Our Vision for the FUTURE
A Message from the Chamber

To collaboratively build a strong, sustainable future, Little Rock needed to provide a voice to those who will be helping create it. The Think Big Little Rock strategic assessment is the right tool for the right time to accomplish this while ensuring those helping to create the plan also lead in implementation. Much discussion has occurred, and many articles written, about how cities should involve the growing millennial generation. The over one hundred talented young leaders who shouldered this task, specifically crafted well-researched, thoughtful and much needed recommendations for growing, recruiting and retaining young professionals to our Little Rock region. This plan also provides recommendations for other important areas of need in our city: public safety, public education, diversity and inclusion, economic development, transportation and environment, and arts and culture. These recommendations were completely created by millennials who invested significant personal time over the last twelve months to accomplish the plan. That’s an investment that will pay amazing dividends for us all. After reviewing their recommendations, it was abundantly clear that Think Big Little Rock has created a vision to increase the growth and prosperity of our city and region for the coming decades.

I hope that you will join us in supporting the vision and implementation of the Think Big Little Rock strategic plan.

Jay Chesshir
President & CEO
When Think Big Little Rock (TBLR) embarked on this journey over a year ago, the goal was to identify the challenges of the Little Rock region and to layout recommendations in a report that would pose solutions to these challenges.

TBLR created a steering committee and task forces that focused on six key areas. Each month, members met at UA Little Rock to research and develop implementable recommendations for each subject area. Community leaders and experts where invited to speak, providing input and perspective on a variety of topics. During these monthly meetings, members brainstormed and drew upon their experiences to develop strategies that would assist the Little Rock region in attracting and retaining young professionals. Along with facilitating TBLR’s process, the Arkansas Economic Development Institute (AEDI) conducted focus groups and held community listening sessions to gather feedback from members of the community.

This report includes TBLR’s strategies, which lay out the action steps, resources, and timetable needed for successful implementation. We hope that it will serve as a playbook to improve the overall community in the Little Rock region for young professionals. TBLR members invested more than 5,000 volunteer hours to this process, and with your help and support, we can ensure that this is not another document that sits on a shelf. Planning is underway to develop a phase two for TBLR, which includes an implementation strategy.

We are counting on your support, so we can THINK even BIGGER in the next phase of this process.

Think Big Little Rock Co-Chairs
Chris East, Antwan Phillips, Amanda Richardson, and Kara Wilkins
**Think BIG Little Rock** brought young professionals, ages 25 to 40, together over a 12 month period to assess the community’s needs and, where possible, act as a catalyst for positive change. Conceived and funded by *Fifty for the Future*, *Think BIG Little Rock* has been a year-long strategic assessment and implementation process aimed at improving the Little Rock regions overall quality of place and making it a community in which young professionals will want to live and work. The project is an inclusive and participatory initiative focused on an age group that traditionally has had little input in building the region’s future.

**Think BIG Little Rock**

**Our Mission**

The mission of *Think BIG Little Rock* is to improve the overall community in the Little Rock region for young professionals.

**Our Process**

A selection committee chose fifty-five individuals, including four co-chairmen and chairwomen, to serve as the Steering Committee. Young professionals from the community at large were encouraged to apply. The Steering Committee began with a half-day work session on Sunday, September 11, 2016 where they selected 6 areas of study:

- Transportation & Environment
- Public Education
- Public Safety & Governance
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Economic Development
- Arts & Culture

Task forces were formed for each of the study areas to define problems and develop implementable strategy proposals. Monthly meetings were held on the 2nd Sunday of each month from 2–5 p.m. at UA Little Rock’s Reynolds College of Business building, and additional meetings were organized throughout each month by the task forces and subcommittees. Members of each task force worked during the first 6 months to identify issues within their designated category and used the remaining months to identify potential solutions.
As the Little Rock region competes with other communities for business and investment, transportation and built environment considerations must be part of a successful strategy. The Transportation and Environment Task Force believes that the region cannot remain competitive without a comprehensive master plan that encompasses regional mobility, transportation and housing choice, sustainable economic growth and a desirable quality of life.

Other recommendations update the region’s transportation infrastructure by improving parking, expanding commuter connections to other cities, stabilizing and expanding mass transit, and promoting the benefits of a range of transportation options to the business community. Task Force members also focused on how to incentivize energy efficient construction and promoting renewable energy.

Big things must happen in the Little Rock region if it is to remain the political and cultural center of the state.
think BIG Little Rock

Transportation & Environment

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Master Plan**

- **STRATEGY:** Develop a master plan for Little Rock that supports regional mobility, transportation and housing choice, sustainable economic growth and a desirable quality of life.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** An improved and sustainable economic outlook and a better quality of life.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1. Establish a diverse committee of elected officials, community and business leaders and others to develop a citywide master plan.
  2. Determine criteria for committee membership and select members.
  3. Seek sponsoring organizations and city funding to finance the development of the master plan.
  4. Develop a strategic plan to ensure systematic development and implementation of the city master plan.
  5. Incorporate changes to city zoning and housing, building, and land use rules and polices that promote public engagement and support flexible infrastructure, diverse housing options, and the city’s urban core.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** End of 2018.

**Downtown Parking Plan**

- **STRATEGY:** Establish a comprehensive parking plan for downtown that brings all public parking spaces under one Parking and Transportation Authority.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Reduced parking demand and a more attractive and economically viable use of parking space.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1. Charge Little Rock city board and staff and Little Rock region businesses and developers with developing a comprehensive parking plan.
  2. Hire parking consultant to analyze parking need, availability, tax revenue and ownership arrangements.
  3. Establish formal legal structure for Parking and Transportation Authority.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
Transportation & Environment
TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS continued

Public Transit

- **STRATEGY:** Establish a dedicated funding source for public transit in Pulaski County.
- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** More reliable, efficient and affordable public transportation.
- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Request formal support of local elected officials, Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups for a quarter-cent sales tax dedicated to funding public transit in Pulaski County.
  2) Ask Pulaski County jurisdictions that offer multi-modal services to provide the quorum court with an annual transportation review that includes land use reports and a comparison of costs incurred for different modes of transportation.
  3) Request Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce to add a multi-modal services overview to all leadership programs.
  4) Establish a regional transportation coalition to support research and implementation of multi-modal commuter transportation solutions.
  5) Include pedestrian, cycling and transit information on all directional signage.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

RegionalMobilityAuthority

- **STRATEGY:** Establish a Regional Mobility Authority.
- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Viable and sustainable economic growth and increased mobility choices.
- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Establish a regional mobility coalition that includes elected officials, business and community leaders and residents of the Little Rock region.
  2) Establish a committee to pursue funding authority at the state level that requires meaningful apportionment of funds to various modes of transportation.
  3) Develop a multi-county plan for regional multi-modal connectivity.
  4) Create a funding initiative to begin implementation of connectivity plan.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
Multi-Modal Transportation and Economic Growth

- **STRATEGY:** Promote the economic benefits of multi-modal transportation’s to the business community.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** An informed business community that will promote multi-modal transportation.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Create a committee that will communicate the economic benefits of multi-modal transportation to businesses.
  2) Develop a strategic plan that targets the AEDC, Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureaus, vocational boards and professional groups to reach business leaders with key messages about the benefits of non-traditional transportation.
  3) Consider an annual event to bring awareness to business success stories related to use of non-traditional forms of transportation.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
  July 2018

Renewable Energy

- **STRATEGY:** Convince Little Rock and North Little Rock to commit to operating on 100% renewable energy by 2035.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Lower energy costs, cleaner air, water, and green energy jobs.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Conduct an asset grade audit to determine current energy usage and establish a baseline.
  2) Conduct a feasibility study to determine cost effective strategies for reducing energy usage.
  3) Publicize study and secure support from the business community.
  4) Determine funding sources and solicit proposals from interested companies.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
  1) Commitment to Renewable by End of 2018.
  2) Fully Renewable by 2035
Energy Benchmarking

**STRATEGY:** Establish a voluntary benchmarking program for existing buildings and new construction.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Lower energy costs, job creation and energy efficient buildings and public spaces.

**ACTION STEPS:**
1) Incorporate the HERS (Home Energy Rating System) index rating into building codes for new residential construction.
2) Develop a rewards and recognition program for city buildings and commercial building owners who use benchmarking tools to monitor energy usage.
3) Hire company to market program.

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
1) HERS Kickoff: 2018.
The Little Rock School District (LRSD) has been part of historical moments of progressive and positive change. Despite its prestigious past, it presently faces serious difficulties.

In response to these challenges, the Education Task Force focused on improving learning environments for LRSD students by increasing access to Pre-K education programs, developing new school discipline practices, encouraging partnerships between schools and businesses, and providing better volunteer opportunities.

We are thrilled with the positive feedback our recommendations have received from the LRSD and excited to see the full impact on Little Rock students, parents and the city as a whole.
**Increase Pre-K Capacity**

**STRATEGY:** Increase access to affordable quality Pre-K education to young professional parents living in Little Rock.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Better student retention and performance, greater support for public schools and an increase in young professionals locating in Little Rock.

**ACTION STEPS:**
1. Develop Pre-K Tuition Policy modeled after existing tuition policies from programs that utilize ABC matching funds.
2. Create a capacity-building fund through tuition payments.
3. Develop guidelines to determine acceptable expenditures that directly increase capacity for more students.
4. Develop a digital marketing campaign to encourage applications to coincide with first enrollment period after tuition policy is implemented.

**RESOURCES NEEDED:**
1. Staff time to manage billing as part of current management of application process.
2. Digital marketing budget of $5000.
3. LRSD communications staff or local firm willing to donate their time and expertise.

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
1. First Year of Tuition Revenue: Fall 2018.
2. Second Year of Tuition Revenue: Fall 2019.
3. Third Year of Tuition Revenue: Fall 2020.

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**Restorative Justice**

**STRATEGY:** Introduce Restorative Justice (a facilitated mediation and community building strategy) in LRSD schools in phases.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Safe and positive learning environment for LRSD schools and improved public perception of public education in Little Rock.

**ACTION STEPS:**
- Phase I: Pilot Program and Teacher Preparation.
- Phase II: Middle School Training.
- Phase III: District Wide Training.
- Phase IV: District Policy Requiring Restorative Justice in All LRSD Schools.

**RESOURCES NEEDED:**

1. Extensive and Targeted Training. (See appendix.)

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
- Phase III and IV: 2020-2021.
Middle School Community Partnerships

- **STRATEGY:** Keep middle school students engaged in learning.
- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Improved student performance and increased community support for middle schools.
- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Create a research team to assist potential community partners and individual middle schools with identifying effective ways to collaborate on educational programming.
  2) Create committees at individual schools to identify specific needs.
  3) Assign a specific individual from each school to act as a liaison between that school and its community partner.
  4) Identify potential community partners that will work directly with middle schools to create project based learning plans.
  5) Create and implement a project based pilot program at a selected middle school.
  6) Determine the successes and shortcomings of the pilot program.
  7) Implement project-based program at every LRSD middle school.
  8) Continue to maintain and enhance the program over multiple years.
- **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
  1) Dedicated personnel and targeted resources from participating community partners.
  2) Dedicated personnel and targeted resources from participating middle schools.
  3) Personnel and resources from the research team.
- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE(S):**
  1) Research Team Formed and Initial Program Creation: Fall 2017 through Spring/Summer 2018.

Business/Community Partnerships

- **STRATEGY:** Build a strong partnership between the business community and the existing LRSD community engagement program, Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS).
- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Increased business support for the LRSD.
- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Redesign VIPS website to make it more accessible and user friendly.
  2) Develop a strategy to better market VIPS and its programs to the business community.
  3) Advocate for other Little Rock region school districts to implement similar business engagement programs.
- **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
  1) Assistance with effective marketing techniques and strategies.
  2) Assistance with effective website development and maintenance.
PUBLIC SAFETY

COMPREHENSIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

GOAL: Reduce crime and improve public safety in Central Arkansas

- Pulaski County juvenile diversion program
- Improved law enforcement officer development
Improving public safety and governance are important to attracting and retaining young professionals to the Little Rock region. During the past year, the Public Safety & Governance Task Force consulted experts and professionals currently working in the Little Rock region to improve public safety, health and governance.

Synthesizing information from the speakers with our own ideas, we concentrated on developing a more comprehensive and effective criminal justice system, increasing social cohesion and civic engagement in Little Rock neighborhoods, and reducing systemic barriers to vulnerable populations obtaining health services.

We are convinced that a safer, healthier city, with active and involved citizens, will mean an improved quality of life for all current and future residents.
**Reducing Crime**

**STRATEGY:** Reduce crime and improve public safety in the Little Rock region by developing a more comprehensive and effective criminal justice system.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Lower crime rates and a fairer and more responsive juvenile justice system.

**ACTION STEPS:**
1) Create Committee to Establish a Pulaski Juvenile Diversion Program.
2) Hire a full-time Program Coordinator/Chief of Staff.
3) Create marketing campaign to promote program to Pulaski County residents.
4) Develop a network of rehabilitative services that include “Wrap Around Services” to address gaps in current system.
5) Improve diversity training for law enforcement personnel.
6) Create committee to promote community engagement with law enforcement personnel.
7) Expand LRPD Kids Camp.
8) Expand Sidewalk Re-Entry Program to include additional training.
9) Fill vacant officer positions and expand recruitment.

**RESOURCES NEEDED:**
1) Volunteers to serve on committee to create program.
2) Funding for officer training programs.
3) Funding for Pulaski County juvenile diversion program coordinator/chief of staff.
4) Community programs and organizations that will provide “Wrap Around Services” for juvenile offenders.
5) Assessment training for parole officers.
6) Funding for expanding sidewalk re-entry program.

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

**Neighborhoods**

**STRATEGY:** Reduce crime and improve public safety by increasing social cohesion and civic engagement in Little Rock neighborhoods.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Lower crime rates and safer, more secure neighborhoods.

**ACTION STEPS:**
1) Improve marketing of existing community programs for young people.
2) Establish more civic and social outreach training programs through the Department of Community Programs (DCP).
3) Make DCP website more interactive.
4) Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) methods to initiate improvements to public spaces.
5) Create civic accelerator program to encourage youth and young professionals to become involved in local government.
6) Create a City Government Academy to teach residents how city government works.
7) Establish a civic education requirement in schools that incorporates lectures or lessons by elected officials or other city/state employees.
8) Create a public space for mural contests.
Public Safety and Governance

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS continued

RESOURCES NEEDED:
1) Increased funding for Department of Community Programs (DCP).
2) Assistance with DCP website improvement.
3) Assistance with marketing existing community programs of young people.
4) Funding for civic accelerator program.
5) Funding for city government academy.
6) Development of curriculum to meet civic education requirement.
7) Public space for mural contest.

ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:
2) Steps 5-6: 2019.

Public Health

STRATEGY: Improve public health by making it easier for people in need to access health services.

BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY: Reduction in overall health care costs and a healthier, happier and more productive workforce.

ACTION STEPS:
1) Review city and county budget allocations for homeless services and public health programs to determine if funding can be allocated more effectively.
2) Create a committee of homeless service providers to determine how best to expand homeless services and increase access to homeless facilities.
3) Establish a Health Awareness Education Program that emphasizes the importance of nutrition and exercise.
4) Encourage suppliers to increase individual food portions above the minimum allocation allowed under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

RESOURCES NEEDED:
1) Compilation of city and county budget line items that funds homeless services and public health programs.
2) Homeless service providers to serve on committee.
3) Model citywide Health Awareness Education Programs.
4) Funding for respite centers from local hospitals, HRSA, HUD, Medicaid/Medicare, private donations, local/state government, religious and non-religious foundations, and United Way.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATES:
1) City and County Budget Review: December 2017.
2) Formation of homeless service providers committee: December 2017.
Studies show that diversity and inclusion are attractive qualities and factor into whether young professional people move to Little Rock or choose to remain in the city.

After extensive research and discussion, Task Force members focused on improving diversity and inclusion by re-examining intra-city school attendance zones in the LRSD, rewarding Little Rock employers who embrace diversity, and developing a publically available databased historical analysis of the impact of public policies and practices on the city’s diverse population.

We believe our recommendations will encourage critical questions that shed new light on old social problems and inspire creative solutions that will make our city a more diverse, tolerant and inclusive place to live.
Diversity and Inclusion
TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Workforce**

**STRATEGY:** To help Little Rock region area businesses create workplaces that are more inclusive by providing a measurable framework for how to recruit, retain and grow a more diverse workforce.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Increased employee satisfaction and a more productive and diverse community.

**ACTION STEPS:**

1) Analyze diverse workplaces that exemplify the universal standards for diversity and inclusion in the workplace to determine best practices for inclusive companies.

2) Consult with Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRRCC) on defining core values for workforce development.

3) Use Mosaic Tulsa as a model for establishing a measurable framework for identifying and measuring diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

4) Pilot an audit process for existing corporate diversity and inclusion training.

5) Introduce the new program modeled after Mosaic Tulsa through LRRCC, the City of Little Rock, or a 501c3 entity to identify and measure diversity and inclusion in participating Little Rock businesses.

6) Present findings at an annual meeting and award companies that made real efforts to make their workplaces more diverse.

**RESOURCES NEEDED:**

1) Funding for trips to Tulsa to get more first-hand knowledge about how to bring replicate Mosaic Tulsa in Little Rock, and to gather necessary data to establish a baseline and track diversity and inclusion trends in the region.

2) Appropriate data and research tools.

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**


Diversity and Inclusion

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS continued

School Zones

- **STRATEGY:** Create a more diverse educational landscape.
- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Improved educational performance and a more interconnected, unified and economically viable community.

**ACTION STEPS:**

1) Define/analyze the current state of diversity in the Little Rock region education system.
2) Study the implementation and impact of the rezoning efforts of Conway, Arkansas.
3) Complete a comparative analysis of surrounding educational systems/cities/states.
4) Interpret the racial map for findings.
5) Identify best practices of school systems in country with respect to Diversity and Inclusion.
6) Present findings to the LRSD and ADE.
7) Collaborate with ADE on recommended guidelines for zoning.

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**


Diversity, Inclusion, and History

- **STRATEGY:** To tell the story of inclusion and diversity in the Little Rock region area through data analysis and graphic representation.
- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** To assist Little Rock region area residents and decision makers with meeting the challenges associated with attracting and retaining young professionals.

**ACTION STEPS:**

1) Gather data required to understand two generations of development and economic change in the Greater Little Rock Area.
2) Create a map or a sequence of maps to display data.
3) Conduct a survey of Think BIG Little Rock participants designed to identify what they need to succeed as young professionals.
4) Analyze the survey to find trends complemented by the data.
5) Publish findings of the Think BIG Little Rock participant survey.
6) Present findings to the public.

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

The Economic Development Task Force was concerned with the economic advancement of the Little Rock region. Since economic development is a broad area, we limited our efforts to realistic projects that would positively affect economic growth.

Task Force members directed their efforts to improving connectivity between business, professional and recreational activities, enhancing workforce development and technology, revamping efforts to market the region, and creating a group of your professionals to work with city government.

The Task Force believes that our recommendations will help spur the kind of sustainable tech smart, economic growth that will attract young professionals and make the Little Rock region an exciting place to live.
think BIG Little Rock

Economic Development

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Connect 501**

- **STRATEGY:** Develop Connect 501, a single web-based digital hub for posting relevant social, recreational, and professional activities in the Little Rock region, similar to programs already in place in Dallas (Do 214), Kansas City (Do 816), and elsewhere.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** A single and easily accessible source of information for public events and activities.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Contract with local web development firm to develop and maintain the website digital hub for the first two years.
  2) Hire a full time manager for Connect 501.
  3) Market and promote new web based service.
  4) Secure commitments from local entities and publications to provide public events and activities for posting on the hub.

- **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
  1) Funding to cover development and additional maintenance costs.
  2) Funding for full time manager position.
  3) Funding to market website digital hub.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
  2) Connect 501 manager hired: March 1, 2018
  3) Marketing campaign begun: April 1, 2018.
  4) Website up and running: June 1, 2018.

**Marketing the Region**

- **STRATEGY:** Develop a separate marketing focus within the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRRCC) that promotes the Little Rock region as a great place to live and work.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** More jobs and improved economic environment.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Request that LRRCC implement a new strategic marketing plan to recruit talented young professionals to live and work in the Little Rock region.
  2) Assistance on new marketing approach requested from Fifty for the Future.
  3) Marketing firm or staff person that will develop and implement new marketing function.

- **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
  1) Funding for marketing firm or additional LRRCC staffer.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
  1) Funding and selection of firm or staff person: June 1, 2018.
Workforce Development

**STRATEGY:** Increase statewide business participation in the Arkansas State Chamber’s BE PRO BE PROUD program.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Better trained and better paid workers filling high demand jobs.

**ACTION STEPS:**

1) Increased support from businesses and chambers from across Arkansas.
2) Improve/uprade the mobile Be Pro Be Proud workshop program.
3) Enhance the Be Pro Be Proud website.
4) Expand Be Pro Be Proud marketing efforts to include paid media channels.
5) Add a Be Pro Be Proud program assistant and additional support staff.
6) Develop a data collection program to document program impact.
7) Administer participant surveys to determine program effectiveness.

**RESOURCES NEEDED:**

1) Increased support from businesses and chambers across Arkansas.
2) Funds to maintain and upgrade the current mobile workshop.
3) Funds to purchase a new mobile workshop.
4) Funds to expand marketing efforts.
5) Funds for adding a Be Pro Be Proud assistant and support staff.

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

1) Acquire sponsorships: Ongoing.
2) Create new data based performance metrics: June 1, 2018.
3) Develop, distribute, and analyze participant survey: March 1, 2018.
4) Implement expanded marketing strategy: June 1, 2018.
5) Complete Be Pro Be Proud website enhancements: June 1, 2018.
Economic Development
TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS continued

Tech Startups

**STRATEGY:** Create a fertile intellectual and financial environment for growing and sustaining tech startups.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Growing numbers of high-skill, high paying jobs, increased economic growth, and more tax revenue for city and state services.

**ACTION STEPS:**

1) Expand the Arkansas Economic Development Commission’s Royalty Investment Program.

2) Triple the current $6.2 million cap on Equity Investment Tax Credits.

3) Provide student loan forgiveness for the participants in the Venture Center/FIS Fintech Accelerator program and other accelerators throughout the region.

4) Provide state tax incentives to encourage investment in tech startups.

5) Seek out more “angel investor” funding to invest in local entrepreneurs.

6) Provide support from local educational entities for concepts and initiatives of the Venture Center, Regional Innovation HUB, Innovate Arkansas, and other programs and entities that support the startup community.

7) Encourage the creation of Arkansas-based venture capital funds capable of providing one million dollars or more to companies ready to launch a start-up.

8) Create a venture capital summit in Little Rock.

**RESOURCES NEEDED:**

1) Support from the Venture Center, Create Little Rock, and the Little Rock Regional Chamber, including help in drafting legislation and lobbying the state legislature.
Young Professionals Advisory Council

**STRATEGY:** Create a Young Professional Advisory Council to assist the Little Rock Mayor, City Manager, and City Council with addressing issues important to young professionals living in Little Rock.

**BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Keeping and attracting young professionals, and growing new leadership.

**ACTION STEPS:**
1) Create Little Rock drafts resolution establishing the Advisory Council.
2) Resolution submitted to the City Council.
3) Resolution adopted and implemented.

**ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
1) Completion of draft resolution: March 2018.
2) Submission of the resolution to the city council: March 2018.
3) Resolution adopted and implemented: April 2018.
4) Council meets: June 2018.
Research shows that a vibrant arts and cultural climate is one of the more important aspects a metropolitan area needs to attract new residents, especially millennials. The Arts and Culture Task Force dedicated itself to developing realistic, actionable proposals that can increase Little Rock’s artistic and cultural significance.

After examining a variety of research materials and meeting with several local persons involved in arts and culture, our group created four primary goals: increasing the usability of War Memorial Stadium and Park, strengthening the Arkansas film industry, and creating two new annual festivals, one for arts and culture and one for music.

We believe these measures will promote arts and culture and, at the same time, increase the viability of the Little Rock region as an excellent place to live.
think BIG Little Rock

Arts and Culture

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

War Memorial Stadium and Park

- **STRATEGY:** Increase usage of War Memorial Stadium and add attractions to War Memorial Park.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Greater use of War Memorial Stadium and the surrounding park will create a vibrant central park in the heart of Little Rock’s Midtown.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1. Add a track inside the stadium to host local and statewide track events.
  2. Host intrastate high school and collegiate football games and championships.
  3. Recruit more promoters and vendors to sponsor events year round.
  4. Recruit more concerts.
  5. Redevelop War Memorial Park by:
     a. Converting War Memorial Golf Course into a multi-purpose “central park” including various types of ball fields and other recreational facilities, as well as general purpose park land.
     b. Adding amenities such as an amphitheater, skate park, climbing walls, a dog park, and a food truck area.
     c. Creating concession/food truck areas.
     d. Enlarging the pool at the Jim Dailey Fitness Center.
  6. Create a Marketing Plan.

- **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
  1. Financial resources for track and park improvements including state and federal grant money and city and state funding.
  2. Sponsorships to defray costs of events.
  3. Contacts at university and high school athletic departments.
  4. Community support.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
  3. Park Expansion/Additional Attractions: TBD.
**Artober Little Rock**

- **STRATEGY:** Create a Little Rock art festival modeled after the Artober event in Nashville, Tennessee.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** A month long celebration of the arts and culture.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Contact Artober Nashville to gather useful information and best practices.
  2) Create a schedule for Artober Little Rock events with members of other art festivals committees.

- **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
  1) Participation from existing arts groups.
  2) Committee for planning and coordinating.
  3) Sponsorships.
  4) Publicity.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**

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**Film/Arkansas Cinema Society**

- **STRATEGY:** To encourage the development of the film industry in the Little Rock region.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Improved quality of life and enhanced economic development.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Request plans for professional development of filmmakers from Arkansas cinema society.
  2) Support first year of ACS by purchasing an ACS sponsorship.
  3) Raise funds to support ACS outreach/professional development and staffing.
  4) Raise funds to solicit and hire a full-time film and arts lobbyist to report to ACS.

- **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
  1) $5000 for ACS sponsorship.
  2) $50,000 to support ACS outreach/professional development and staffing.
  3) Funds to solicit and hire a film and arts lobbyist.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
  2) Hiring of full-time film and arts lobbyist: TBD.

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**Music Festival and Conference**

- **STRATEGY:** Create an annual musical event that will provide artists with professional development and a platform for displaying their work.

- **BENEFIT TO COMMUNITY:** Provides musicians access to workshops and lectures, improves quality of life, and enhances economic development.

- **ACTION STEPS:**
  1) Develop events.
  2) Create an event timeline.
  3) Formulate plans and tasks.
  4) Engage community partners through sponsorships and host responsibilities.
  5) Solicit funding from community businesses and individual leaders.
  6) Secure volunteers or staff as needed.

- **RESOURCES NEEDED:**
  1) Funding.
  2) Locations and equipment.
  3) Hospitality, logistics and volunteers.
  4) Publicity.
  5) Fees.

- **ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:**
  1) Steps 1–5: Fall 2018.
  2) First event: Spring 2019.
think BIG Little Rock

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Big Ideas

Transportation & Environment
- Master Plan
- Downtown Parking Plan
- Public Transit
- Regional Mobility Authority
- Multi-Modal Transportation and Economic Growth
- Renewable Energy
- Energy Benchmarking

Public Safety and Governance
- Reducing Crime
- Neighborhoods
- Public Health

Public Education
- Increase Pre-K Capacity
- Restorative Justice
- Middle School Community Partnerships
- Business/Community Partnerships

Diversity and Inclusion
- Workforce
- School Zones
- Diversity, Inclusion, and History

Economic Development
- Connect 501
- Marketing the Region
- Workforce Development
- Tech Startups
- Young Professionals Advisory Council

Arts and Culture
- War Memorial Stadium and Park
- Artober Little Rock
- Film/Arkansas Cinema Society
- Music Festival and Conference
Our Vision for the FUTURE