



City of Portland Bureau of
Planning and Sustainability
 Sam Adams, Mayor | Susan Anderson, Director

Arts and culture are an essential component of a thriving and sustainable city. Art gives a place spark. Public art, cultural amenities and events enliven public spaces, help grow our economy and tourism industry and can help build a sense of community.

The purpose of the Portland Plan Arts and Culture Background Report is to provide Portlanders with enough information about arts and culture in Portland, and about the city’s existing role in supporting arts and culture, to begin the community discussion of:

- long-term goals for strengthening cultural infrastructure;
- improving access to the arts and arts education; and
- investing in creative talent.

The Arts and Culture Background Report includes:

- **Summary of existing conditions** regarding arts and culture - programs and policies, current conditions and trends in Portland today
- **Emerging issues and challenges** Portland faces now which, if they continue to go unaddressed, will affect the future of arts and culture in the city.
- **Recommendations** for potential policy choices that expand upon, re-emphasize and complement existing plans and coordinated strategies.
- **An appendix of the best practices** and successful strategies undertaken by cities around the world.

The report is not intended to be a complete survey of arts and culture in Portland or a catalog of artistic achievements. Instead, it focuses on the City of Portland’s role supporting arts and culture in the city. The report relies heavily on information provided by Act for Art: A Creative Action Plan for the Portland Metropolitan Region as well as much existing documentation on economic development, arts education and public art programs.

Why is arts and culture in the Portland Plan?

Typically, long-range city development plans address topics like economic development, community design and environmental health, to name a few common planning themes. While those themes and topics are essential to creating a prosperous and healthy city, Portlanders are concerned about more than typical planning issues.

Creative expression is important to Portlanders. The VisionPDX community project noted this, and we see it in many of Portland’s cherished and emerging traditions—Saturday Market, Sunday Parkways; events like Time Based Art and countless other arts, music and film festivals. With such strong interest, it seems necessary to address the role that the city plays, over the long-term, in supporting arts and culture in Portland.

Arts and culture contribute to a thriving city in complex and varied ways. Many Portland neighborhoods, including Alberta and the Pearl District, have experienced a dramatic revitalization partly attributed to their vibrant arts community. Artists choosing to make a particular neighborhood home tends to have positive, regenerative effects on the neighborhood.

Organizations also play an important role in the arts and culture of a thriving city. Two Portland groups that have been particularly involved in advocating for the arts are described below.

- **Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC)** – RACC is an independent non-profit organization that was established in 1995 to integrate arts and culture into all aspects of Portland’s community. RACC is responsible for public investment in the arts in the Portland Metropolitan area, including Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Over 60% of RACC’s budget is a contract with the City of Portland for the full integration of arts and culture into the community.
- **Creative Advocacy Network (CAN)** – The Creative Advocacy Network (CAN) was established in 2008 as an independent non-profit to build stronger grassroots support for arts and culture, and to take a lead role in securing sustainable, dedicated funding for the arts.

Challenges and Opportunities

The Portland Metropolitan Region’s last big master plan for the arts was Arts Plan 2000, written in 1992. Much progress has been made since then, and Portland certainly has a strong and vibrant arts community to show for its efforts. But there remains a persistent, systemic problem of inadequate public funding for the arts in our region and today’s economic crisis has only exacerbated the situation. In order for the true creative capacity of our City and region to be realized, a dedicated, stable funding mechanism for local arts and culture and arts education must be created.

Additionally, this pursuit of dedicated funding is only possible with the continued diligence, coordination, and organization of a historically fragmented arts and culture community.



Key Findings

Many aspects of the current state of arts and culture in Portland are crucial to address in order to meet community needs and desires for this part of city life. The following summarizes key factors, which are described further in the background report.

The arts are a significant part of Portland's economy.

According to the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission's (MERC) Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis, (Oct. 2008), there are 1,500 firms employing 14,000 'creatives' in Portland. The average salary in creative industries is \$66,600 compared to the regional average wage of \$40,600. Further, according to RACC and the Arts and Economic Prosperity Report III from 2007, nonprofit arts and cultural organizations themselves represent a \$318 million industry in the Portland metro area, supporting over 10,300 full time equivalent jobs. The Portland metro region's 111 arts-related nonprofit organizations produced \$206 million in personal or business income in 2006. State and local governments collected more than \$27 million in taxes and fees as a result of this activity, more than 3 times what they invested.

Portland has a successful public art program.

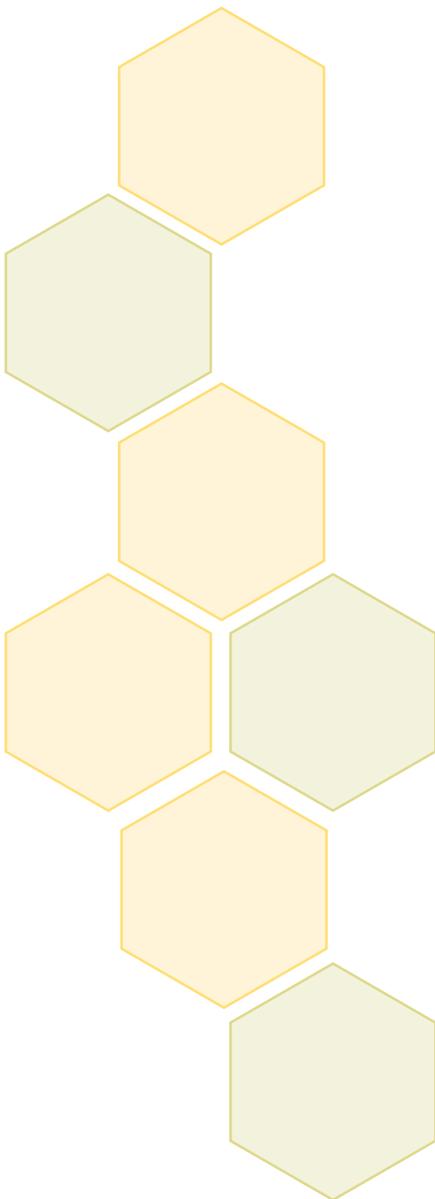
The last three decades of development and progress with regard to public art have consistently improved the public's access to art throughout the city. RACC, the Regional Arts and Cultural Council, has played an important role in that success, as the primary non-profit working with government funds to involve communities in arts and culture. Increasing investment in the Percent for Art program will continue to encourage vibrant neighborhood spaces.

Portlanders are interested in supporting the arts with public dollars.

In a recent phone survey done through Creative Capacity Strategy, 77% of local voters say that having opportunities to enjoy the arts, and creative learning is essential to their families. 70% stated that arts and cultural organizations need additional, dedicated funding. This support has not waned even during economic recession. The VisionPDX process revealed that people want Portland, at all levels including local government, to become a national leader in community support for the arts. The community also calls for more public art throughout the city, not just downtown.

Significant work is already underway.

The spring 2009 publication of *Act for Art: The Creative Action Plan for the Portland Metropolitan Region* finalized several year's worth of best practice research and community input. The full implementation of this plan is a 5-year process and should serve as the foundation for any planning efforts during the next decade.

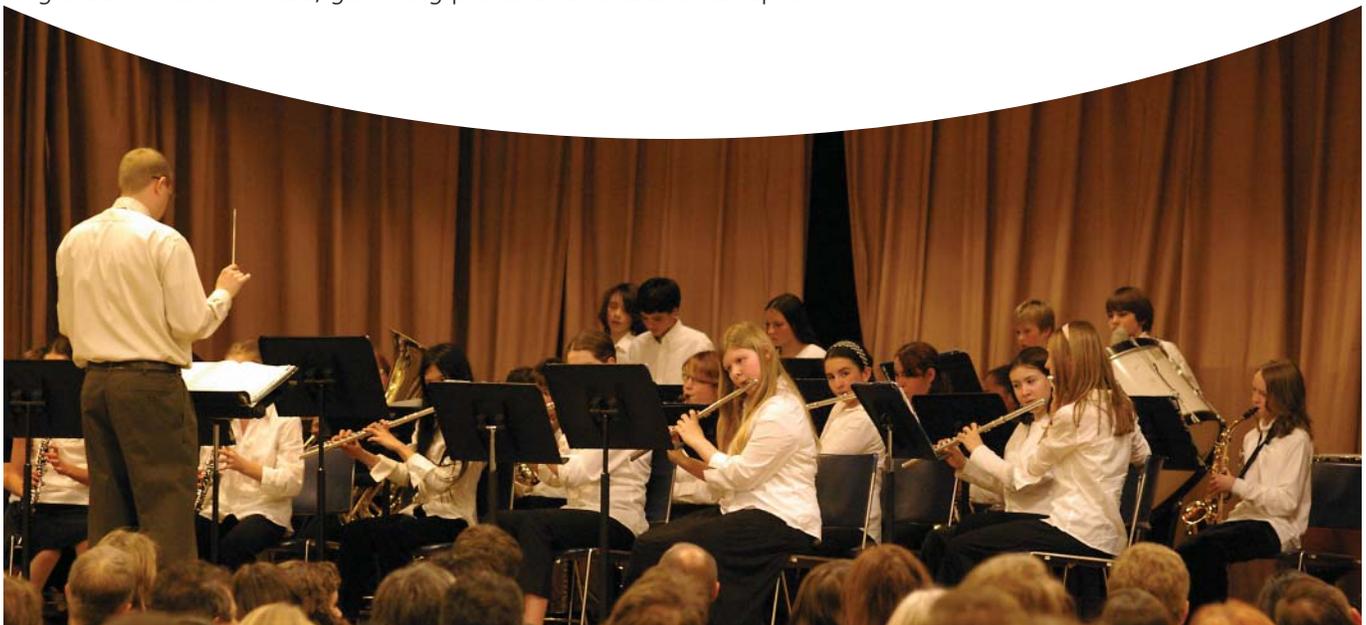


Recommendations

The *Arts and Culture Background Report* reiterates recommendations derived from the Creative Capacity Initiative and published in *Act for Art: The Creative Action Plan for the Portland Metropolitan Region*. Some recommendations come from the creation of this background report or are derived from a study of best practices in other cities and regions. All recommendations below are secondary to the satisfaction of the **primary recommendation: create a dedicated, reliable, public funding source**. This need was identified earlier in the Challenges and Opportunities part of this overview, and bears repeating, as it is the over-arching recommendation of the *Arts and Culture Background Report*.

Strengthen Cultural Infrastructure

- **Improve Public Funding:** Implement a dedicated, sustainable public funding mechanism for arts and culture that will yield \$15-\$20 million per year.
- **Maintain or increase current funding base for public art:** Policies like the Percent for Art programs are crucial to the public's access to art and should be vigorously protected and examined for proper maximization.
- **Increase private sector giving:** Leverage public funds to stimulate more giving from the private sector.
- **Help art spaces flourish:** Support public and private efforts that make our region's performance and exhibition venues, rehearsal and office spaces, studios, and live/work sites more exciting, more affordable and more accessible.
- **Create a public art master plan:** A master plan would set out a vision for public art, as well as basic principles for how public art can be integrated into architecture, gathering places and natural landscapes.





- **Incorporate different art forms into the City's streets and public spaces:** Encourage Portlanders' use of public space, including outdoor dining, entertainment, street theatre, and new media showcases and art displays. Promoting and activating public spaces can energize entire districts by getting more people out of their cars and onto public sidewalks or plazas. Integrate more artwork into City building projects that are compatible with their settings.
- **Consider creating arts and cultural overlay zones:** Use zoning overlays to promote and sustain arts districts. Ensure that arts overlay zones are consistent with other district zoning regulations and that incentives for arts related uses are not precluded by other provisions of zoning. Commercial and nonprofit cultural organizations could benefit from clustered office spaces, rehearsal and performance spaces, retail boutiques and galleries, and studio living spaces for individual artists.
- **Encourage neighborhoods to develop their own cultural plans:** Support neighborhoods in the development of cultural plans by creating public/private partnerships and collaborations between individual communities and artists. Doing so will help to create identities for neighborhoods and a pride-of-place.
- **Support temporary reuse of vacant buildings:** Temporary installations and art exhibits within vacant or underutilized storefronts can maintain visual interest for the public.

Improve Access to the Arts and Arts Education

- **Increase Access to the Public:** Provide more free and reduced-cost arts and culture experiences for the citizens of the region.
- **Support accessibility for all citizens:** Particular consideration should be given to making sure new policies, assessments and investments include the pursuit of increased access for individuals with disabilities.
- **Expand Arts Education:** Integrate arts learning into the education of every K-8 student in the region, and support arts learning throughout the community.
- **Build the Brand:** Position the Portland metropolitan region as a center of excellence for art and design.

Invest in Creative Talent

- **Support Artists:** Eliminate barriers and support the basic needs of artists and other creative professionals in the region.
- **Network:** Create opportunities for artists to network with other artists, creatives, supporters, and consumers – locally, nationally and internationally.
- **Buy Local:** Increase the purchase of locally produced art and create more cultural consumers. Support collaborations that help the entire creative services sector thrive.