

Florence Center for the Arts  
Florence, South Carolina

As a key element of a downtown revitalization master plan for Florence, Strategy 5 Principals were asked to assist in development planning and a funding and finance strategy for a proposed performing arts center. After completing a review of a prior feasibility study done by an arts consulting firm, new projections which accurately reflected the realities of the project were prepared. These projections essentially identified the requirement for a larger operational subsidy that previously forecast, but also quantified key economic and fiscal benefits to the community that had gone unmentioned.

The project was placed into the Downtown Florence Master Plan, identifying a site and related access parking and traffic solutions. Partnerships between the arts groups and Francis Marion University were fostered, ultimately resulting in a funding and operational agreement that has paved the way for significant capital acquisition. During the course of work on the downtown revitalization strategy, our Principals also worked to bring aboard the Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation, Florence's most influential philanthropic body.

As of summer 2006, the Bruce and Lee Foundation has contributed \$10 million to the capital campaign for the Florence Center for the Arts, as well as \$10 million for the Florence Little Theater – a historic community company that will move from its suburban location into the heart of downtown Florence. The Florence Center for the Arts has also recently received a grant from the State of South Carolina in the amount of \$10 million, and Francis Marion University is completing the funding requirement with \$5 million in contributions.

