

## Members

Benjamin Maestas III, Chair  
Olivia Samuel, Vice Chair  
John Hines, City Council Liaison  
Keith Blocker, City Council Liaison Alternate  
Jasmine Brown  
Heather Conklin  
Heide Fernandez-Llamazares  
Michael Kula  
Wade Neal  
Elizabeth Pew  
Jeanette Sanchez  
Jamika Scott  
MaryMikel Stump  
Alejandra Villeda  
Joe Williams

## Staff

Amy McBride, Tacoma Arts Administrator  
Chevi Chung, Community Programs Specialist  
Rebecca Solverson, Public Art Specialist  
Naomi Strom-Avila, Funding & Cultural Programs Manager

# Summary Minutes

## Tacoma Arts Commission

Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality

Tacoma Venues and Events Department



### Special Meeting

**Date: April 30, 2022**

**Time: 10:00 am**

**Location: Virtual**

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### *Commission Members in Attendance:*

Benjamin Maestas III, Chair  
Olivia Samuel, Vice Chair  
Jasmine Brown  
Heather Conklin  
Heide Fernandez-Llamazares  
Michael Kula  
Wade Neal  
Jeanette Sanchez  
Jamika Scott  
Joe Williams

### *City Staff Present:*

Amy McBride  
Chevi Chung  
Naomi Strom-Avila  
Rebecca Solverson  
Lisa Jaret

### *Commission Members Excused Absence:*

MaryMikel Stump

### *Commission Members Unexcused Absence:*

Elizabeth Pew  
Alejandra Villeda

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## 1. Call to Order

10:04

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

ʔukʷədiitəb ʔuhigʷətəb čəł txʷəl tiit ʔa čəł ʔal tə swatxʷixʷtxʷəd ʔə tiit puyaləpabš dxʷəsłəłlils 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** **10:04**

Commissioner Stump had an excused absence.

Vice Chair Samuel asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda.

Motion: Commissioner Neal

Second: Commissioner Conklin

Motion: Carried

**3. Public Comment on Agenda Items** **10:05**

There were no public comments on agenda items.

**4. Introduction** **10:05**

Chair Maestas gave a welcome and shared an overview of the agenda and meeting objectives. Chair Maestas reviewed the values-based behaviors of the Commission: be a safe space maker, be yourself, practice empathy and respect, speak and share responsibly, be willing to experience discomfort and accept differences, hold each other accountable with care being mindful of intentions and context, be open to learning; learning is iterative and perfection isn't achievable, be a support for each other.

**5. Check-in Question** **10:10**

Vice Chair Samuel posed the question "what's one thing you are giving up to make space to be here today?"

Commissioners took turns responding to the prompt.

**6. ArtFull Tacoma Small Group Discussions** **10:20**

Staff split Commissioners into four breakout groups. Groups routed through four rounds of discussion, once in each of these topic areas: public art, community programming, funding, and creative economy & collaboration. In each topic area, the presenting staff gave a brief overview of what the Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality is currently doing in that area and then presented several initiatives from ArtFull Tacoma that connect to that topic area. Commissioners then responded to these discussion questions: where are the gaps and opportunities related to this topic area that are not covered in these current initiatives? In what ways can we be advancing Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) in our work?

**a. Topic area: Public Art**

- ArtFull Tacoma Initiatives covered: 2d – Employ arts and culture as a strategy to address civic and social needs through Creative Placemaking; 3a – Ensure that art and design are successfully integrated into public development projects; 3b – Equitably distribute public art throughout Tacoma's neighborhoods.; 3c – Investigate opportunities to include public art in private development.; 3d – Increase capacity for the stewardship and maintenance of public art.
- Thoughts shared by Commissioners:
  - Interest in public art in private development – a good next step could be forming a subcommittee to focus on developing this
  - Interest in shifting policy/funding so public art can be better distributed

- Interest in having specific policy asks for City Council
- Include artist housing as an option for developers to get FAR boost benefits
- Interest in programs that specifically work with graffiti artists
- Interest in working with educational institutions: K-12 and college level
- Geography is important when looking at how public art is distributed, but the question was also asked: are we storytelling every group that's represented in Tacoma?
- Distributed opportunities are powerful – murals, traffic box wraps, functional art, and other things that can get into many parts of the city
- Are there ways to support other art forms through/in connection to public art (theater, dance, poetry)?
- Can public art work with other funding sources (especially Tacoma Creates)?
- More professional development for public art (maybe through a partnership with the professional development program?)
- Creative Placemaking Tours to support better access/knowledge of the public art program

**b. Topic area: Community Programming**

- ArtFull Tacoma Initiatives covered: 1a – Promote Tacoma as a center for the arts; 1d – Provide training and professional development for artists and arts organizations; 2b – Support and build on existing community events and explore opportunities for signature events that celebrate Tacoma's rich arts and culture.
- Thoughts shared by Commissioners:
  - Consider a repetitive cycle for professional development workshops and educational content around financial sustainability as an artist, obtaining medical benefits, affordable housing, creating professional websites, and negotiating contracts
  - Consider bringing back the Public Art Reaching Community training program
  - Consider activating winter, spring, and summer offerings in addition to Tacoma Arts Month for a full-year approach. Spring example: having a literary focus during April, National Poetry Month and/or a Tacoma book festival. Summer example: encourage library reading and getting out to see public art around Tacoma with a potential social media scavenger hunt with hashtags.
  - Consider support and infrastructure to help emerging artists move into becoming professional artists
  - Consider getting the Tacoma Arts Commission an in-person presence throughout the year at various arts and culture activities like setting up a table with pamphlets
  - Consider ways of showing off arts, culture, and creative economy in Tacoma

**c. Topic area: Funding**

- ArtFull Tacoma Initiatives covered: 2a – Promote equitable distribution of and access to arts for all throughout Tacoma; 4a – Provide expert arts administration consulting services to partners seeking to advance the arts in their organizations and our community; 4b – Strengthen and expand existing arts and cultural funding opportunities; 4c – Ensure access to quality arts education in and out of school time with Tacoma schools and arts providers.
- Thoughts shared by Commissioners:
  - Review funding requirements and wording with an eye on allowing as much room as possible for new groups to apply for funding
  - Consider developing a micro-grant and training program for small groups who are just getting started and trying out new concepts
  - Consider developing a training program that covers technical information about starting up an organization or group
  - Promote community-produced services and program, especially low and no-cost ones, that are available to the community
  - Consider ways to adapt Expanded Learning Opportunities programming to include high school students and their younger siblings
  - Encourage/support groups who are hosting programming outside downtown and North End; want to see organizations providing neighborhood programming willingly and with an authentic desire to be in and continue serving these communities on a long-term basis
  - Consider funding and other types of in-kind services that support organizations with things like rehearsal and performance space, equipment, etc.

**d. Topic area: Creative Economy and Collaborations**

- ArtFull Tacoma Initiatives covered: 1b – Expand opportunities for creative businesses to thrive through programs like Spaceworks Tacoma; 1c – Identify and develop creative growth sectors; 1e – Encourage development and sustainability of creative spaces throughout Tacoma; 2c – Develop a network to strengthen connections with diverse audiences throughout the city.
- Thoughts shared by Commissioners:
  - Strong interest/desire around developing youth after school programs, apprenticeships, and other pipeline development programs for jobs/opportunities working in the arts
  - Consider opportunities to build skills for makers to access the online market
  - Connect with broader maker movement to build skills for youth
  - Convene performing arts producers to identify locations for free/reduced cost performance spaces, expand opportunities for Global Majority participation and ensure

that all opportunities aren't at same time (i.e. tied only to certain 'cultural calendar' timelines), coordinate and collaborate

- Expand awareness of opportunities for funding to performing artists
- Identify opportunities where creative workers can apply skills in non-arts-specific areas or cross-over (storytelling, community engagement, design, videography, acting, etc.
- Look at opportunities to develop/support a 'Meow wolf' type interdisciplinary creative experience
- Work with City departments and partners to deploy artists in public art, community engagement, communications
- Capture funding from non-arts-specific programs to flow to creatives (i.e. equity in contracting, infrastructure funding, mental health tax, etc.) making sure creative businesses are aware of opportunities

**7. Deeper Dive Survey**

**12:00**

The deeper dive survey and whiteboard session with Chair Maestas and Vice Chair Samuel was postponed to the May 9 Commission meeting.

**8. Adjourn**

**12:03**

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**MEETING FREQUENCY**

Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month at 5:00 pm, venue to be determined based on health regulations. All meetings of the Tacoma Arts Commission are open to the public.



To request this information in an alternative format or to request a reasonable accommodation, please contact Tacoma Arts Commission staff at (253) 591-5191. TTY or speech to speech users please dial (253) 581-5820 to connect with Washington Relay Services.

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