

InterOffice Memo

To: Councilmember Lisa Herbold
From: Randy Engstrom, Director, Office of Arts and Culture
Date: August 10, 2018
Subject: Cultural Space Affordability, Access, and Equity

Dear Councilmember Herbold,

The Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) has a dedicated focus on the affordability of cultural space in Seattle. Last year, with support from Council and the Executive, ARTS published *The CAP Report: 30 Ideas for the Creation, Activation and Preservation of Cultural Space*. Several ideas presented in the report are being implemented or explored by ARTS currently. These include:

- *Increase Capital Funding for Cultural Spaces* – Increased Cultural Facilities Fund Launched in 2018
- *Certify People* – BASE Certification Cohort Launched in 2018
- *Reclassify Art Galleries from Assembly (A-3) to Mercantile (M)* – Legislated in 2017
- *Identify an SDCI Liaison* – Hired in 2018

As part of the 2018 Adopted Budget, the City Council passed a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) on ARTS' work related to the creation of a Cultural Space Management Public Development Authority (PDA). The SLI requests that ARTS submit a report on the results of its feasibility study and racial equity toolkit related to the creation of the PDA by August 1, 2018. Given the complexity of potentially standing up a wholly new arts agency, properly assessing the feasibility of a PDA requires both detailed financial modelling and a thorough study of operational models. These actions are currently underway, with an expected completion date of end of year 2018. Therefore, while we will be unable to submit the full requested report at this time, we would like to update you on the ongoing work to date.

In early 2018, ARTS contracted with Framework Creative Placemaking (Framework) to work with staff and community to develop a feasibility report. Framework's staff are working with Matthew Richter, ARTS' Cultural Space Liaison, to research PDA case studies and best practices and to examine various options for organizational structure. ARTS and Framework are also conducting extensive outreach and engagement which is detailed below.

Starting in early March of 2018, Framework connected with both the cultural field and the commercial development field to establish baseline best practices and explore new ideas. The consultant conducted focus groups; created a cultural space survey and integrated the results of our office's ongoing cultural space inventory work; and is engaging with other City departments instrumental to the creation and success of this work. The Seattle Arts Commission's Facilities and Equitable Development committee is advising and guiding the work of the PDA study since its inception, as it did with the CAP Report.

ARTS is also contracting with Equinox Studios and the Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) in San Francisco to assist in this research. Equinox serves as community liaison for cultural development while CAST's Chief Financial Officer is developing a series of financial estimating, modeling and forecasting tools custom designed to ARTS anticipated needs.

After this research is completed, ARTS will share it with a group of internal and external stakeholders to conduct a Racial Equity Toolkit in Fall 2018. Once that Toolkit is completed, ARTS will finalize the findings for city leadership.

We anticipate presenting our findings by end of year 2018. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns, and we look forward to our discussion with the CRUEDA Committee on August 14th.

Best,

Randy Engstrom