

For Immediate Release

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Cultural planning process in Macon-Bibb County to open access and engagement in the arts with \$100,000 from Knight Foundation

MACON, GA.—May 22, 2019—Recognizing the potential of arts and culture to drive community connection and economic growth, a community-wide Cultural Planning Process has been launched in Macon-Bibb County with the aim of increasing arts access and engagement across the area. The plan is funded by \$100,000 from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation provided to the Community Foundation of Central Georgia on behalf of a community partnership including the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, the Bibb County School District, Macon Arts Alliance, Macon-Bibb County, Mercer University, the Museum of Arts and Sciences, and Visit Macon.

A steering committee of more than 50 arts, cultural, and community organizations has been formed to develop an arts and culture strategic plan that will build on the work of existing city master plans, address regional challenges and opportunities, and guide future investments in the arts and culture sector.

“Our community has articulated and affirmed its value of creativity, arts, and culture in a number of ways,” said Susan Welsh. “Now we have the opportunity to come together and develop a strategic master plan specific to the cultural arts and tourism sector. With a broad spectrum of organizations and leaders involved, this will be the most dynamic cultural planning process in the history of our city – resulting in an actionable vision that builds on the work of other regional strategic plans, addresses regional challenges and opportunities, and guides future investments.”

“Arts and culture connect people to place and to each other. That’s why access to and engagement in the arts is so essential,” said Victoria Rogers, Knight Foundation vice president for arts. “We hope that this planning process will help drive the sustainability of Macon’s anchor institutions, grass-roots organizations, and individual artists and help them better connect with all of Macon-Bibb’s communities.”

The international cultural planning firm Lord Cultural Resources (LCR) has been engaged to facilitate the planning process. Founded in 1981 in response to a need for specialized planning services in the cultural and heritage sector, Lord Cultural Resources is the world’s largest cultural professional practice. Lord has helped create iconic cultural destinations in more than 460 cities, in 57 countries on six continents. LCR led the facilitation of the Chicago Cultural Plan in 2012, which has been downloaded over 200,000 times as well as for cities like Decatur, Georgia and Dallas, Texas. LCR works with leaders at private and public corporations, foundations, governments and non-profit institutions to create places, programs and resources that build cultural capital and serve society.

Macon residents are invited to attend three upcoming community conversations to share feedback and programing input on arts and culture in Macon-Bibb County:

Thursday, May 30, 5:30 p.m. at the Mill Hill Community Arts Center

Saturday, June 1, 10:00 a.m. at the Museum of Arts and Sciences

Monday, June 3, 6 p.m. at the South Bibb Recreation Center

Susan Welsh, Executive Director of the Museum of Arts and Sciences and Julie Wilkerson, Executive Director of Macon Arts Alliance are co-chairs of the Steering Committee.

“The potential for growing our creative economy is considerable.” said Julie Wilkerson. “This plan will give us the means to enhance the arts and cultural experience for Macon-Bibb County citizens, to attract tourists, and to entice new residents in the creative sector to make Macon-Bibb County their home.”

About the Community Foundation of Central Georgia

The Community Foundation of Central Georgia was founded in 1993 by a group of citizens interested in encouraging philanthropy and strengthening communities. Since then, the foundation has awarded more than \$89 million in grants. As a local center for philanthropy, the foundation works with individuals, families, corporations, private foundations and nonprofit organizations to carry out their charitable objectives and address emerging community issues.



Our donors make possible the foundation's mission to enhance the quality of life for the people of Central Georgia. To learn more, visit cfcga.org.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. We invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Our goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy. For more, visit kf.org.



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