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The City has improved oversight of the Regional Arts and Culture Council

News Article



This is a one-year follow-up to our 2018 report, "Regional Arts and Culture Council: Clear City goals aligned with strong Arts Council strategy will improve arts and culture services."

Published: July 22, 2019 9:00 am

In the year since our audit, the City and the Regional Arts and Culture Council have made progress in implementing our five audit recommendations.

Substantial work remains to develop a new contract between the City and the Arts Council, for the City to assess needs and goals for arts and culture, and for the Arts Council to complete a strategic planning process. We will follow up again in one year to check if the remaining recommendations are implemented.

The City has contracted with the Regional Arts and Culture Council for more than 20 years for services. In 2018, we audited to determine if the City had

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clear goals for arts and culture, if the Arts Council's services met City goals and contract obligations, and if City oversight was effective. We found the City did not have clear goals for arts and culture, that the Arts Council needed to articulate its strategy and regional role, and that the City's contract with and oversight of the Arts Council needed improvement.

Recommendation Status: Resolved

2018 Recommendations

The Arts Commissioner and Mayor appoint a contract administrator to:

- A. Monitor contract compliance;
- B. Provide technical assistance;
- C. Review the annual budget submitted by the Arts Council;
- D. Develop a mechanism to track City funding to the Arts Council;
- E. Develop procedures for Arts Council reporting.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

In July 2018, the City created a Project Manager position responsible for administration of the City's contract with the Arts Council and program oversight. The City's new Arts Manager reviewed the Council's 2020 budget request and tracked the City's allocations to the Percent for Art program by reviewing Capital Improvement Plans. The City Arts Manager and the Arts Council developed new performance measures and a reporting procedure.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

The Arts Commissioner and the Mayor work with the Arts Council, City leaders, City agencies involved with arts and culture, and community stakeholders to:

- A. Assess the state of arts and culture in Portland;
- B. Identify needs; and
- C. Develop clear goals, vision, and strategy for arts and culture.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The City Arts Manager synthesized goals from past plans to create current arts and culture draft goals.

City Council allocated \$35,000 for the initial phase of a cultural mapping project. The City and Arts Council said that based on the mapping project, a community-driven cultural planning process to identify needs and articulate a strategy for arts and culture will begin in 2021, and they anticipate completing it in 2022.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

The Arts Council conduct a strategic planning process to clarify the organization's mission, goals and vision for arts and culture. Update bylaws to reflect governing agreements.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

In 2018, the Arts Council hired a consultant to initiate the strategic planning process. In 2019, the Board approved a plan and \$25,000 to develop a vision and strategic plan.

The Arts Council changed its bylaws to reflect two new non-voting board members representing the City -- the Commissioner of Arts and Culture and the Chief Administrative Office, or their designees.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

City Council review the intergovernmental agreement with the Arts Council, and in conjunction with other jurisdictions party to it, recommend changes that reflect the appropriate level of board representation and funding from each jurisdiction.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The City Arts Manager and the Arts Commissioner reviewed the agreement and recommended that changes be made after the cultural planning process is complete in 2022.

In the interim, as noted above, the Arts Council added two non-voting members to the board. The parties said they plan to address City representation on the board in the next contract.

Recommendation Status: In Process

2018 Recommendations

The Arts Commissioner, Mayor and the Arts Council update the contract, consistent with the City's goals, to:

- A. Clearly define services, measures, and reporting;
- B. Clarify arts education objectives and outcome measures for districts and programs, and the Arts Council's oversight role;
- C. Identify the organization responsible for art valuation, determine which assets' values should be updated, and carry out the work;
- D. Identify goals for grants.

2019 Auditor's Status Update

The City and the Arts Council prepared a contract amendment to reflect current services, performance measures and reporting requirements and extended it to 2020. The City Arts Manager and Arts Council said they plan to negotiate a new multi-year contract during Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

In 2019, the Arts Council restructured its largest grant program to be more equitable. The City's amended contract allows this, and the City said that equitable distribution of grants will be included in the next contract.

The Arts Council secured an appraisal on Portlandia, and the insurance limit now reflects the appreciated value.

View the [original 2018 audit report](#).

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