

Council Advocacy Items

Following are foundational level needs we would like to partner with the Arts Commission to address. This document lays out each need and reason for its continued support. Specific budget requests require staff preparation and approval through our department before being presented to City leadership. So, at this point, the advocacy items are focused on foundational needs. We look forward to joining you in a more detailed strategic planning process under our new Division Manager, as the foundational needs are approved.

For our upcoming Council Coffee meetings, Commissioners can add personalized advocacy statements that give real-life examples to exemplify the relevance and importance of sustaining these foundational needs.

1) Public Art Staffing

What – We need to continue our Public Art Project Manager position (Ricky Reyes' position) in the 2025-26 biennium. In addition, to meet current and projected demand, the public art program will need one new public art project manager position, beyond what currently exists. Staff is working on projections and will be including a request for public art project management staff in the biennial budget, based on expected project workload and available revenue.

Why – Arts & Cultural Vitality needs increased staff capacity to be able to deliver all the public art projects currently funded. Without these positions, these public art projects will not be able to be delivered to the community.

2) Arts Funding Budget

What – We request an increase in the General Fund budget allocation to support inflation-linked updates to the Tacoma Arts Commission's funding programs: Community Arts Projects and Tacoma Artists Initiative Program. Staff will be including a request for an increase in these funds in the biennial budget to meet the current baseline needs and have the flexibility to expand and respond to emerging needs.

Why – While Tacoma Creates and the Public Art program have seen steady growth in their funding that allows for inflationary issues to be mitigated, Tacoma Arts Commission funding has remained flat for more than two decades, even as the cost of living has increased dramatically. This funding is especially important for grassroots and community groups and individual artists who don't qualify or have the capacity to pursue other funding opportunities, including Tacoma Creates.

3) Tacoma Creates Reauthorization

What – Tacoma Creates needs to be reauthorized in 2025 to continue past the initial 7-year timeframe approved in 2018. It is now possible for reauthorization to happen with a councilmanic vote, rather than a vote of the people; the staff recommendation is for Council to exercise this option during the first quarter of 2025.

Why – In addition to the demonstrated impact of increasing access to arts, culture, heritage, and science experiences throughout Tacoma over the last 4 years -- including greater financial and geographic access to programs, increasing youth education programs, and the support for creative workforce and sustainability for the cultural sector -- Tacoma Creates funding is what allowed the Tacoma Arts Commission to increase arts funding to individual artists by 113% percent. This is because Tacoma Creates has significantly increased the funding available to organizations, allowing the Arts Commission to reallocate more of its funding to individual

artists, which Tacoma Creates cannot directly fund. Pursuing the councilmanic option makes sense because it allows cultural organizations to keep their focus and their dollars on community programming instead of a campaign, and because of the incredibly strong community support in 2018.

4) **Tacoma Public Utilities' participation in the 1% for Art program**

What – We would like to expand the public art program to also include Tacoma Public Utilities.

Why – While the Public Art Program has fostered widely successful relationships with capital and partner departments across the City, Tacoma Public Utilities currently does not contribute to the 1% for Art fund. This funding would allow for various internal, community, and Council priorities to be pursued.

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