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Editor  
[Newspaper Name]  
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Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Changes to Arts and Culture Support in Portland

Dear Editor,

I am writing as a concerned resident of Portland's creative community to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed changes to arts and culture support in our city. The recent decision by the City of Portland to establish its own Office of Arts & Culture by the end of June 2024 raises important questions about the future of our vibrant arts ecosystem and its ability to prioritize equity, inclusivity, access, and community-driven support.

The Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) has been a vital partner to our creative community since its establishment through a region-wide intergovernmental agreement in 1995. This partnership was created with the understanding that a private non-profit organization like RACC, rather than the City's bureaucratic processes, would better serve our community's diverse arts and culture needs. The proposed shift away from this partnership raises concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of arts funding and support in our region.

Equity-driven arts and culture engagement and communication have been central to RACC's mission. However, in recent years, we have witnessed a growing divestment in these critical aspects. It is essential that any changes made to the arts and culture landscape prioritize equity, ensuring that resources and opportunities are distributed fairly among all individuals and communities. We cannot afford to neglect the voices of underrepresented groups and risk further marginalization within our own creative community. The new City Charter and the the resulting changes from the November 2022 vote to change our government structure is a testament to how Portlanders are invested in better representation. Why make these monumental restructuring knowing that Portlanders have a referendum on change and how the current Council makes decisions?

The potential exclusion of RACC from decision-making processes regarding our arts ecosystem is deeply troubling. RACC has consistently demonstrated its commitment to working collaboratively with community members, City employees, and elected officials to advance the arts and culture not just in Portland, but across the tri-county area. Their expertise and deep

understanding of our community's needs must be valued and incorporated into any discussions surrounding the future of arts and culture support in Portland.

The perceived premature nature of the proposed changes is also a cause for concern. It is crucial that we engage in robust community engagement sessions and analysis to ensure that decisions are rooted in the genuine needs and aspirations of our community as put forth by the new cultural plan's process in "Our Creative Future." Rushing into conclusions without proper evaluation undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of the cultural planning efforts currently underway. It also maligns representative voices from within our underrepresented communities.

RACC's contributions to our community cannot be overstated. Through their equity-driven model and ability to leverage public and private resources, they have consistently exceeded established metrics for equity, community engagement, support, and advocacy. RACC's commitment to accessibility and their invaluable support during the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic have made a tangible difference in the lives of artists, organizations, and our broader community.

As a concerned citizen, I must actively advocate for the preservation of the partnership between RACC and the City. We need to ensure that any decisions made regarding our arts and culture support are based on inclusive, transparent, and collaborative processes that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of our community.

I implore our local representatives and policymakers to consider these concerns and engage in open dialogue with the creative community before finalizing any decisions. Let us work together to safeguard the vibrancy and inclusivity of our arts ecosystem and continue fostering a community where all voices are heard, valued, and celebrated.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]