City of Orlando 2024-2050 Growth Management Plan (GMP) Review

The 2024-2050 Growth Projections Report for the City of Orlando presents a comprehensive and detailed overview of the city's future development trajectory, emphasizing land use, population, and employment growth. While the plan offers valuable insights, opportunities and challenges for arts and cultural planning related to growth management could be more thoroughly explored, especially in alignment with broader urban design principles. This refinement would ensure Orlando's development reflects its cultural vibrancy and reinforces its identity as an established arts community.

Strengths:

- The use of historical data to guide future projections helps frame the city's trajectory in a clear context and scale for stakeholders.
- Emphasizes the importance of creating compact, interconnected, and mixed-use environments that can enhance cultural vibrancy through placemaking.
- Covers a broad range of growth indicators, including population, land use, employment, and "service population" (which accounts for transient populations such as tourists and commuters), ideal for coordinating services like public safety, transportation, and cultural events.
- By considering the impacts on surrounding areas and major projects like the Orlando International Airport expansion and Lake Nona, the report effectively addresses growth in a regional context.
- The report's acknowledgment of the Growth Management Plan (GMP) framework for shaping community development and strategic investment includes significant potential for arts and cultural programming. Public parks, facilities, and event spaces could serve as hubs for cultural expression, particularly in high-density areas where there is already demand for arts-based events and experiences.

Areas for Improvement:

- Water management, green space preservation, and climate resilience are not adequately addressed, even though these factors are critical to sustainable development. A more detailed analysis of environmental sustainability, alongside mitigation strategies for urban sprawl, would strengthen the plan. Integrating the GMP with the city's efforts to create environmentally friendly parks and event spaces could better preserve green spaces while promoting outdoor recreation.
- The report emphasizes growth in both single-family and multifamily housing, but there is no explicit mention of affordable housing initiatives. As population density increases, particularly in areas like Downtown and Lake Nona, the city may face challenges related to housing affordability. A clearer strategy addressing this issue—such as zoning for affordable housing or incentivizing developers to include affordable units—would be a critical addition. Ensuring that event venues and parks are distributed across communities and remain accessible to all, regardless of income, could also foster inclusivity.
- The projections highlight several high-growth areas, such as Southeast Orlando and the Downtown core, but there is limited focus on balancing growth to ensure underserved communities benefit from new investments. Proactively identifying ways

to support equitable development in historically underserved neighborhoods could prevent socio-economic disparities from widening. Facilities and public spaces should be planned with an eye toward enhancing accessibility in these communities.

- While the report acknowledges the role of transportation modeling in supporting future growth, it could provide more specific details about planned transportation improvements, especially regarding mass transit options. Given Orlando's growing population and increased reliance on car travel, addressing public transportation, congestion management, and sustainable alternatives (e.g., bike lanes, light rail, and pedestrian-friendly design) would help the city maintain a high quality of life. Transportation planning should also be linked to event venue and park locations, ensuring that they are accessible to large numbers of residents and visitors.
- It is unclear how community input has been integrated into the planning process. Expanding this section to highlight outreach efforts and citizen feedback mechanisms would increase transparency. Understanding community preferences, especially for event spaces and public amenities, could lead to better alignment between the plan and residents' needs.
- The report lacks an outline for monitoring progress and adjusting the plan as new challenges or opportunities arise. A system for ongoing evaluation and adaptation will help ensure that the GMP remains relevant as economic conditions, migration trends, or environmental factors evolve. Moreover, adjusting event planning and public space management based on changes in population concentrations or community needs could help make the plan more responsive and dynamic.

The 2024-2050 Growth Projections Report provides a well-researched and ambitious blueprint for Orlando's future growth. Its strengths lie in its data-driven approach and commitment to creating mixed-use, sustainable neighborhoods. Even so, the report could be further enhanced by incorporating more specific strategies around affordable housing, equitable development, environmental sustainability, and transportation infrastructure. Ensuring community involvement and establishing a robust system for long-term monitoring will also be essential for managing anticipated growth responsibly. Refining the arts and events planning aspect through a comprehensive understanding of GMP could enable more strategic placement of parks, event spaces, and public facilities in response to the increase in population.