

CITY OF VANCOUVER CULTURE, ARTS & HERITAGE PLAN

Approved April 16, 2018

CITY OF
Vancouver
WASHINGTON





Painting and tools inside local artist Tom Relth's studio in downtown Vancouver

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Civil War-era artillery demonstration at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site | Photo by National Park Service

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For Vancouver's Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan, we offer simple definitions of culture, arts and heritage that aim to help people understand the intention of the terms for the purposes of the Plan.

CULTURE

Culture is transmitted through language, customs, knowledge, cuisine, institutions, music, dance, theater and art and embodies the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time.

ARTS

The arts are a product of imagination and creativity and a vehicle for the expression or communication of emotions and ideas, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. The arts, for the purposes of this plan, include the full range of visual and performing arts.


HERITAGE

Heritage involves the qualities or features belonging to a particular place or culture, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, which come from the past, are still important, and have been passed down through generations. Highlighting Vancouver's history is a source of civic pride, and fundamental to the shared values and culture of the city.

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Heart and Stone sculpture by Cobalt Designworks on Columbia and West Sixth Streets



Welcome to the City of Vancouver Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan, a plan that builds on the vision and values contained in the City's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan for a vibrant, safe, welcoming and prosperous Vancouver.

The City's Strategic Plan was developed with input from thousands of residents, community and business partners, and identifies area of focus including investments in public safety, strengthening connections with residents, parks investments, reinforcing our connection to the Columbia River, supporting economic growth, transportation, and reinforcing Vancouver's clear and distinctive sense of place.

The Strategic Plan includes goals affirming the importance of culture, arts and heritage to our city and this Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan builds on that affirmation and identifies strategic areas that will help to realize the City's aspirations.

Vancouver is home to a growing and ever-evolving cultural ecosystem, with a variety of artists, arts and cultural organizations, institutions of higher education, a historical museum, a national historic site, and other arts and cultural venues such as festivals, outdoor concerts and markets and a monthly First Friday Art Walk.

A focus on culture, arts and heritage and support for cultural resources can benefit almost every part of our lives, from the vibrancy and economic prosperity of our city to our health and well-being, in addition to enhancing the unique character and identity of our city.

While culture, arts and heritage are sometimes marginalized and not seen as essential, they are actually one of the most necessary ingredients in what makes a community an attractive and vibrant place to live, visit and work.

This Plan outlines why culture, arts and heritage are an important part of our city's identity, and focuses on the strategies and initiatives needed to grow and sustain a thriving and vibrant culture, arts and heritage scene in Vancouver.

VISION

Bringing together the diverse interests and talents of Vancouver, we will integrate culture, arts and heritage into the daily life of our community. We will steward the exceptional assets of Vancouver's heritage and natural setting, making contributions that enhance the identity of Vancouver, welcome all community members and visitors, strengthen the local economy, and improve the quality of life in Vancouver.



“Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today and we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration, our touchstone, our reference point, our identity.”

– UNESCO

A “Keys to the City” piano, painted by a local artist, at Esther Short Park

Vancouver's Strategic Plan

With its location between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Mountains on the north bank of the Columbia River, Vancouver is known for its natural beauty and high quality of life. We are consistently among the nation's most livable and fastest growing cities, with a population of nearly 185,000 as of 2017.

Vancouver's city government has a tradition of planning for the future with input from the community. The City's past strategic plans helped successfully guide accomplishments, including downtown revitalization, redevelopment of the waterfront, and investments in public safety and our streets.

From a recent survey completed by more than 2,000 residents, a strong vision for the future of Vancouver emerged: a desire to be more than a bedroom community, one with robust cultural experiences, a self-sustained local economy, and opportunities to spend leisure time right here.

The 2016-2021 Strategic Plan will help ensure Vancouver remains one the nation's most livable cities—one that has a strong economy, and an exemplary education, health care, housing, public safety, transportation, parks and arts and culture ecosystem.



Creating the Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan

To assist with the creation of this plan, a 25 member advisory committee was formed. This group, representing a broad range of community arts and heritage stakeholders, began meeting monthly starting in September 2017. In addition, interviews were conducted with stakeholders, including those interested in culture, arts and heritage, as well as economic development, education, neighborhoods and local business.

The draft plan was presented to 15 stakeholder groups, including the Historic Preservation Commission, Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance, Arts of Clark County and Vancouver's Downtown Association. Feedback from the stakeholders was incorporated into the plan.



“The arts empower. The arts give a voice to the voiceless. The arts help transform American communities and, as I often say, the result can be a better child, a better town, a better nation and certainly a better world. Let’s champion our arts action heroes, emulate them and make our communities everything we want them to be.”

– Robert L. Lynch, *Americans for the Arts*

“Arts and culture make considerable and necessary contributions to the well-being of communities. Arts and culture are powerful tools with which to engage communities in various levels of change. They are a means to public dialogue, contribute to the development of a community’s creative learning, create healthy communities capable of action, provide a powerful tool for community mobilization and activism, and help build community capacity and leadership.”

- Creative City Network of Canada

Three key themes surrounding culture, arts and heritage in Vancouver emerged from the advisory committee’s discussions and the stakeholder interviews:



City of Vancouver Creative Vitality Index

In March 2018, the Washington State Arts Commission provided a Creative Vitality Index (CVI) report for the City of Vancouver, updating the data contained in the last Vancouver CVI report received nearly five years ago, in June 2013.

The CVI is a measure of economic vitality of the arts and art-related activities in a specific geographic region of the U.S. It is designed to provide an indicator of the relative health of the economic elements of the creative economy. It measures annual changes in the economic health of an area by using per capita concentration of creative activities in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. The report found:

The city of Vancouver's CVI has steadily improved, from 0.74 in 2012 to 0.81 in 2016. The U.S. baseline CVI rating is 1.0 and Washington State's CVI is 1.02.

In the downtown core, Vancouver's CVI is 1.60. Downtown has seen a 7% gain in the number of creative jobs between 2015 and 2016, and a 10% gain in creative industry earnings during the same period.

Cultural nonprofits have lost ground in Vancouver since 2015, earning \$1.9M (18%) less in revenues in 2016 than in the previous year.

Creative industries in Vancouver with the highest revenues in 2016 were: software publishers (\$68.6 million), antique shops (\$25.8 million), film/video exhibition (\$23.7 million), newspaper publishers (\$21.9 million) and music publishers (\$19.9 million).

Local festivals, such as the Recycled Arts Festival and the Vancouver Wine and Jazz Festival bring thousands of attendees to Vancouver. Americans for the Arts estimates that nonlocal attendees spend twice as much per person as their local counterparts as a result of attending an arts event (\$45.57 vs. \$23.44).

The Salmon Run Bell Tower in Esther Short Park



Where we Are Now

The advisory committee discussed the state of arts and culture in our community and developed an inventory of Vancouver's current cultural assets and arts community needs:

Vancouver's Cultural Assets





“In 2015, arts and cultural production contributed \$763.6 billion to the U.S. economy (more than construction, transportation, agriculture or warehousing), the arts employ 4.9 million workers across the country with earnings of more than \$370 billion, and consumers spent \$31.6 billion on admissions to performing arts events, \$1 billion more than projected.”

– Bureau of Economic Analysis & the National Endowment for the Arts, March 2018 report

Best Practices From Other Cities

The advisory committee reviewed the cultural programs from several nearby cities: Hillsboro and Beaverton, Ore., Bellingham and Tacoma, Wash., and Boise, Idaho. From these case studies, the committee identified the following areas as key ingredients for success:

“Arts and culture can bring people together across traditional barriers such as age, income, education, race and religion. It can help create a sense of neighborhood identity and pride. Along the way, it can also be instrumental in helping to grow and attract businesses, create vital markets for housing and help improve the safety of a community.”

– Creative Community Leadership Institute






Native American drumming at the annual Nez Perce Chief Redheart memorial ceremony at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site



Esther Short Park fills with visitors during the City's summer concert series



The City of Vancouver recognizes it cannot support cultural, arts and heritage programs and activities alone, and much of the City's work is done in partnership with nonprofits, community groups and businesses. The City currently supports and implements arts, cultural and heritage programs and services as outlined below.

Current Cultural, Arts and Heritage Services:

Public Art Collection: The City has an eclectic collection of more than 30 pieces of outdoor public art. Recent additions to the collection have been in partnership with Vancouver's Downtown Association and the Clark County Mural Society.

Events: The City sponsors cultural events, including two popular outdoor concert series in Esther Short Park and the Columbia Tech Center Park. In addition, the City issues permits for a number of cultural events each year, including the Recycled Arts Festival and 3 Days of Aloha.

Real Vancouver: The City airs a monthly documentary-style program that highlights the people, places and events that make Vancouver unique, including the areas of heritage, arts, culture and music.

Marketing/Communications: The City uses a variety of channels (social media, website, community newsletter) to highlight and build awareness of arts and culture events in Vancouver.

The Vancouver National Historic Reserve¹: The City supports The Historic Trust and the National Park Service in the programming and management of this federally-designated national historic reserve.

Celebrate Freedom Programs: The City supports these programs in partnership with The Historic Trust, which include Independence Day, Flag Day, the Veterans Day Parade and the Marshall Leadership Awards and Lecture.

Clark County Historical Museum: The City provides the building that houses the museum and provides operational funds, in partnership with Clark County.

"TICKET TO ENTRY"

The advisory committee recommends the City take four near-term actions to begin implementing this plan:

- Appoint a new Cultural Commission
- Hire a full-time Cultural Services Manager
- Restore the cultural grant program
- Create a public art program

¹ Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, created as a unit of the National Park System in 1948, is part of the federally designated Vancouver National Historic Reserve, which also includes Officers Row, the West Barracks and Pearson Airfield.

SIX-YEAR ACTION PLAN

Plan Elements

- ▶ Cultural capacity
- ▶ Cultural focus
- ▶ Cultural space

The stockade at the reconstructed Fort Vancouver

ELEMENT 1: CULTURAL CAPACITY

Building Capacity of the Cultural Sector

THE VISION: Vancouver’s cultural service providers and participants believe the cultural sector of the city is strong, offering quality cultural, arts and heritage experiences to residents and visitors. There is visionary government and community leadership and increased organizational capacity in resource development, training and operations.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Support renewed cultural focus among City leadership

Action 1.1.1	Hire two full-time staff positions to coordinate and champion the City’s culture, arts and heritage programs	Action 1.1.2	Facilitate presence of elected and staff leadership at cultural events throughout the city	Action 1.1.3	Update the 2013 “Creative Vitality Index,” which provides a measurement of the value and contribution of the creative economy
					Completed March 2018

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Engage and elevate community leaders in support of culture, arts and heritage

Action 1.2.1	As established in Vancouver Municipal Code, Section 2.88, appoint a Cultural Commission to provide a focus on growing support and awareness of culture, arts and heritage across the city	Action 1.2.3	Increase outreach budget for the Clark County/ Vancouver Historic Preservation Commission, which provides education and awareness of heritage, including preservation of historic buildings	Action 1.2.4	Contract with an organization with cultural expertise to build leadership capacity within community-based culture, arts and heritage organizations
Action 1.2.2	Partner with the Clark County Arts Commission to expand county-wide awareness and support for culture and arts				

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Expand City-supported arts and cultural programs

Action 1.3.1	Expand the City's public art program, including installing pieces throughout the city, and clarify roles for decision-making and artist selection	Action 1.3.3	Under the direction of the Cultural Commission, restore the Cultural Grant program, which provides small grants for culture, arts and heritage organizations	Action 1.3.5	Explore partnerships to provide additional classes in arts and dance for all ages and cultures at the City's community centers
Action 1.3.2	Expand the popular Summer Concert Series to include additional performances in east Vancouver and/or Clark College and the new waterfront park (2019), including additional staff to support programming and permitting	Action 1.3.4	Create paid internships for youth to provide opportunities in the cultural or special events programs, particularly during summer months when there is a spike in cultural activities	Action 1.3.6	Work with other City departments, including Public Works and Community and Economic Development, to infuse art throughout the City's infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 1.4: Promote the infusion of culture, arts and heritage into Vancouver residents' daily lives

Action 1.4.1	Leverage the City's existing web-based calendar of events to promote cultural events (i.e. linking to Evergreen Public Schools' Fine Arts Calendar and Arts of Clark County calendar of events)	Action 1.4.3	Expand practice of making space available in City Hall for arts and heritage exhibits to other City-owned facilities	Action 1.4.5	Create honors, awards and laureate programs to celebrate individuals and organizations that support culture, arts and heritage
Action 1.4.2	Use Clark/Vancouver Television (CVTV) to bring culture, arts and heritage programming to a broader community audience	Action 1.4.4	Expand neighborhood grant program to include culture, arts and heritage projects, allowing neighborhoods to plan for desired enrichment specific to their community	Action 1.4.6	Encourage broader use of the City's Art-in-Right-Of-Way policy that allows community groups and artists to decorate street lights, utility boxes, pavement and storm drains



Glass artists at Firehouse Glass Studio and Gallery in downtown Vancouver

The Cultural Commission

A passionate group of community leaders recognized as partners with the City is one of the foundational elements of any successful culture, arts and heritage program. Cities throughout the Pacific Northwest with successful programs have acknowledged the value and benefit of engaging its citizens directly as advocates and ambassadors, and as such, have established volunteer-based councils and commissions to work with elected officials and city staff to promote culture, arts and heritage.

The City of Vancouver long-ago recognized the value of empowering its citizens in the advocacy for culture, arts and heritage. In 1994, a Cultural Commission was created in local ordinance. However, with no financial resources to staff the commission in 2006, its members were dismissed and much of the work put on hold. The Cultural Commission remains in Vancouver Municipal Code (Section 2.88), though it currently has no members and is not in operation.

The advisory committee recommends that the City reinstate the Cultural Commission to provide a focus on growing support and awareness of culture, arts and heritage across the city. The committee discussed the need to include ethnically diverse voices to ensure multiculturalism is infused into decisions and activities. It was also recommended that Cultural Commission members' roles and responsibilities be modified in order to align with best practices of comparable cities in the region.

Detailed recommendations for changes to the commission's roles and responsibilities are outlined in Appendix B.



Art display in the Fort Vancouver Regional Library during Vancouver's Downtown Association's First Friday Art Walk

ELEMENT 2: CULTURAL FOCUS

Strengthen Vancouver's Cultural Core

THE VISION: Vancouver's unique identity is rooted in three distinct, connected areas with delightful, but different characteristics: Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, downtown and the evolving waterfront. Each of these three districts offers residents and visitors multiple ways to participate in and enjoy the city's culture, arts and heritage. The Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan envisions a strengthened synergy among these three extraordinary assets.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Fully leverage the Arts District to be an economic and cultural driver of downtown's future

Action 2.1.1 Reconfigure boundaries of the Arts District to reflect the concentration of arts activities and enhance the ability to successfully market the district

Action 2.1.2 Focus on developing the Arts District in terms of economic benefits to the city and to local artists, including creating mechanisms to encourage more arts uses in the district

Action 2.1.3 Support creation of dedicated staff position at Vancouver's Downtown Association to help with marketing for the Arts District;

OR

partner on the development of an organization to manage the Arts District, which would include a governance board, mission, brand and identity, programming, and data collection on outcomes

Action 2.1.4 Design and implement art-based streetscape improvements targeted at the heart of the Arts District, which may include increased pedestrian and amenity space and artistic lighting, or partial street closure to support arts uses



OBJECTIVE 2.2: Explore designating a historic district to recognize and celebrate downtown’s heritage

Action 2.2.1	Explore designating a portion of downtown as a historic district	Action 2.2.3	Consider physical improvements to a designated historic loop, including simple streetscape improvements and plaques, and tie the historic loop into the MyVancouver and Clark County Heritage apps	Action 2.2.4	Complete renovations, including climate control, of the City-owned Carnegie Library, which houses Clark County Historical Museum
Action 2.2.2	Update the City’s 1994 downtown design guidelines manual to emphasize public art, cultural amenities and historic character of built environment				

OBJECTIVE 2.3: Enhance connections to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site to honor Vancouver as the birthplace of Pacific Northwest settlement

Action 2.3.1	Leverage City communications tools to promote culture, arts and heritage activities at Fort Vancouver	Action 2.3.2	Partner with the National Park Service in the creation of a multi-cultural center at Fort Vancouver, acting as an early champion and investor to leverage philanthropic and other funding sources	Action 2.3.3	Refurbish the Confluence Land Bridge at the Vancouver National Historic Reserve, including new lighting, irrigation system, landscaping and trail improvements
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OBJECTIVE 2.4: Strengthen connections to the river and amplify Vancouver’s identity as a waterfront city

Action 2.4.1	Include historical interpretative signage as part of improvements to the Renaissance Trail and at the new waterfront park	Action 2.4.2	Leverage art and streetscape improvements, and uses of City-owned property, to create physical connections between downtown and new waterfront development	Action 2.4.3	Support development of the waterfront public market (Port of Vancouver Terminal 1) through advocacy, design, permitting and marketing, and encourage the inclusion of culture, arts and heritage space and programs
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OBJECTIVE 2.5: Promote downtown, the waterfront and Fort Vancouver as the collection of irreplaceable assets that make Vancouver unique

Action 2.5.1	Partner with Visit Vancouver and other tourism organizations to highlight new opportunities to engage with the City’s three major physical assets	Action 2.5.2	Expand the MyVancouver mobile app to include all public art, not just City-owned, and a broader range of cultural and heritage uses
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The Arts District

In 2014, Vancouver designated a section of downtown as the “Vancouver Arts District” in order to increase tourism and further the City’s economic development strategy. The idea of an arts district was one of the recommendations in the City’s 1997 Cultural Plan, and was championed by a number of downtown and arts interests.

The district covers portions of downtown and the Vancouver National Historic Reserve, with boundaries of 15th Street on the north, Fort Vancouver Way on the east, 6th Street on the south and Esther Street on the west. It is marked by street sign toppers. Vancouver’s Downtown Association hosts a successful monthly First Friday Art Walk in the Arts District.

This Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan prioritizes the success of the Vancouver Arts District as a focus of arts and culture, a source of civic pride, and a magnet for residents of Vancouver and people throughout the region. Of the many examples of arts districts throughout the country, the most successful have three key qualities:

1. Character

Arts districts are often in neighborhoods with a visible history, and Vancouver is fortunate to have the irreplaceable stock of historic buildings in its downtown. With the Art Deco Kiggins Theatre, the early 20th century brick buildings and the delightful scale, Vancouver has an outstanding setting for a center for culture and arts.

The City’s role in maintaining the quality of the district’s character is to prevent the loss of the historic and cultural resources, and to find ways to support the rehabilitation and code compliance of older architectural fabric.

2. Walkability and ‘stayability’

Walking in arts districts should be comfortable and interesting. In addition, it should be comfortable to linger and enjoy spending time. Attention to storefront interest, streetscape, lighting, seating and outdoor dining will encourage people to spend time in the district. The City can make improvements in the public realm and streetscape that can reap benefits by making the Arts District a distinct and attractive area within the downtown.

3. Activity

Arts districts thrive when there is a variety of things to see and do, when there are other people present, and the possibility of the positive unexpected. Including free activities opens up an arts district to people of all economic means.



Main Street in downtown Vancouver

Vancouver's Arts District has all the prerequisites for increased success. In order to achieve that potential, there needs to be increased efforts to have more art and cultural uses in the district, to have more activities, and more of a marketing effort.

The City needs to be pro-active in encouraging arts and culture to thrive in the Arts District.

Art and cultural uses do not necessarily appear and flourish in an arts district without concerted efforts to work with property owners, artists and cultural organizations to create and use space in the district. The City should look for ways to encourage ownership of property by arts organizations and non-profits; to incentivize property owners to rent to arts organizations; and to reduce financial and other barriers that make it difficult for art and cultural users to have space in the arts district.

Partnerships with arts organizations and non-profits are key to success.

The City alone cannot energize the Arts District. Artists are the attraction, and the City has a role to play in terms of nurturing their success. Partnerships will include non-profit community organizations (Vancouver's Downtown Association); other agencies (ArtsWA, Clark County, Port of Vancouver, the National Park); business organizations; philanthropic entities and individuals.

Concentrate the activity.

The Arts District currently covers a large area, and it is not perceptible as a center of the arts. By reducing the geographic area of the district, it will be easier to focus activities and have the feel of a cultural zone. With success, the boundaries of the district can expand.

Foster a complete ecosystem for the arts.

The Arts District will benefit with spaces where the arts are taught as well as showcased. Stores selling art supplies are also welcome uses in an arts district, along with offices of arts organizations. Some cities have created incubators with affordable studio and exhibit space, or shared office space. Affordable living space is also beneficial. Vancouver should also take advantage of potential partnerships with the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, even though it is located somewhat north of the district itself.

Possibilities for Expanding Cultural Space in the Arts District

These are examples of how existing City resources could be used to expand cultural space. There are a number of other opportunities that could be explored.

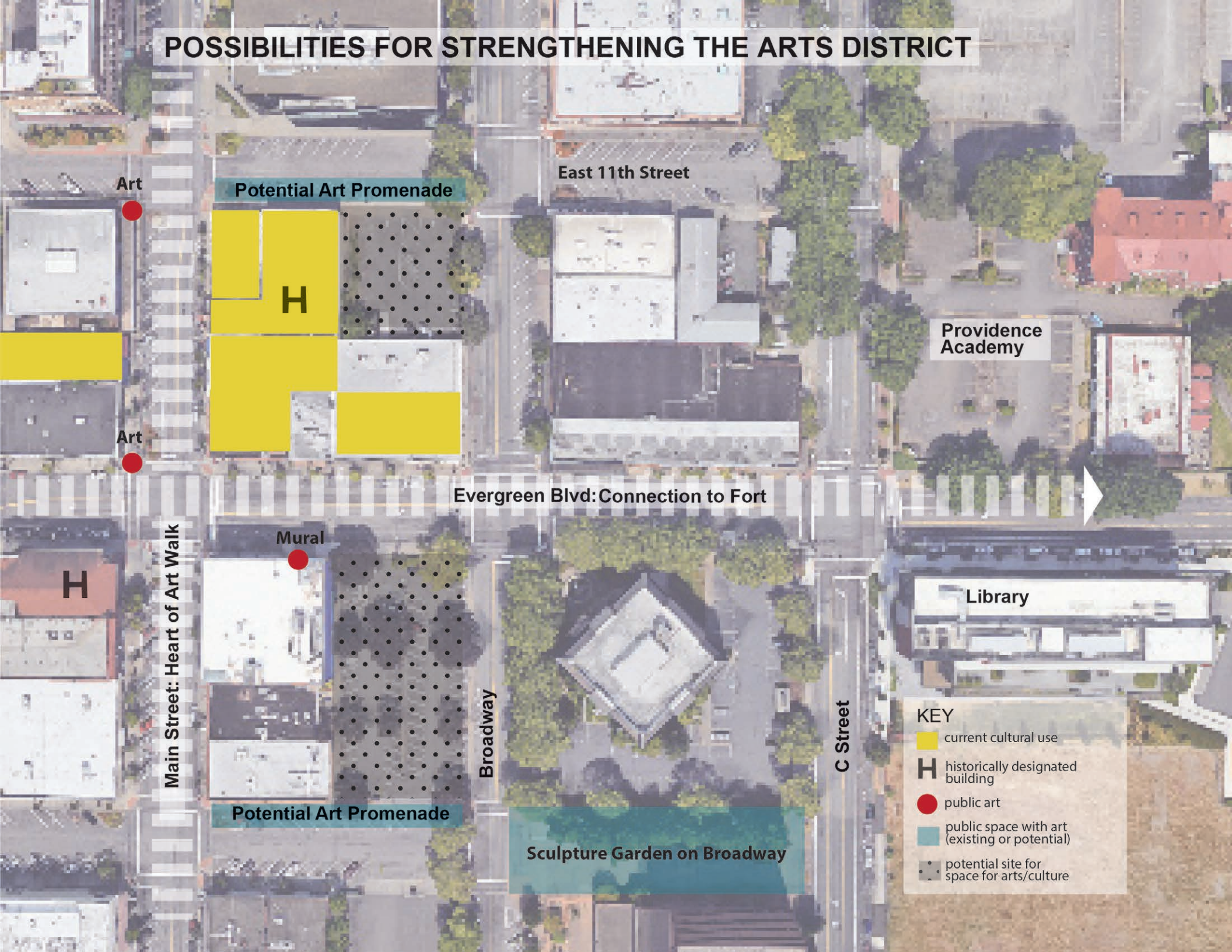
The Kiggins Theatre is an iconic part of Vancouver's Arts District. There is the potential to have the Kiggins be an anchor to a multi-disciplinary arts complex with additional performance space, gallery space and classrooms.

The City owns the 100' x 100' lot just east of the Kiggins at 11th and Broadway. In addition, 11th Street could be partially closed to create more pedestrian space.

Near Evergreen and Broadway is a City-owned 100' x 200' parking lot. It is a good size for a proscenium theatre with 300–350 seats. An active public lobby on Evergreen would strengthen the link between downtown and Fort Vancouver.

At the south end, on 9th Street, an active storefront could include gallery space, with an upper level for shared administrative space for cultural organizations, and/or studio and classroom space.

POSSIBILITIES FOR STRENGTHENING THE ARTS DISTRICT



Art

Potential Art Promenade

East 11th Street

H

Providence Academy

Art

Evergreen Blvd: Connection to Fort

Mural

Main Street: Heart of Art Walk

H

Library






Broadway

C Street

Potential Art Promenade

Sculpture Garden on Broadway

KEY

-  current cultural use
-  historically designated building
-  public art
-  public space with art (existing or potential)
-  potential site for space for arts/culture



“A vibrant arts community not only keeps residents and their discretionary spending close to home, it also attracts visitors who spend money and help local businesses thrive. Communities that provide a variety of artistic and cultural experiences attract new dollars from cultural tourists and capture the discretionary spending of its own residents.

– Arts and Economic Prosperity Report IV

Slocum House in Esther Short Park

ELEMENT 3: CULTURAL SPACE

Vancouver Nurturing Vancouver

THE VISION: Vancouver supports the creation of needed space for culture, arts and heritage by encouraging allocation of space in new buildings and making the process of adapting older buildings for cultural use as easy as possible. New models for artist- and non-profit ownership are explored.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Expand space available for performances, for performing arts rehearsals and classes

Action 3.1.1	Identify potential property in the heart of the Arts District to renovate to create a hub for performing and visual arts	Action 3.1.3	Increase partnerships with Clark College as an institution and as a location for space for culture, arts and heritage	Action 3.1.5	Support building of a performing arts center that would accommodate large-scale performances
Action 3.1.2	Work with developers of new space to encourage and incentivize inclusion of space for the performing arts	Action 3.1.4	Develop an inventory, including contact information and technical specifications, of performing arts space		

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Expand space available for the making, teaching and display of art

Action 3.2.1	Consider including shared meeting and commercial space for culture, arts and heritage in the renovation/reuse plans for the Slocum House	Action 3.2.2	Renovate the Post Hospital for its value as a historic property, and consider partnerships that leverage its revenue-generation potential
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OBJECTIVE 3.3: Expand affordable living space for artists

Action 3.3.1 Consider working with an organization such as Artspace to develop artist housing

Action 3.3.2 Dedicate a portion of the Historic Reserve properties to makers or live/work artist space at rates that are below market-rate

OBJECTIVE 3.4: Facilitate artists successfully securing available space

Action 3.4.1 Create a digital clearinghouse for artists seeking space and property owners and managers with space to offer, particularly in downtown, at the waterfront and at Fort Vancouver

Action 3.4.2 Contract with outside program with cultural expertise to complement City's Office of Economic Development's efforts to build capacity among artists as entrepreneurs and commercial tenants

Action 3.4.3 Help preserve vulnerable historic buildings downtown by encouraging use of the City's Adaptive Reuse Program to make it more economically feasible



Clark County Historical Museum



Artillery Barracks

Expanding Cultural Space

The need for cultural space was a consistent theme in the input for the Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan. Desired space includes a variety of performance spaces, rehearsal space, studios and exhibition space for the visual arts. Artist housing and shared administrative space would be beneficial to the local creative community. The most desired space is targeted at serving the community of Vancouver itself, with space where people can create, learn and share.

A number of successful models were discussed at the Arts of Clark County's September 2017 Arts and Culture Summit, including Artspace projects in Seattle, Spaceworks in Tacoma, Beaverton Center for the Arts, the Walter Cultural Arts Center in Hillsboro and the Rose Center for the Arts in Longview. Vancouver-based organizations presenting projects related to space for arts and culture included the City, the National Park Service, the Port of Vancouver USA, The Historic Trust and the Vancouver School of Arts and Academics. These models and partner organizations in Vancouver indicate there are possibilities for creating new space for arts and culture in the city.

Space for the performing arts has particular requirements that make it harder to find, with acoustical needs, column-free space and large gathering areas. Creating space for arts and culture can be costly, and for larger projects, typically needs a combination of strong arts organizations, City partnership, and an entity focused on the project. The project needs to fill a real need, and have a plan for operational stability over the long-term.

Cities globally have recognized that arts and culture are good investments as valuable parts of a rich civic life and as economic generators. They are supporting arts and cultural uses in a variety of ways, many of which are relevant to Vancouver. Ways that the City of Vancouver can be a key partner in the creation and preservation of cultural space include:

Reducing barriers to using space

The City can assist cultural space users by making the process as easy and affordable as possible. This can build on the client assistance programs already in place in the City's Economic Development Department, and can consider flexibility in zoning and building code provisions outside of life-safety. If the City wishes to incentivize art and cultural uses in the Arts District, for example, they can reduce permit fees, or provide technical support to applicants.

Bringing resources

The City owns a number of properties that may be ideal for arts and cultural space uses. Some are existing buildings that are underutilized, such as the Slocum House. Others are vacant parcels, such as parking lots along Broadway in the Arts District. The use of City property by arts and cultural uses needs to be in line with the City's vision and goals, but when aligned, can make critical projects viable.

Cities can offer other kinds of resources, including grants or earmarked funds. Public space improvements can dovetail with cultural spaces, such as streetscape improvements or open space development.

Partnering, convening and connecting

The City's role is typically not to lead, but to play a supportive role to cultural organizations in a variety of ways. Some cities help match property owners with cultural organizations looking for space. They can bring together groups of property owners, agencies and organizations to coordinate efforts for the benefit of all. The City of Vancouver is already working with a number of partners, and by focusing on a set of coordinated actions through the Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan, aims to effectively guide efforts to increase space for creative endeavors as a partner.





- ▶ Admission tax
- ▶ Percent for Art Program
- ▶ Cultural Access Program
- ▶ Lodging Tax Grant Program
- ▶ Columbia Arts Center Fund
- ▶ City General Fund

Expanding access to culture, arts and heritage in Vancouver will require additional financial investment by the City beyond current spending. Current investments are so limited that the City is missing opportunities to leverage philanthropy, private investment and other partnership opportunities in the community that could help generate resources outside of public spending.

Specifically, the current City budget provides for less than one full-time equivalent (FTE) employee for culture and art (0.25 FTE), and one FTE for heritage related activities (specifically, Pearson Airport). Should the City opt not only to increase spending for basic infrastructure of a culture, arts and heritage program, but also to make investments in capital, programs and staffing, then new revenue sources will be needed.

The revenue options discussed here are those available to the City of Vancouver for the implementation of its Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan. These options include funds available from existing sources as well as new proposed revenue sources that could be adopted by the Vancouver City Council or by a vote of the people.

Admission Tax

An admission tax, commonly referred to as a “ticket tax” is added to the ticket price or other charge that attendees pay to enter entertainment venues or events. This tax is perceived more like a fee, as it is a user-based charge that only affects those using a service. Furthermore, there is strong nexus between taxing entertainment activities to generate funds to be reinvested in entertainment-type uses, including culture, arts and heritage.

Potential revenue: Approximately \$400,000 per year

Method of adoption: Council action

Where used: Tacoma and Spokane

Percent for Art Program

Percent for art programs designate a small portion (percent set by ordinance) of public construction or renovation project budgets to be set aside for the purchase, installation and/or maintenance of public artwork. This artwork is usually installed on the grounds of the capital project. While public projects are what are most commonly subject to this program, private development may also be included.

Percent for art programs are used by states across the country, including Washington, as well as by many Pacific Northwest cities. According to a policy brief from the National Assembly of State Art Agencies, 25 states have active percent for the art programs. While this would not be a consistent revenue stream for cultural programs, it could place public art throughout the city as public buildings are built over time. If enacted, the City should be mindful of, and mitigate, potential inequity created by cultural investments being made in neighborhoods already experiencing improvements, rather than in neighborhoods that are not.

Potential revenue: Dependent on number and size of public construction projects

Method of adoption: Council action

Where used: Bellingham, Tacoma and Boise, Idaho

Cultural Access Program

In 2015, the Washington State Legislature granted local governments the authority to create a Cultural Access Program to strengthen access to cultural, science, and heritage organizations and their activities, as well as enhance citizens’ participation in their cultural events and programs. The authority was first delegated to counties, but a city whose county government declined to use this authority by June 2017 has the option to pursue a city-only program. This deadline has passed and Clark County has not adopted the Cultural Access Program.

Revenue is raised from a 0.1% maximum increase in sales tax (or a similarly sized property tax increase) and has to be reauthorized every seven years by a vote of the people. Similar to the admission tax, the Cultural Access Program can be used for a broad range of cultural uses, though investments should demonstrate some nexus to educational programs.

Potential revenue: \$3.5–\$3.9 million per year

Method of adoption: Council recommendation + vote by ballot measure

Where used: Not yet used

Lodging Tax Grant Program

A lodging tax, often referred to as a “hotel/motel tax,” charges a small fee (percent set by ordinance) on each nightly stay at a hotel or motel. The lodging tax has often been used to pay off debt from a capital project, with surplus funds used to support culture, arts and heritage programs.

The City of Vancouver currently uses this tool, assessing a 4% lodging tax. Half of this tax is dedicated to the Vancouver Convention Center and Hotel Project for the repayment of the

bonds. Surplus funds can only be used for tourism-related activities, which currently includes a tourism grant program in Vancouver. The number and amount of grants vary by year, but will likely increase as the bonds are repaid over time. For example, this grant program was used to pay for advertising of the Arts of Clark County “Open Studios” tour and also funded Phase I (installed) and Phase II (2018) of a pedestrian wayfinding sign program for downtown.

Potential revenue: \$500,000 in 2018, but variable (could be zero)

Method of adoption: Council action (already in effect in Vancouver)

Where used: Beaverton, Ore. (specifically for Center for the Arts) and Hillsboro, Ore. (currently considering)

Columbia Arts Center Fund

The City of Vancouver is uniquely positioned to make an investment in a physical project in support of culture, arts and heritage. Due to the sale of City-owned property that for a time housed the Columbia Arts Center, funds have been set aside for this type of investment.

Furthermore, those funds are currently earning interest that have

Historical reenactors at the Counting House, Fort Vancouver



The Night Market, held during the First Friday Art Walk in downtown



grown the fund over time, currently about \$1 million in total. These dollars are ripe for investment based on the priorities of this Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan.

Potential revenue: \$1 million one-time (with fund growing by about \$15,000 on an annual basis)

Method of adoption: Council action (funds already raised and need only to be appropriated)

City General Fund

Including investments in the City's regular operating budget is one of the most important signals any local government can send that they understand the value of culture, arts and heritage in their community's local economy and in residents' quality and of life. In cities throughout the Pacific Northwest, general fund dollars are used to make the basic investments required to successfully leverage philanthropy, private investment and other partnership opportunities in the community. Namely, funding staff positions, as well as a volunteer culture commission or council. Many cities also tap general funds for next-level investments, such as a cultural grant program to support local artists.

Bond capacity is an additional funding mechanism that is part of the main operation of any city. Like general fund dollars, the use of bond debt capacity must be weighed against other priorities of government. In Vancouver, there is currently quite a bit of capacity for use of this revenue source, but high priority items competing for these dollars include fire stations, parks and a new operations center.

Method of adoption: Council action

Where used: Tacoma, Hillsboro, Ore., Beaverton, Ore. and Boise, Idaho



The Pearls



Members of the Chinook Tribe perform a traditional dance

PUBLIC ART

Below is a recommended Public Art Policy for the City of Vancouver.

Scope

The policies discussed here cover permanent, outdoor public art works to be owned by the City of Vancouver. The City recognizes that, in addition to the permanent, outdoor public art covered by these recommendations, there are also temporary and other durational art exhibits that we would like to encourage. Those types of exhibits would fall under the City's Art in the Right of Way policy.

The City of Vancouver currently owns a collection of public art, primarily located in downtown, uptown, the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and the waterfront. The Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan recommends adding to the collection of City-owned public art, with the following mechanisms for decision-making and stewardship.

Beyond these policies, the City should coordinate with private entities, community organizations, and other agencies in the creation of public art in Vancouver. A coordinated effort, based on common goals in the Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan, will magnify the efforts of the City for the benefit of the people of Vancouver.

Criteria

Public art should be:

- based on the vision and goals in Vancouver's Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan;
- high in artistic quality;
- diverse, but connected through "telling the story" of Vancouver's people and place; history, cultures and aspirations; and
- considered as part of a cohesive set of art works.

Locations

VIEW MAP HERE: www.cityofvancouver.us/PublicArtMap

Public art should be located to:

- make Vancouver's identity and commitment to culture, art and heritage visible;
- help define the Arts District; and
- promote connections between downtown / Fort Vancouver/ waterfront.

Funding

Funds should be secured, at a minimum, for the maintenance of existing public art. In addition, funding for the arts should include new pieces to be commissioned on a regular basis. Options include using a portion of funds generated from admission taxes, the lodging tax grant program, interest from the Columbia Art Center Fund, revenue raised from bonds, and the City's general fund. Additionally, we recommend exploration of a 1% for art program so that public art is included in civic buildings. While this is not a consistent revenue stream, it will add public art throughout the city as civic buildings are built over time.

Process

Public Art Committee

The Cultural Commission will appoint a Public Art Committee to review and make recommendations to the Cultural Commission on proposed donations, acquisitions, relocations or deaccession of City-owned public art. The Public Art Committee should be five members, and may include members outside of the Cultural Commission. The Public Art Committee will include, at a minimum, one professional artist.

Donations and Acquisitions

For donated and acquired pieces, the work would need to be 1) aligned with the goals of the City's Culture, Arts and Heritage Plan; 2) of high artistic merit; 3) compatible with the needs of the City's collection; and 4) durable and low maintenance. For donated or acquired pieces, the Public Art Committee will work with City staff to make a recommendation on the location of the piece, where appropriate.

Relocation or Deaccession

If public art now in the City's collection is found to be inappropriate to the City's goals for culture, arts and heritage, or problematic in terms of safety, maintenance or other concerns, the public art may be considered for relocation or removal from the collection.

The Public Art Committee will review the need for relocation or deaccession in terms of the City's overall goals, the collection of public art as a whole and cost issues. In cases of relocation or deaccession, the committee will contact the artist of the work where possible and take their input into consideration.

For pieces to be relocated, the Public Art Committee will recommend a new location. For pieces to be removed from the City collection, the Public Art Committee will make a recommendation on documenting the work and the most respectful manner of transferring the piece back to the artist, selling the work, or if no other option is available, destroying the work.

Commissioning of New Work

Artist selection process:

When the City wishes to commission a new work of public art, and funds for the work are identified, City staff will work with the Public Art Committee to establish an Artist Selection Panel specific to the commissioned work.

The Artist Selection Panel will be coordinated by City staff, and will include at least one member of the Cultural Commission and one member of the Public Art Committee. A stakeholder from the neighborhood where the art is to be placed is also recommended. At least one member of the Artist Selection Panel will be a professional artist.

City staff will work with the Public Art Committee to write a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), including a description of the project, eligibility parameters, a budget and timeline, submission requirements and any other specifics of the project. The RFQ may be publicized by the City of Vancouver, or posted on a site such as CaFÈ, CallForArtists.org,

etc. Artists will submit a letter of interest, resume and work samples relevant to the project.

The Artist Selection Panel will review the submissions, and reduce the applicant pool to a short list of finalists for interviews. An artist can be selected after the interviews. Alternatively, the process may have the finalists submit proposals for the project in order to be better understand the artistic direction. The artists will create better proposals if they can spend the time understanding the community and context of the work. This may be appropriate for a highly visible project.

In some cases, artists may be selected through an invitational list of recommended artists, particularly if there are specific aspects of the project that require a targeted discipline or expertise.

The recommendation for the selected artist will be presented to the Public Art Committee and the Cultural Commission, including a description of the process.

Public Input

Meetings of the Public Art Committee and the Cultural Commission will be open to the public, and efforts will be made by the City to notify affected parties and the general public of meeting time and place, and key agenda items.

Approvals

Based on the work of the Public Art Committee, the Cultural Commission will make recommendations to the City Council for approval.

Maintenance

The City is responsible for the maintenance of the public artworks, including routine inspection and care for artwork, such as cleaning and applying protective surface coatings as needed. In the case of aging, flaws, or vandalism, a reasonable effort will be made within funds available to return artwork to its original condition and integrity.

CULTURAL COMMISSION

Below are recommendations for revising the scope of the Cultural Commission.

Role & Authority

The purpose of the Cultural Commission as stated in Vancouver Municipal Code (VMC Section 2.88) reflects a volunteer-driven culture, arts and heritage program with little to no dedicated staff at the City. As such, tremendous responsibility is put on the shoulders of volunteers who lack the time and resources to execute what have been very ambitious plans in the past.

In comparable cities that have invested in professional staff for culture, arts and heritage, much of the responsibilities bestowed upon volunteers in Vancouver's municipal code is reserved for staff.

This plan recommends that the purpose of the Cultural Commission be updated in municipal code to focus broadly on growing support and awareness of culture, arts and heritage across the city generally in an advisory role, and limit specific responsibilities and decision making to two critical programs.

First, the Cultural Commission should direct a restored Cultural Grant Program, helping to define grant criteria, and awarding grants to recipients (subject to availability of funds).

Second, the commission should appoint a Public Art Committee, which may include Cultural Commission members, to review and make recommendations to the Cultural Commission on proposed donations, acquisitions, relocations or deaccession of City-owned public art.

Meeting Frequency

Similar to the current scope of purpose of the Cultural Commission, the meeting frequency requirements reflect a

volunteer-only culture, arts and heritage program at the City. Current code stipulates that the Cultural Commission must meet at least monthly.

This plan recommends, instead, that minimum meeting frequency be set at quarterly to allow participation by some of the City's busiest, but most effective advocates, and retain the language that allows the commission to hold additional meetings it determines necessary or desirable.

Composition & Service Terms

The Cultural Commission is currently set at 11 members in municipal code, and appoints members to three-year terms, with shortened one- and two-year terms for some members for initial appointments to the commission to achieve staggered terms over time.

This plan recommends that these terms of service, and staggered terms, should remain in place, as they are generally aligned with best practices in non-profit board service, which also typically comprises volunteer members.

Looking to comparable cities with successful culture, arts and heritage programs, there was no particular size of commission that was deemed more effective than another. Therefore, this plan recommends the size of this commission be set at a maximum number, rather than a set number, to allow flexibility in appointments should the mayor and City Council deem that the Cultural Commission is effective at a size smaller than 11.

Nowhere in current code does it indicate that members must represent specific constituencies within the culture, arts and heritage disciplines, and this plan recommends that remain the same.

Nearby cities with successful programs indicated that members do not represent specific constituencies and instead advocate

on behalf of the entire cultural community.

Selection & Removal

Members of the Cultural Commission are appointed by the mayor, subject to confirmation by the City Council in current code. This approach solicits the interest and support of both the legislative and executive branch, though it could also provide a forum for disagreement if the mayor and council are not aligned.

Comparable cities had a mixed approach to appointment; in some cities, the mayor made these appointments, in other it was left to the council.

The plan recommends changing this selection process to award the responsibility to one or the other, but not both, branches of government. This recommendation is rooted not so much in the appointment of members, but in the removal of them.

This plan recommends that current code for removal of members be changed. Current code stipulates that Cultural Commission members may only be removed for 1) misconduct; or 2) missing more than three meetings.

Comparable cities instead have members of their commission serve as the pleasure of the mayor or council (whoever appoints). This allows the City to be nimble in responding to ineffective members, ensuring the most effective commission possible to support the City's broader goals of growing support and awareness of culture, arts and heritage across the city.



