



## **Coordination needed**

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Our position: A regional master plan for the arts will give venues a better shot at success.

Call it the great arts awakening for Central Florida.

Arts centers are being discussed for downtown Orlando, the University of Central Florida and Lake, Osceola and Seminole counties. Plus, a performance venue opened just last month in Daytona Beach.

A regional master plan mapping out arts needs for the next 20 years or so would help coordinate the offerings so they work together to enhance the quality of life and not unnecessarily compete.

An Arts and Culture Economic Impact Study this year will survey arts patrons in seven counties to show how far from home they come to take in a show or exhibit. Conducted by myregion.org and Americans for the Arts, it will show whether out-of-town visitors are apt to hang around an extra day or so to visit a theater or museum, spending a little more money in area hotels and restaurants.

Those details should bolster arguments for arts funding, but that demographic information alone will not create an atmosphere where multiple arts venues can thrive. Only a long-range regional plan can do that, and myregion.org is the ideal group to pull it off.

Maybe that plan would reveal voids in the arts and cultural offerings. Perhaps it would show it's best for some venues to combine. Without a forward-thinking plan, it's all guesswork.

Greater Birmingham initiated its regional master plan for arts and culture in 2002. In North Carolina, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area unveiled a similar plan in 2003. It's time for Central Florida to take on the task as well.