



Dear Mayor and City Commissioners,

July 14, 2021

The Regional Arts & Culture Council supports the creative economy in greater Portland by equitably providing funding and services to artists and art organizations; managing and growing a diverse, nationally acclaimed, public art program; and developing long-lasting public and private partnerships.

It is RACC's unique responsibility to commission, care for, and maintain the City of Portland's public art collection. The purpose of the Public Art Program is to integrate a wide range of art into public spaces in the community and reflect the diversity of artistic disciplines and points of view. RACC promotes appreciation and understanding of public art through management of the collection and related programming; raises the public's awareness of their environment; and expands access to commissions and purchases of public art to artists from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. Memorials, monuments, and statues make up a small portion of the public's collection. Many of these artworks have been donated to the City by private donors and they are generally located in public parks or streets rights of way.

Portland, like many cities across the country, has an obligation and an opportunity to revisit how public art represents our communities and reflects our values. The South Park Blocks, with its significant cultural and educational institutions, supports RACC's mission of enriching communities through arts and culture and with arts and culture in every neighborhood. The proposed draft master plan for the South Park Blocks includes changes that would significantly enhance that vision by making the area more welcoming and accessible to communities not represented in the art and design of the park today.

Through inclusive community engagement, the vision developed through the planning process for the South Park Blocks includes several key elements that align with RACC's values of accessibility, equity, community, and diversity. Specifically:

- Balance of contemporary needs with historic features
- Optimize opportunities for reconciliation and healing through the landscape and park features
- Create opportunities for interaction and learning among different groups with new public art and seating promoting social interaction
- Represent more diverse cultural histories and identities in art, landscaping, and other park features

We support these elements of the draft master plan and look forward to working together with city and community partners to develop new artworks and cultural opportunities for the area that will bring the plan to life.

Best regards,

Madison Cario