



Special Appropriations

Analysis by Shannon Carney

DIRECTIONS TO DEVELOP

Cultural Mapping Project

SA_7897, \$180,000, 0.00 FTE

Direction Language

This proposal aims to provide policy makers, city bureau, artists, and the general public with an understanding of the current state of Portland's cultural ecology. If funded, the project would proceed in three phases and is expected to be completed by June 2020.

- *Phase I* includes the creation of a cultural database and integration of institutional datasets by RACC, \$35,000.
- *Phase II* consists of community outreach to identify information gaps and identify additional needs, by the City Arts Program. The \$55,000 cost of this phase are largely for limited duration personnel costs for community outreach and coordination.
- *Phase III* is the design and build of a public-facing web platform. RACC plans to utilize \$90,000 to hire a vendor to complete the third phase of the project.

Ongoing funding for user testing, customer service, and marketing once are not included in this request.

CBO Analysis

The Regional Arts and Culture Council City Arts Program is the largest program in Special Appropriations, with a General Fund contribution of over \$4.2 million in FY 2019-20. The majority of this appropriation (\$4.0 million) provides direct funding to the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC), an independent 501(c)(3) organization. Established in 1995, RACC seeks to provide equitable access to the arts for all Portlanders; support the creation and presentation of art, and infrastructure supporting art. To this end, the non-profit's program areas include public art, grants for artists and nonprofit organization, arts education, advocacy, and community services. Support from the City of Portland, including more than \$3 million from the Arts Education & Access Income Tax, the City's Percent for Art Funds, and contributions from the City's Business

License Fee comprised 60.4% of RACC's total FY 2017-18 revenues of \$9.78 million.

This decision package would provide additional funding for the Regional Arts and Culture Council and the City Arts Program¹ (a separate program that oversees the City's contract with RACC and aligns the City's various arts related efforts) to create a cultural database and web platform to catalog and share information regarding the City's cultural assets. The term 'cultural assets' refers to the facilities, industries, public art, artist networks, festivals, and cultural organizations that enable arts and culture to thrive in Portland.

Two recent City reports have noted concerns about the displacement of artists and arts organizations as Portland grows and changes. [A Plan for Preserving and Expanding Affordable Arts Space in Portland](#)², issued by Mayor Wheeler, Commissioner Fish, and Commissioner Eudaly in January 2018, called for "an inventory of creative spaces within the city and display on a map on PortlandOregon.gov". A recent City audit of RACC recommended that the City "assess the state of the arts and culture in Portland". Developing an inventory of cultural assets is viewed as a step towards more comprehensive cultural planning in this arena, and one that could help preserve artists and cultural assets from traditionally underserved communities. Other cities that have undertaken similar cultural planning work include Austin, Philadelphia, Toronto, and Seattle.

As noted above, should this decision package be funded as requested, work will proceed in three phases:

- Phase I includes work by BTS, RACC, BPS, and Metro to design the architecture of the new database, which will then be populated with existing data on the City's cultural assets. The \$35,000 provides funding to RACC primarily for data formatting and entry.
- In Phase II, the City Arts Program would conduct community outreach to identify information gaps and identify additional needs for the project. The \$55,000 estimated expenses largely support personnel costs for community outreach and coordination.
- Phase III is the design and build of a public-facing web platform. The majority of the estimated \$90,000 costs is for RACC to hire a vendor to develop and build the platform.

Without new General Fund resources, work on the cultural mapping project is not expected to proceed in FY 2019-20. However, the project could be pursued within existing resources by RACC and the City Arts Program in the future if deemed a priority for those programs.

Alternatively, proposers note that this project could be approached with a reduced scope of creating the cultural database (Phase I only) with one-time General Fund resources of \$30,000 – \$50,000. This option would lack robust community outreach and a public-facing platform; however the database could still be made available to third party developers and in existing

¹ The City Arts Program was established in 2018 to oversee the City's contract with the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC), and to coordinate and align the City's various arts-related efforts. The City Arts Program has a budget of \$199,002 in FY 2019-20.

² *A Plan for Preserving and Expanding Affordable Arts Space in Portland*, Jan. 2018, pg. 12.
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/fish/article/667747>

programs like SpaceFinder Portland.³

CBO notes that this decision package does not include funding for post-development or ongoing costs of maintaining the new resource. Expenses related to user testing, customer service, and initial marketing could be covered through partnerships with other stakeholders. However, if the public facing web platform is to continue to be maintained and operated, it will require ongoing resources. It unclear if this ongoing support would be provided by RACC, or if additional funding requests to support this resource would be made to the City.

Despite unresolved questions about ongoing support, this decision package offers a robust and planful approach to documenting and sharing information about the City's cultural assets. In that the new resource would highlight and connect cultural assets from traditionally underserved communities, the work also clearly aligns with the City's equity goals. However, the City has already budgeted over \$4.2 million in General Fund resources to support RACC and the newly-established City Arts Program in FY 2019-20, in addition to other ongoing funding streams provided to RACC by the City.

Completion of the cultural mapping project would achieve not only City goals, but also clearly advances the mission and enhances service provision for the Regional Arts and Culture Council. Given the limited amount of new General Fund resources available in FY 2019-20, if cultural mapping project would stand to create a critical resource for cultural planning and to be utilized by artists and arts organizations in the region, then CBO recommends that RACC and the City Arts Program should strongly consider pursuing this project within its existing FY 2019-20 General Fund budget allocation.

³ <https://portland.spacefinder.org/spaces>