

“Be the best Birmingham we can be”, is the message that newly elected Mayor Bell delivered to more than 50 young professionals, on February 4<sup>th</sup> at Urban Standard. Mayor William Bell, along with YPNOW, the Birmingham Business Alliance’s YP Roundtable, organized a group discussion with some of Birmingham YPs to address his initiatives and plan for the city. During the meeting, a number of attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions or make comments that concerned them with the city and its future. People voiced their opinions or gave suggestions for projects that could impact the city and region as a whole. Some of the key topics that were discussed were the city’s financial problems, economic development, education, transportation and cultural arts.

Mayor Bell is encouraging YPs to get involved with his plans for the future. He proposes having YPs serve on boards & committees that addresses key issues with Birmingham. He also suggests the young professional’s involvement with the city school system. He encourages experienced and successful young leaders to enter into a mentoring relationship with students because it often is the influence of others that helps them develop their true potential. He believes that YPs can help bridge the gap between students and the business community.

The whole meeting was well received and had a positive impact on the YPs that were present. Many YPs are eager to get involved and help Mayor Bell with moving the city forward. Bains Fleming, an attorney at Norman, Wood, Kendrick, Turner and a member of Rotaract Club commented that “by reaching out to young professional leaders today, the mayor has begun to lay the foundation upon which city government and the YP community. We can work together towards our shared goal—for a strong and vibrant Birmingham.”