



November 2, 2022

Dear Council Member,

The Seattle Arts Commission (SAC) wishes to express our collective gratitude for your ongoing commitment and support for creative communities and artists, especially in light of the ongoing repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. As representatives of our diverse community, the SAC supports the work of the Office of Arts and Culture. We are committed to economic recovery in a way that centers and champions the inspirational power of arts, and the equity in being inclusive of Black, Indigenous, Latinx and People of Color (BIPOC) communities that have historically been excluded from wealth-building.

We absolutely understand that there are many competing issues vying for your attention at this time, yet we stand strong behind the fact that arts and culture UPLIFT SOCIETY in times of turmoil. The pandemic proved this and it is why we collectively ask that you reconsider the funding allocation assigned to the arts.

We are pleased to see that the Mayor's budget draft for funding the Office of Arts and Culture incorporated an additional \$1M in funding for Hope Corps, which will continue to serve to create meaningful job opportunities for artists and organizations as we move forward in our recovery efforts.

While there are many worthy inclusions in the Mayor's budget, there are several critical investments in Arts & Culture that have been left out. We believe that making sustainable infrastructure investments (real estate acquisition, advance access to new developments and space use resources) ensure the positive impacts of our sector (hope, joyful experience interruptions and artistic expression) to uplift ALL of Seattle for years to come.

ARTS has graciously committed \$250K to the Cultural Space Agency to complete their initial \$1M investment in the start up of the public development authority (PDA). The Space Agency has been intentionally designed to build community wealth, especially within BIPOC communities and historically disinvested neighborhoods, through a community-led process that places

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Jessica Caudle
YMCA Social
Impact Center

Kayla DeMonte
Citizen University

Sophia Fang
Artist, Honeycomb
Credit

Ricky Graboski
The Vera Project



decision-making authority into the hands of impacted community members.

In addition to the \$250K in critical seed funding already committed to the Space Agency from ARTS, we ask for on-going annual operations support for the Cultural Space Agency. A 20-year annual investment of \$500,000, from the Budget Summary Line (BSL) committed to cultural space work, is in alignment with the City of Seattle's pre-COVID commitment for the creation and operations of the PDA.

(To add context to the original commitment of \$500k a year made by the City to the Cultural Space Agency, [please review the following memos](#) that outline the conversations that took place with former Mayor Jenny Durkan's office while forming the PDA.)

Since its inception, the Cultural Space Agency has raised over \$19 million with its community-based partners, for site acquisitions and cultural development programming. This money is primarily for capital projects supporting the organized entities below.

Yet the \$1M that is funded through ARTS for startup over three years (2021-2023), is currently the entirety of the PDA's operations budget. This is of concern, as that funding is coming to an end, while the important work of the PDA continues in partnership with a number of community organizations.

Recent and current projects include:

District 1: Cultivate South Park, which represents that neighborhood's diverse Latino/a/x community, and acquired over [40,000 square feet of the heart of South Park](#), including the **South Park Hall** and the **South Park Idea Lab**.

District 2: The acquisition of the [Columbia City Theater](#) houses **Rainier Avenue Radio**, a Black-owned community radio station in Rainier Valley,

District 2: NW Tap Connection and **Union Cultural Center** are purchasing the ground floor of a new affordable housing project in Rainier Beach.

District 3: The Space Agency is purchasing a **1,500-square-foot storefront** at Mt. Baker Housing Association to program as a dedicated BIPOC small

Holly Jacobson
Path With Art

Danielle McClune
Microsoft

Yeggy Michael
Artist, Yeggy
Studio

James Miles
Bumbershoot

Chieko Phillips
4Culture

**Mikhael Mei
Williams**
Seattle Art
Museum



business incubator and pop-up space.

District 3: Partnership with **Arte Noir** to create a Black-owned, Black-focused contemporary artist support space on 23rd and Union, the heart of Seattle's historically Black Central District of Seattle.

District 5: United Indians of All Tribes, Colleen Echohawk, Eighth Generation, Daybreak Star Radio and Council President Juarez, to create an **Indigenous Cultural Campus at Northgate Commons**.

District 7: Through **Station Space at King Street Station**, the PDA has partnered with [five BIPOC youth-serving arts organizations](#), including Totem Star, Red Eagle Soaring, The Rhapsody Project, Whipsmart, and Jackson Street Music Program.

The Cultural Space Agency has a pipeline of more than 20 potential projects throughout the city. **The SAC asks for a dedicated funding stream of \$500,000 annually to support the PDA's operations, to ensure that organizations and communities like those listed above can continue to thrive.**

Your support is vital to our art and cultural communities. The SAC hopes that Seattle City Council will collaborate with us as we work to ensure that the arts and cultural workers, institutions, and organizations who have helped make Seattle a culturally rich tourist destination and economically thriving city will continue to thrive here.

We are so grateful for your ongoing commitment to this work, and we would love to continue this important conversation with you. We are available anytime for additional meetings and comments.

Vanessa Villalobos and Vee Hua 華婷婷
Co-Chairs, Seattle Arts Commission