transparency, include all of the following:

- Budget information is provided.
- County board members are listed with contact information.
- Board meeting dates are posted, as well as meeting agendas and documents.
- Local tax information is available on the treasurer's website.
- Building permits are available on the Inspections page, and the county's zoning codes are posted.
- Administrative officials are listed under their departments.
- Name and contact information for the public information officer is published.
- Stimulus information is posted for the county.
- Taxpayer-funded lobbying associations disclose membership.
- 2008 audit is posted.
- County contacts are posted.

<http://www.tulsacounty.org>

[http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/Sunny\\_Awards](http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/Sunny_Awards)

## **Tulsa's Young Professionals (Tulsa, Oklahoma)**

Tulsa's Young Professionals (TYPros) was founded by the Tulsa Metro Chamber in 2003 in response to the region's "brain drain" of new graduates and young professionals to other cities and states. In its first six years, TYPros grew to more than 6,300 members. The organization is a key component of the Tulsa Metro Chamber's regional



economic development plan, Tulsa's Future. To ensure that the group was maturing into an active facilitator of community change, TYPros developed "work crews" allowing young professionals to have a collective voice and impact on a number of community concerns and initiatives. TYPROs work crews are focused around the following issues:

- ✓ Business Development
- ✓ Colleges & Universities
- ✓ Community Ambassadors
- ✓ Community Redevelopment
- ✓ Diversity
- ✓ Government Relations
- ✓ Next Generation Leadership
- ✓ Special Events
- ✓ Sustainability

The Government Relations Crew organized has organized legislative days in which they rent buses and take a large consistency of young professionals to the state capital for a day of meetings with state representatives from the region. The Diversity Crew promotes greater diversity within TYPros membership while hosting a number of events to promote dialogue about diversity in Metro Tulsa. The organization's mission is to attract and retain young talent in the Tulsa metro region while also establishing Tulsa's next generation of business and community leaders.

<http://www.typros.org>

## **Workforce Development**

### **Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce's Education and Workforce Development Council (Montgomery, Alabama)**

The Education and Workforce Development Council (EWDC) at the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce provides support to a number of initiatives in Montgomery Public Schools (MPS) through the Council's various sub-committees.

The School Facilities Task Force works with hundreds of volunteers to help improve school grounds through painting, planting, landscaping, and other projects.

The Leadership Development Initiative provides training focused on supervisory tools and the principles of leadership to help enhance the leadership attributes of MPS officials including senior staff and principals.

The Mentoring Sub-Committee has helped launch the Partners in Education School-Based Mentoring Initiative in grades six through eight. The business community supports the program by providing mentors who offer support, friendship, advice, and positive examples with the goal of one-time student promotion to the ninth grade. Student promotion is achieved by reducing absenteeism, targeting disruptive and criminal behavior, and elevating student self-worth. The School-Based Mentoring Initiative began in August 2009 and connected 100 students in five schools to 200 adult mentors. By 2012, it will connect 800 students with 1600 mentors.

The Career Academies Task Force works with MPS administrators to help support the development of career academies. Seven career academies are located in the system's four high schools and are focused on health science, information technology, law and public service, business and finance, advanced manufacturing, teaching, and culinary arts and hospitality.

<http://www.montgomerychamber.com>

### **Mobile Area Education Foundation (Mobile, Alabama)**

The Mobile Area Education Foundation is an independent, non-profit, education fund dedicated to building community-wide responsibility for improving public education outcomes in Mobile County. In its roughly 10-year existence, the Foundation has developed a track record of supporting and implementing a variety of successful initiatives.

The Partners in Education program is based on a national model implemented in many communities across the country. The program leverages regional businesses and non-profit organizations as sponsors of and volunteers for a variety of educational improvement initiatives in specific schools. In Mobile County alone, the Partners in Education program is responsible for more than \$2.3 million in private investment in such initiatives in the County's schools. More than 1,000 businesses and non-profit organizations are currently partners.

The Fund-A-S.T.A.R. (Students and Teachers Achieving Results) initiative is an online portal that links classrooms with potential donors. Teachers submit proposals online for funds to support the acquisition



of resources and teaching materials that will enhance classroom learning. Individual donors can browse the proposals and donate between \$10 and \$1,000 to support the various requests. The program has raised more than \$40,000 from individual donors to support new classroom resources.

The Foundation supports a number of professional development opportunities for teachers in Mobile County, including the Maysville/Mobile Mathematics Initiative's Teacher Leadership Program. This particular program has reached more than 60 teachers across the County over six years, providing them with the training to help implement school-wide mathematics reform, consistent with the Foundation's efforts to improve Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) skill sets.

The Foundation also supports and guides implementation of AT&T Vital Link, a program whereby eight grade students and teachers spend a half-day for five days as interns in Mobile businesses. Teachers prepare students by helping to make the connection between traditional subjects such as language arts, science, and social studies, with their applications within a workplace. The hands-on experience with local employers is intended to help students begin thinking about potential career paths.

<http://www.maef.net>

### **The Leader in Me: A.B. Combs Elementary School (Raleigh, North Carolina)**

In 1989, Steven Covey released the best-selling book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. In 1999, A.B. Combs Elementary in Raleigh, North Carolina was struggling with low academic performance and lack of engagement among faculty and parents. Administrators and teachers began searching for a solution, including learning principle-based leadership skills and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. The lessons learned by teachers were taken back to the classroom, integrated into curriculums, and passed on to students. A.B. Combs formalized its leadership initiative to blend leadership training and character education into every facet of a school's curriculum and culture. Students are taught that "leadership is a choice, not a position" and are equipped with the self-confidence and skills that complement their academics to become 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders. Students are taught how to set goals and track those goals throughout the year. In addition, students are taught public speaking skills and



social etiquette, in an effort to prepare them to face the world head on.

In a short amount of time, end-of-grade tests improved dramatically. In just over one year, average end-of-year passing grades for students jumped from 84 to 94 percent. Discipline problems dropped significantly. Parents began reporting incredible shifts in their children's attitudes and behaviors. Students began problem solving and engaging in more positive ways with each other. The school saw significant and sustained increases in students' self-confidence and impressive increases in teacher and administrator job satisfaction. Today, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* has become completely integrated into the curriculum at A.B. Combs, and the school is widely recognized for its focus on leadership development.

In 2008, Covey released a new book, *The Leader in Me – How Schools and Parents Around the World Are Inspiring Greatness, One Child at a Time*, which details the successes at A.B. Combs Elementary. Other schools around the country are beginning to adopt similar approaches.

- In Alberta, Canada, Joseph Welsh Elementary is reporting that parent satisfaction with what children are being taught has increased from 67 to 98 percent.
- In Decatur, Alabama, a local businessman and chamber of commerce president adopted Chestnut Grove Elementary and sponsored it as a leadership school.
- In Adams County, Illinois, documented improvements in academic success at Dewey Elementary captured the eye of the United Way, which is now working to ensure that all 10,000 students in the county receive the same opportunity.

<http://www.theleaderinme.org>

<http://combses.wcpss.net>

### **North Carolina Early College High Schools (State of North Carolina)**

Students in early college high schools graduate with both a high school diploma and two years of transferable college credit or an associate's degree. In most cases, early college students stay in high school five years to complete those college courses. Located on the campuses of two- and four-year colleges and universities, early college high schools are intended to attract students who often are under-represented in



college: minorities, students from low-income families, and those whose parents never attended college.

North Carolina leaders launched the early college high school initiative in 2004 as a way to help encourage more students to complete high school and to gain the kind of advanced skills increasingly demanded in the workplace of the 21st century. Early college high schools support students through what effectively become their first two years of college "the most vulnerable period for students from low-income families. The early colleges also lift the financial barrier students and families often face when considering college. Students get two years of college credit without paying tuition.

North Carolina is now a national leader in developing early colleges. Since 2005, the number of early college high schools in North Carolina has increased more than fivefold, from 13 to 70. Nationally, about 200 early college high schools are open in 24 states. Through a grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation and funding from the General Assembly, students in seven early college high schools work with one-to-one access to laptop computers.

<http://newschoolsproject.org/>

### **Parent Institute for Quality Education (State of California)**

The Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) began in California in 1987 when Reverend Vahac Mardirosian (retired pastor and community activist) and Dr. Albert Ochoa (San Diego State University professor) engaged parents to discuss social conditions, the school system, and persistent problems of low academic achievement in their community. The initial session was so popular that the program evolved into eight different sessions. At the end of this initial process, Dr. Ochoa took the lessons from these eight sessions and developed a formal nine-week curriculum for workshops targeting K-12 parents.

The Parent Institute for Quality Education was born and quickly spread to school districts throughout California. The workshop is offered by certified instructors trained by PIQE, and educates parents on a variety of topics including motivation, communication, discipline, school system organization, college preparation, and overcoming obstacles in child learning. The program is typically supported in part by the school system (leveraging Title 1, Title 111 and No Child Left Behind funds) with contributions from charities and grants. The program is offered free of charge to parents and is typically offered in morning and evening sessions to accommodate various schedules. Since starting in



California, PIQE has spread to other regions of the country including the Washington D.C. metropolitan area and communities throughout Texas, Arizona, and Minnesota. As of 2009, over 375,000 parents have graduated from PIQE's parent involvement training classes in California alone.

<http://www.piqe.org>

### **Parent University (Mesa, Arizona)**

With the philosophy that parenting is a continuous learning process and that the foundation for a child's education is laid at home, the Mesa Public School system launched a Parent University program in 1985.<sup>1</sup> The diverse offering of sessions and workshops, held in junior high school auditoriums and other local school sites, now boasts attendance rates of 4,000 parents annually. The program is publicized through radio announcements, target fliers, brochures sent home with every student, and announcements in the monthly district newsletter. Topics for sessions are relevant, often specifically requested by parents, and led by local and national speakers and experts.

Parent University is funded through a small registration fee for participants, grants, partnerships with local nonprofit agencies like Mesa United Way. Scholarships are available for those parents who are unable to meet the registration fee.

<http://www.mpsaz.org/parentu/>

## **Economic Prosperity**

### **Eminent Scholars Program - Georgia Research Alliance (State of Georgia)**

The Georgia Research Alliance (GRA) is a non-profit organization, founded in 1990, that is designed to allow businesses, research universities and the state government to collaborate and build a technology-driven economy fueled by innovative university research. The GRA strives to attract the world's pre-eminent scientists to lead extraordinary programs of research and development at affiliated Georgia research universities. They focus on areas with the most potential for generating new companies,

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<sup>1</sup> Bafile, Caren. "Parent University: Adults Hone Skills for Stronger Communities, Kids." Education World. 16 November 2004. <[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_admin/admin/admin381.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_admin/admin/admin381.shtml)>.



helping established companies grow, and creating new science and technology jobs.

The GRA's 60 Eminent Scholars are employed faculty members at a variety of Georgia institutions of higher education, including Clark Atlanta University, Emory University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, and the Medical College of Georgia. Together, these eminent scholars help to:

- Compete for a larger share of federal and foundation research funds.
- Attract other talented faculty and graduate students to Georgia.
- Foster new companies and create relationships with industry to commercialize technologies developed through research.

With the financial backing of the Georgia legislature, the state's research universities, private foundations and other supporters, the GRA has focused on marshalling talent and resources and driving an effective strategy for achieving these results. Today, the GRA is a well-regarded model for nurturing public-private partnerships to advance innovation and technology development in the state. In addition, one of the GRA's most important accomplishments has been bringing together the state's research institutions to foster cross-university research, which is often critical when competing for federal research funding. Presidents of each university sit on the GRA board along with prominent state business leaders.

To date, the GRA has invested approximately \$510 million, which has helped attract dozens of GRA Eminent Scholars, leveraged an additional \$2.6 billion in federal and private funding (a return of more than \$5 for every \$1 invested), created more than 5,500 new science and technology jobs, established more than 150 new companies, and allowed established Georgia companies to expand into new markets.

<http://www.gra.org>

## **The Deshpande Center for Technological Innovation (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)**

Through an initial gift from Jaishree and Desh Deshpande, the Deshpande Center was established at MIT's School of Engineering to increase the influence of innovative MIT technologies in the marketplace through guidance and a sustainable source of funding. The Center is funded through financial and professional support of MIT alumni, entrepreneurs, corporations, and investors. The Deshpande



Center funds and supports a diverse breadth of emerging technologies that includes biotechnology, biomedical devices, energy innovations, information technology, new materials, and “tiny tech.”

Since its founding in 2002, the Deshpande Center has funded more than 80 projects with over \$10 million through several funding and programmatic approaches. Ignition Grants offer as much as \$50,000 for projects that target new and beneficial ideas in all technology-related areas. Innovation Grants for up to \$25,000 aim to overcome the obstacles that may hinder innovation from advancing in technologies that have already progressed past the earliest development stages.

The Deshpande Center offers a number of hands-on programs for student entrepreneurs to interact with established innovators and commercialization strategies. The Catalyst Program brings together a group of experienced, proactive, and committed individuals from the entrepreneur and technology commercialization communities who mentor and guide innovators in making an impact in the marketplace. Innovation Teams (i-Teams) are student groups who, through collaboration with faculty and mentors, develop effective commercialization strategies through the assessment of technical and market risks and economic and social prospects for scientific and engineering breakthroughs in an array of disciplines.

Twelve companies have been created through the Deshpande Center’s efforts, collectively raising more than \$180 million in outside financing and hiring over 200 employees. Thirteen venture capital firms have invested in these ventures. Additionally, activities led by the Center have engaged over 100 volunteers from the venture and entrepreneur community, supporting more than 200 MIT faculty and students in a number of departments and disciplines.

### **William J. von Liebig Center (University of California, San Diego)**

Founded in 2001 through a \$10 million gift from the William J. von Liebig Foundation, the von Liebig Center at the UCSD Jacobs School of Engineering became the first university-based “proof-of-concept” commercialization center in the U.S. The Center’s core mission is to advance entrepreneurship and commercialize early-stage technologies through grants, education, and mentoring.

The von Liebig Center typically funds 10 to 12 projects from proposals reviewed externally by independent consultants. Seed funds of up to

\$75,000 are granted UCSD faculty or graduate students to support commercialization with near-term market prospects. The grants may be used for development, testing, prototype construction, market research, or intellectual property protection.

The Center also offers advisory services to facilitate exchange between the university and the business community and to assist UCSD researchers in discovering commercialization strategies. Experienced technology and business advisors from a wide range of backgrounds and investment networks help faculty, graduate students, and research staff with a number of issues related to commercialization, marketing, and technology transfer.

Since its establishment, the von Liebig Center invested more than \$3.8 million in seed grants, advocacy, and advisement to over 70 projects selected from more than 200 proposals. These projects have resulted in over 22 license agreements and the launches of 26 startup firms. Consequently, those start-ups have attracted more than \$87 million in ensuing private financing and created over 180 jobs. In addition, over 400 graduate and undergraduate students have matriculated in the Center's entrepreneurship courses.

### **Temple Research Administration (Temple University)**

The Temple Research Administration interfaces with the business community through two distinct operational functions: the Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) and the Office of Strategic Initiatives & Corporate Partnerships (OSICP).

Like most traditional models of technology transfer, OTT is tasked with the commercialization of inventions resulting from University research, assisting University researchers with invention disclosures and the patenting process, while overseeing the licensing of University patents to external entities.

The Office of Strategic Initiatives & Corporate Partnerships (OSICP) assists companies in identifying and accessing Temple faculty expertise and research centers, and works to foster University-industry research partnerships. The Office assists Temple faculty and staff with creation of new companies based on university research and technologies, and helps connect faculty and staff with sources of early stage capital and investors, as well as mentors and management expertise.



OSICP is designed to provide a “one stop shop” for the business community to minimize corporate efforts to:

- Find faculty and staff expertise
- Sponsor research and innovation
- Develop strategic corporate alliances
- Utilize university’s resources/facilities
- Recruit students and graduates

Although a separate entity, OSICP works closely with OTT to identify the most appropriate avenues to commercialize University research and intellectual property. When licensing technologies is not viewed as a viable or preferred method, OSICP works with University researchers to evaluate start-up potential. If OSICP and the research team find that there is strong market potential and a high likelihood of obtaining external funding to support start-up growth, OSICP will help guide the development of a business model and plan, recruit management expertise, and formally establish the company.

### **Office of Research Alliances, University of Rochester (Rochester, New York)**

The Office of Research Alliances (ORA) at the University of Rochester has undergone an important transition during 2010. Formerly, the Office of Corporate Alliances exclusively served the University of Rochester Medical Center and focused on fostering research partnerships in the biomedical and medical technology fields. In 2010, the University expanded the functions of the Office to encompass the entire University and enhance strategic research partnerships between the University’s research community, private business, government laboratories, and other academic institutions.

The Office currently focuses on the University’s strategic research priorities, including biomedical research, translational medicine, imaging and optics, energy research, nanotechnology, health computing, and other areas. Combined, the ORA, Office of Technology Transfer, and Office of Research project Administration work to attract research funding to the University, develop strategic partnerships to create new technologies, and identify the appropriate paths to commercialize new technologies.



## **CORTEX District (St. Louis, Missouri)**

The Center of Research Technology and Entrepreneurial Expertise (CORTEX), founded to promote biotechnology development in St. Louis, has been central to the dramatic growth of a bustling regional plant and medical sciences sector. CORTEX is a one-stop shop that provides easy access to everything a young or mature life sciences company needs to succeed from helping sort out various economic incentives to providing turnkey services including site selection and acquisition. However, CORTEX is not simply a facility or set of services. CORTEX is a not-for-profit partnership of Washington University, Saint Louis University, the Barnes-Jewish Hospital Foundation, the University of Missouri-St. Louis and Missouri Botanical Garden. The consortium also includes founding partners Civic Progress, the City of St. Louis and the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA).

In 2005, the City of St., Louis identified 246 acres to declare as blighted, allowing the government to grant redevelopment rights. CORTEX was granted tax abatement and the power to condemn properties for purchase in exchange for a commitment to redevelop the area. Today, the CORTEX district is quickly becoming the city's hub for entrepreneurial activity. The district is adjacent to the historic neighborhoods and Forest Park, a city park that is larger than New York City's Central Park. The district is anchored by St. Louis University, its medical school and its associated medical and biological research facilities on the East End, and Barnes Jewish Hospital and Washington University on the West End. Numerous medical and biological research facilities are located within the district. The region's largest incubator, the Center for Emerging Technologies (CET), is home to many start-ups that partner closely with researchers at the region's medical schools. The newly constructed LEED-certified CORTEX 1 building provides 170,000 square feet of post-incubation wet lab space for growing companies.

Solae, an international biotech company that develops and produces food additives and products from soy, was formed by a partnership of Bunge and DuPont. As Solae grew, the company could have relocated anywhere in the country, or the world. Instead, Solae decided to build its \$40-million corporate headquarters in the CORTEX district. R. Michael Reed, Solae's vice president of facilities, says CORTEX cut through a lot of red tape by expediting required approvals, permits, and other details involved in working with government and other entities.



[www.cortexstl.com](http://www.cortexstl.com)

### **Nashville Health Care Council (Nashville, Tennessee)**

Comprised of more than 175 member organizations, the Nashville Health Care Council is a partnership of leaders in the health care industry working to further establish the strength and reputation of Nashville as a health care provider hub. The Council promotes the continued growth of Nashville's health care industry by fostering a supportive operating environment for existing, start-up, and relocating health care businesses. Through educational programs, the Council provides executives with timely information on key operational and policy challenges facing health care companies, as well as networking and mentoring activities. Membership dues are organized in a tiered system, with recognition of the role that smaller and start-up companies play in the local health care cluster.

The Council formed in 1995 through the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and continues to work closely with the Chamber on achieving the goals and objectives set out in its Partnership 2010 economic development strategy. The efforts of the Council are focused on attracting health care businesses to the region and expanding existing firms. The Council and Chamber also partner to promote overseas business opportunities in Middle Tennessee's health care cluster through international trade missions to 11 European countries. In the fall of 2010, the Council and Chamber's health care trade mission will travel to Santiago, Chile and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Council provides information, specialized publications, and data on Nashville's health care sector. These resources include a directory of Nashville's health care firms and support businesses and a comprehensive Council website that features upcoming events and health care news.

The Council hosts seminars and workshops organized around issues and innovations in the health care cluster and beyond. "Garage to Wall Street" workshop series identifies major challenges health care entrepreneurs face. A seminar called "Technology in Health Care: The Value and the Vision" included a panel of six health care executives discussing innovations in performance and efficiency.

Leadership Health Care (LHC) is an initiative of the Health Care Council that works to promote educational, mentoring, and networking opportunities to cultivate the growth of Nashville's up-and-coming health care professionals and enhance the regional base of health care



expertise. The organization formed in 2002 to create professional development and learning opportunities for the Nashville's next generation of health care leaders and entrepreneurs. Leadership Health Care leads annual delegations to Washington, D.C. and Wall Street to meet with elected officials, policymakers, and health care industry leaders.

[www.healthcouncil.com](http://www.healthcouncil.com)

### **KCSOURCELINK (Kansas City, Missouri)**

Launched in 2003 by the Kauffman Foundation, in collaboration with the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, KCSOURCELINK connects small business owners with critical resources. KCSOURCELINK connects a network of over one hundred business resource providers to help entrepreneurs in the Kansas City region grow and succeed.

The model, which is now being replicated in other parts of the United States focuses on helping individuals move through the maze of local entrepreneurship support services. The goal of the model is to save entrepreneurs time, provide more relevant information, and encourage collaboration among area service providers. The KCSOURCELINK site includes a list of resources: a resource navigator, a resource directory, a resource library, and a toll-free referral phone line staffed by knowledgeable personnel. KCSOURCELINK also tracks inquiries and the impact of its service provider partners work to determine how its system may be able to work even more effectively in the future.

With the formation of KCSOURCELINK, Kansas City became one of the first cities selected by the SBA for its new National Entrepreneur Center Alliance, which sets Kansas City as a model environment for advancing entrepreneurship.

<http://www.kcsourcelink.com>  
<http://www.kauffman.org>

### **GREATER RICHMOND PARTNERSHIP, INC. (Richmond, Virginia)**

Originally launched in 1994, the Greater Richmond Partnership overhauled its website in 2003 earning it a national award in website design from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). In addition to providing high quality, up-to-date information on the local workforce, available buildings and sites, and cost of doing



business, the website has some unique features that attempt to connect a variety of users to Greater Richmond. Some of these features include:

- An online photo tour provides users with a “sense of place” by showcasing Greater Richmond’s neighborhoods.
- A companion Partnership website written in Chinese to leverage international development opportunities ([www.we-usa.com](http://www.we-usa.com)).
- A specific portal for women- and minority-owned businesses that connects entrepreneurs to financial resources, government contracting opportunities, and technical assistance providers.
- A featured video called “Speaking of Richmond” which highlights specific areas of competitiveness for the region.
- Custom Report Generator allowing users to build customized reports with detailed data and information about the region.

[www.grpva.com](http://www.grpva.com)

## **Community and Regional Stewardship**

### **Power and Light District (Kansas City, Missouri)**

The Kansas City Power and Light District is an \$850 million mixed use shopping and entertainment district in Downtown Kansas City. The district spans nine blocks and connects the Convention center to the Sprint Arena. The district was developed using tax-increment financing from the city of Kansas City.

The Power and Light District has brought new vibrancy to Downtown Kansas City, with more than 50 restaurants, bars, shops, and music venues providing entertainment options in a concentrated and walkable environment for residents and visitors. The District is one of only a few locations in the country where open container alcoholic beverages are permitted on the street. Kansas City Live! is a one block area of the district devoted to live music, anchored by a covered outdoor plaza.

<http://www.powerandlightdistrict.com>

### **Atlanta’s PATH Foundation (Atlanta, Georgia)**

In 1991, three cycling friends formed the PATH Foundation, a 501 (c) 3, non-profit organization. They believed Atlanta was desperately in



need of alternative transportation choices and places for families to walk and bike together, and saw PATH as a way to connect neighborhoods to each other, to get people out of their cars, to encourage healthier lifestyles and to improve their overall quality of life.

With a mission to develop a system of interlinking greenway trails through metro Atlanta for commuting and recreating, PATH forms partnerships with local governments to build greenway trails. PATH provides a knowledgeable staff to plan, design, build and maintain trail projects. In some cases, PATH will provide matching funds to finance the development of trails.

Local governments provide access to state and federal funding, right-of-ways for trails, as well as in-kind services during trail development. PATH and local governments develop linking trail projects to give everyone access to the trail system.

PATH has developed more than 100 miles of trails throughout northern Georgia and has become a nationally recognized model for trail-building success. PATH's linear parks have become part of the landscape in urban and rural areas, in affluent and impoverished communities. PATH trails are bringing people together from all races, ages, income levels and cultural backgrounds.

<http://www.pathfoundation.org>

### **Downtown Austin Community Court (Austin, Texas)**

The Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC) was started in 1999 to enforce quality of life and public order, handling defendants charged with Class C misdemeanors. College students or homeless persons charged with public intoxication, disorderly conduct, possession of drug paraphernalia, or minor in possession make up a significant number of the DACC's cases. Public order offenses that are committed in Downtown, East Austin, and West Campus fall under the Court's jurisdiction. DACC initially only dealt with the downtown area, where 44 percent of total public order cases in Austin occurred, but the Court's successful outcomes led to increased funding to extend to two more neighborhoods of Austin. The Court's annual caseload is estimated at 5,000. Unlike a traditional court, the DACC strives to be a less intimidating setting that moves quickly to react to crimes with treatment and sentencing options.



DACC focuses on restorative justice and alternative sanctions allow the Court not only to grant due process like any other court but to also offer social services, such as rehabilitation treatment, to reduce recidivism. Many defendants, especially homeless individuals, become trapped in the criminal justice system due to addiction, mental health issues, or the accumulation of court fines. At DACC, the judge and a team of caseworkers consult with each individual defendant to choose the most appropriate and effective treatment, which may be inpatient or outpatient services, always offered free of charge.

DACC looks to restore the quality of life of its jurisdiction by rehabilitating repeat offenders and intervening with preventative services for first-time offenders. Through community service restitution, offenders are held accountable for restoring order in the community. While some defendants may receive conventional sentences, the goal is for all offenders to receive sensible options to reduce repeat offenses and repay the community where the quality of life offense occurred.

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/comcourt/>

### **Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)**

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) is the city of Pittsburgh's economic development agency. Its goals are to create jobs, expand the city's tax base, and improve the vitality of businesses, neighborhoods, and the city's livability as a whole. The URA achieves this mission by assembling, preparing and conveying sites for major mixed-use developments; and by providing a portfolio of programs that include project financing.

The URA offers a variety of programs and financing products that range from assisting low income clients in achieving home ownership to reclaiming brownfields for new development and helping communities reinvent themselves. The URA offers a variety of incentives to Pittsburgh residents, business owners, and developers ranging from loan programs and tax abatements to site selection and facilitation of consistent infrastructure improvement including environmental clean-up. The organization has played a significant role in helping facilitate the city's transition from a dying steel town to a thriving city with a diversified economy with multiple sectors.



<http://www.ura.org>

### **My Louisville/Friends of Lou (Louisville, Kentucky)**

Greater Louisville Inc., in partnership with the Greater Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau and Louisville Metro Government, unveiled a branding campaign for the region called "Possibility City." The campaign builds on the theme of Metro Louisville serving as a welcoming place for people looking to thrive in their businesses and personal lives. Specific cities are targeted for potential relocation prospects. In ads ranging from the philosophical to the humorous, audiences are told of the advantages of Metro Louisville compared to their existing places of residence. Targeted television ads were created for audiences in Los Angeles, Boston, Ohio, Atlanta, and Dallas.

A website established to coincide with the campaign ([www.ShareLouisville.org](http://www.ShareLouisville.org)) provides links to the ads and also invites visitors to join a program called "Friends of Lou." According to the site, "Friends of Lou are simply good people like you who know that Louisville is a city with amazing possibilities. Great things are happening here fast, so as a Friend of Lou, you'll get the early, inside scoop. Your job is simple. Just spread the word on what's going on in Louisville." Louisvillians are able to upload videos of themselves touting the benefits of the city and providing personal anecdotes on local issues or destinations. Testimonials from Louisvillians have been aggregated into customizable DVDs to support talent retention and recruitment efforts within the My Louisville campaign.

The ShareLouisville.com site also contains audio files of various radio commercials that have aired as a component of the Possibility City campaign. In addition to the ShareLouisville site, a website was created to draw visitors specifically piqued by the Possibility City campaign. This site (<http://PossibilityCity.com>) also features the television and radio spots for Possibility City in addition to links to newspaper and magazine ads about Louisville and local blogs touting the region.



## CONCLUSION

The process of creating the Birmingham Business Alliance was a comprehensive one, involving the participation of business leaders, community residents, and public officials. However, establishment of the BBA was just the first step in the process of creating meaningful change in the Birmingham region. Ultimately, a successful transformation throughout the region will only result from a collaborative, unified implementation effort.

Blueprint Birmingham should be seen as a living and constantly-evolving document and endeavor. While the Regional Economic Development Strategy itself represents a “snapshot in time” of the Birmingham region, the needs of the community will change as it progresses. If implementation of Blueprint Birmingham is embraced by the public, private, and non-profit sectors, it will be able to adapt to changing conditions as needs arise.

The Birmingham region is at a critical stage in its history. The coming years may well decide the future trajectory of the region for decades and generations to come. With the global economy changing how communities compete for economic opportunities and resources, those areas that fall behind their competitors may not be able to catch up. The current Great Recession has exacerbated the challenges communities are facing to an even greater degree.

For too long, the Birmingham region has not addressed or has avoided the core issues that have brought it to this crossroads. The Birmingham region must make urgent, important decisions about its future. The status quo must be abandoned if local prospects are to dramatically improve.

The Birmingham region has a strong network of corporate citizens, philanthropic groups, faith-based organizations, private sector leadership, elected officials, and residents who must let go of past differences and divisions to pull together to help the region become a globally competitive, strong, and successful region. Public and private leaders must remain committed to move the region forward. Dynamic leadership and region-wide participation and support will be required to achieve shared goals. Blueprint Birmingham is the necessary step in propelling the Birmingham region forward in an increasingly global and competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century.

