

[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State, ZIP]
[Date]

City Council of Portland
Portland City Hall
1221 SW 4th Ave.
Portland, OR 97204

Subject: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Changes to the Arts and Culture Landscape in Portland

Dear City Council Members,

As an engaged member of the creative community in the city of Portland and our region, I am writing to express my deep concerns about the recent developments concerning the arts and culture landscape in our beloved city. We wholeheartedly support the concerns raised by the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) board members and RACC team, and share their dedication to fostering an inclusive and thriving arts ecosystem for all.

I understand the City of Portland has announced it intends to establish its own Office of Arts & Culture by the end of June 2024, as communicated through a brief email to RACC. While I appreciate the City's commitment to promoting arts and culture, we believe that this decision will undermine the principles of equity, efficiency, inclusivity, and community-driven support that RACC has diligently upheld since its inception.

RACC has been an invaluable partner to our creative community since its establishment through a region-wide intergovernmental agreement in 1995. The decision to entrust arts and culture investment to a private non-profit organization like RACC, after a rigorous community cultural planning process, was based on the belief that a streamlined and nimble approach would better serve the diverse needs and aspirations of our community. By shifting this responsibility to an internal bureaucratic process, we are concerned that the efficiency and effectiveness of arts funding and support will be compromised.

Equity has been at the forefront of RACC's work, and I have witnessed a growing divestment in equity-driven arts and culture engagement and communication since the fall of 2020. RACC has been a staunch advocate for underrepresented voices, ensuring resources and opportunities are accessible to all members of our community. It is imperative that any changes made to the arts and culture landscape prioritize and actively promote equity, inclusion, and diversity to safeguard the richness and vitality of our creative community.

Furthermore, as an engaged creative community member, I strongly believe that all community members voices and experiences should be included in the decision-making processes

surrounding the arts ecosystem in our city. RACC, as the current arts agent for the City of Portland, has consistently demonstrated its commitment to working with and for the residents of our city, as well as collaborating closely with City employees and elected officials. Excluding RACC and its wealth of expertise from these crucial conversations would be a missed opportunity to harness the collective wisdom of our community.

I am also troubled by the perception that Council's vote of approval is premature as it comes before the completion of the ongoing community engagement sessions and the analysis of the community voice for the "Our Creative Future" regional cultural plan. It is vital that decisions regarding the future of our arts and culture landscape are made with careful consideration of the insights and recommendations that arise from this important planning process. Rushing into conclusions without thoroughly assessing the needs and aspirations of our community undermines the integrity and effectiveness of the cultural planning efforts.

I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of RACC's work. It is an institution that was created by the community, for the community in the last cultural plan. RACC even played a vital role in ensuring access to resources and support for those in the creative field during COVID-19. Its contributions are immeasurable, and I believe that any proposed changes should be thoroughly reconsidered to ensure the continued success, vibrancy, and accessibility of our arts and culture community.

I respectfully request that the community's concerns, along with those expressed by RACC and their board members, are given the utmost attention and consideration. I want to urge you to engage in open, transparent, and inclusive conversations with all stakeholders in our arts and culture community to forge a path forward that upholds a truly community-driven process and support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title, if applicable]

[Engaged Creative Community Member]

[City of Portland, Region]