



Yoon Kang-O'Higgins
Co-Chair
Friends of Waterfront Park

October 13, 2026

Megan Kiskaddon
Co-Chair
On the Boards

Seattle City Council
City of Seattle
600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Avery Barnes
Avery Barnes Gallery

Tera Beach
Arts Advocate

Dear Seattle City Councilmembers,

Linda Chavez-Lowry
Seattle Means Business
Magazine

We are writing on behalf of the Seattle Arts Commission to strongly oppose the proposed permanent diversion of \$1.5 million in Admission Tax revenue from the Office of Arts & Culture (OAC) to Seattle Parks and Recreation programs and Seattle Center operations.

Kariel Galbraith
YMCA Get-Engaged
Member

We recognize the critical work of both departments and the budget pressures they face. However, Admission Tax revenue was established to support Seattle's arts and cultural ecosystem and to be administered through OAC's equitable, community-informed funding framework. Protecting these resources is not only about preserving funding levels; it is about ensuring that decisions regarding their use remain guided by the policies, expertise, and public processes specifically designed to support Seattle's artists, cultural organizations, creative workers, and residents.

Dhyana Garcia
Artist, DAIPANbutoh
Collective

Ricky Graboski
The Vera Project

Ed King
Pottery Northwest

We are especially concerned that Mayor Wilson is proposing a permanent diversion.

Mariana Martinez
Centro Cultural Mexicano

Last year, Councilmembers Rinck and Hollingsworth explicitly structured this diversion as a one-time budget action. Making it permanent would reverse that City Council decision and create a recurring reduction in the City's investment in arts and culture beyond earmarked city departments. At a time when cultural organizations are already struggling to keep pace with rising costs, this would further constrain the funding available for grants and other sector-wide priorities, while limiting OAC's ability to respond to the needs identified by the arts and culture community. A permanent diversion makes a recurring claim on resources that would otherwise be available to meet the growing needs of Seattle's cultural sector.

Jo Mikesell
Shunpike

Kate Nagle-Caraluzzo
Town Hall Seattle

Anne Shukla
Allen Family Philanthropies

Yolanda Spencer
Northwest Justice Project

We also urge careful consideration of the original intent and governance framework established for the Admission Tax. Seattle Municipal Code Section 5.40.120 directs that Admission Tax receipts be deposited into the Arts and Culture Fund and appropriated to the Office of Arts & Culture. Although the funds technically pass through the Office of Arts & Culture, they are earmarked for other departments, bypassing the funding priorities and public processes established to guide OAC investments. The code further

Vanessa Villalobos
Artist, Balorico Dance

Ray Yang
National Art Education
Association



charges OAC with developing policies for the use of those funds, with the Seattle Arts Commission providing public comment and advisory input before policies are submitted to the City Council. This structure reflects a deliberate policy choice to ensure that Admission Tax revenues are allocated through an arts and culture framework informed by professional expertise, community engagement, and public accountability.

We urge the Mayor and City Council to restore the full admission tax revenue to the Office of Arts & Culture, reject making this diversion permanent, and identify alternative funding sources to support the important work of Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Center.

These concerns also reflect the broader cultural sector's calls for increased arts funding to meet rising costs and growing community needs, making a permanent diversion particularly concerning. Protecting the full Admission Tax allocation safeguards the public process established for these funds and strengthens Seattle's artists, cultural organizations, creative economy, and civic life.

With appreciation,

 
[Yoon Kang-O'Higgins \(10/14/2026 06:48:36 PDT\)](#) [Megan Kiskaddon \(10/14/2026 08:55:26 PDT\)](#)

Yoon Kang-O'Higgins and Megan Kiskaddon
Co-Chairs, Seattle Arts Commission