

Members

Heide Fernandez-Llamazares, Chair
Jes Takla, Vice Chair
Connie Behe
Jasmine Brown
Erica Chang
Katie Dean
Hannah-Clarke Gilmore
Sarah Jane Hoppe
Michael Kula
Vernon Ng
Derek Nunn
Ean Olsen
Jeanette Sanchez
Kenya Shakoor
Jamika Scott, City Council Liaison
Olgy Diaz, City Council Liaison Alternate

Staff

Daniel Garcia, Community Programs Specialist
Marissa Laubscher, Public Art Program Manager
Rebecca Solverson, Division Manager
Naomi Strom-Avila, Funding & Cultural Programs Manager

Summary Minutes

Tacoma Arts Commission

Arts & Cultural Vitality Division

Community & Economic Development Dept.



Date: May 12, 2025

Time: 5:00 pm

Location: Virtual and in-person

These minutes accompany the recorded meeting of the Tacoma Arts Commission, which is available at

www.tacoma.gov/tacomaartscommission

Commission Members in Attendance:

Heide Fernandez-Llamazares, Chair
Jes Takla, Vice Chair
Jasmine Brown
Hannah-Clarke Gilmore
Sarah Jane Hoppe
Michael Kula
Vernon Ng
Derek Nunn
Ean Olsen
Jeanette Sanchez
Kenya Shakoor

City Staff Present:

Daniel Garcia
Marissa Laubscher
Rebecca Solverson
Naomi Strom-Avila
Lisa Jaret

Guest Presenters:

Councilmember Jamika Scott
Ashlee Branham

Commission Members Excused Absence:

Erica Chang

Commission Members Unexcused Absence:

Connie Behe
Katie Dean

1. Call to Order

5:04 pm (00:14)

Chair Fernandez-Llamazares called the meeting to order. Chair Fernandez-Llamazares recognized that the meeting was held on Indigenous land: the traditional homelands of the Puyallup people.

ʔuk'wədiitəb ʔuhigwətəb čəł txwəl tiit ʔa čəł ʔal tə swatxwixwtxwəd ʔə tiit puyaləpabš dxwəstəłils gwəl ʔutxwəlšucidəbs həlgwəʔ.

"We gratefully acknowledge that we rest on the traditional lands of the Puyallup People where they make their home and speak the Lushootseed language."

2. Consent Agenda

(01:04)

Chair Fernandez-Llamazares welcomed Ashlee Branham and Councilmember Jamika Scott.

Commissioner Chang had an excused absence.

Vice Chair Takla asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda, which included the agenda for the May 12 meeting as well as the minutes from the April 14 and May 3 meetings.

There was a motion: "I would move that we approve the consent agenda and minutes for both of those meetings."

Motion: Commissioner Sanchez

Seconded: Commissioner Hoppe

Motion Carried

3. Public Comment on Agenda or Arts & Culture Items

(02:12)

There were no public comments.

4. Council Liaison Check-In

(03:00)

Councilmember Jamika Scott shared about the following items:

- Councilmember Scott is monitoring impacts of federal funding changes and executive orders and meeting bi-weekly with federal lobbyists. She recently visited Congressmembers in Washington D.C.
- The City issued a joint solidarity statement with federal workers and continues to fly various flags over City buildings for celebratory observances.
- Commissioners were asked to share concerns from the arts community, especially regarding potential National Endowment for the Arts impacts, so City Council can stay informed.
- Councilmember Scott was thanked and encouraged Commissioners to keep advocating for the creative economy, small businesses, and maintaining current funding priorities, including public safety.

Commissioners asked questions and provided comments.

5. Action Items

a. "Mystery Exists in the Void" Artwork Accession

(18:35)

Councilmember Scott presented a recommendation for the Commission to accession the sculpture "Mystery Exists in the Void", created by Douglas Granum and Don Davis, into the City's Municipal Art Collection. The Hilltop Business District Association would like to revive the iconic public art piece, which is a communal representation of Hilltop Tacoma. The piece is currently unowned but Douglas Granum and Parks Tacoma support accessioning the sculpture into the City's Municipal Art Collection.

There was a motion: "to accession Mystery Exists in the Void into the Municipal Art Collection."

Motion: Commissioner Ng

Seconded: Commissioner Nunn

Motion carried

b. 32nd St. Bridge Mural Proposal

(29:51)

Ashlee Branham, a secondary arts teacher at Chief Leschi school, presented a student-designed mural proposal for the 32nd St. Bridge—featuring Coast Salish-inspired stencils symbolizing rivers, skies, and camas flowers—prompted by the at-risk school coordinator and supported by Commissioners who engaged with the students. The piece would be completed by Ashlee Branham with her students and would not be part of the City’s Municipal Art Collection.

Commissioners asked questions and provided comments.

There was a motion “to approve the 32nd St. Bridge mural project proposal.”

Motion: Commissioner Shakoor

Seconded: Commissioner Olsen

Motion carried

c. Arts Commission Priorities

(48:34)

Staff shared an updated Commission priorities document, based on feedback from the May 3 Commission retreat session. Priorities are:

- Tacoma Creates Reauthorization
- Arts Funding and Community Programming Funding
- Spaces for Artists and the Cultural Sector
- Tacoma Public Utilities’ Participation in the 1% for Art Program

Commissioners asked questions and provided comments. Staff asked for motions to approve the Arts Commission Priorities individually.

There was a motion: “I make a motion to make our number 1 priority the Tacoma Creates reauthorization.”

Motion: Chair Fernandez-Llamazares

Seconded: Vice Chair Takla

Carried

There was a motion: “I make a motion that our second priority is maintaining the budget for arts budget and humanities programming as it is.”

Motion: Chair Fernandez-Llamazares

Seconded: Commissioner Shakoor

Carried

There was a motion: “I make a motion that our third priority is to investigate spaces for artists and cultural sector.”

Motion: Chair Fernandez-Llamazares

Seconded: Commissioner Brown

Carried

There was a motion: “I make a motion that our fourth priority is to expand the participation of Tacoma Public Utilities in the 1% for Art Program, but it is not an ask for this year.”

Motion: Chair Fernandez-Llamazares

Seconded: Commissioner Takla

Carried (7 ayes, 3 nays, 1 abstain)

d. Cancellation of July Meeting

(1:28:22)

Staff proposed cancelling the July Commission meeting to allow for a summer break.

There was a motion: “I move that we cancel the July meeting.”

Motion: Commissioner Sanchez

Seconded: Commissioner Shakoor

Carried

6. Discussion/Updates

a. Retreat Session Reflection & Prep for June

(01:29:04)

The Commission will hold a focused conversation at the next retreat regarding types of artist spaces. Jennifer English will provide a presentation about Spaceworks Tacoma.

Commissioners asked questions and provided comments regarding City Council advocacy.

b. JEDIS Subcommittee

(01:35:07)

Vice Chair Takla is working with the JEDIS Subcommittee to refine the JEDIS rubric and thanked everyone for their continued involvement.

Commissioners asked questions and provided comments.

7. Staff Check-In

(01:36:18)

a. Staff Projects Overview and Updates – Funding, Community Programming, Public Art, Tacoma Creates

Staff gave updates about the following items:

- Commissioner Wygle’s departure from the Commission
- Spaceworks’ fundraiser event, Cachet
- The City’s General Fund budget is still frozen
- Commissioners still needed for council coffee meetings
- City’s NEA grant for the McKinley public art project was terminated; staff have submitted an appeal; 90% of the grant has been paid out already
- New City website and domain (tacoma.gov)
- Release of 2024 Arts & Cultural Vitality Annual Report
- TAIP contracting is still on hold with the budget freeze
- Commissioners were asked to sign up for TAIP mid-project meetings
- Tacoma Arts Month subcommittee signups and website update
- Hilltop Plaques paver install
- Traffic box wraps in Hilltop and Tacoma Mall Area
- J Street asphalt murals
- McKinley bench designs

- Sheridan/Wapato Parks collaboration with Parks Tacoma
- PARC: Lincoln Heights Park, Lincoln Park, South Park small projects
- Artists in Residence
- Pride Crosswalk install
- Tacoma Creates reauthorization discussion with Council

8. Report Back

(01:53:43)

a. Advocacy Reports

There were no items.

b. Funded Project Updates/Upcoming Arts Events/Arts Events Attended

Staff shared upcoming projects funded through Community Arts Projects and Tacoma Artists Initiative Program.

c. Future Agenda Items for Consideration

Commissioner Kula suggested discussing the Tacoma Poet Laureate Program as a future agenda item.

9. Adjourn

07:01 pm (01:57:55)

MEETING FREQUENCY

Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month at 5:00 pm. All meetings of the Tacoma Arts Commission are open to the public.



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