



TO: Economic Development Committee

FROM: Tacoma Arts Commission

COPY: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager; Tadd Wille, Assistant City Manager; Kim Bedier, Director of Tacoma Venues & Events; Adam Cook, Deputy Director of Tacoma Venues & Events

SUBJECT: Tacoma Arts Commission's commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

DATE: September 9, 2019

Dear Council members Thoms, Hunter, McCarthy, and Ushka;

In support of the Council's commitment and impactful work to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in our City, we, as members of the Tacoma Arts Commission are working to align and advance these priorities in our work.

As advisory to city council, we would like to make you aware of some of the actions we are taking, the commitments we are making, and request your support in helping us address our goals.

The Tacoma Arts Commission has a long record of service to the city, through stewardship of the City's arts funding, promotion of Tacoma as a dynamic arts destination, and strategic thinking about the direction of the City's public arts programming. Beginning in November 2016, members of the commission recommitted ourselves to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in our work. In ArtFull Tacoma, our strategic plan, we state our committed to "Promote equity, diversity, and inclusiveness through the arts." We added criteria for equity to the applications process for City arts funding and rewrote and expanded on our statement of values:

The Tacoma Arts Commission strongly supports inclusion, equity, and access. We celebrate Tacoma's diversity of people, places, cultures, and artistic expression. Diversity and heritage are points of pride, permeating Tacoma's rich arts scene and giving character to its neighborhoods. The arts are uniquely positioned to touch every person and every part of Tacoma, and we are committed to supporting the entirety of our community.

We have also formed the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Subcommittee to regularly review our processes and make recommendations to our Commission. As we have continued our discussions about how to use the power of Tacoma's arts programming effectively, we realized that diversity and inclusion begin with the commission itself.

We believe that the Tacoma Arts Commission would be most successful in achieving our ideals if membership on the Commission better reflected the identity and geographic diversity of our

city. The Commission needs members with diverse perspectives and life experiences in order to fulfill our mission of inclusion, equity, and access. To that end, we are looking to over-represent traditionally marginalized communities on the Tacoma Arts Commission and ask that you consider this when appointing candidates to the Tacoma Arts Commission.

We will be working to support recruitment to attract a diverse pool of candidates and to develop tools that will help inform your work as you make your appointments. If there are other systemic efforts or opportunities the City is undergoing to support this work for all commissions, such as recruitment or updates to the Committees/Boards/Commissions application, the Tacoma Arts Commission and our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Subcommittee welcome the opportunity to provide input.

We ask that you consider these recommendations to help ensure an Arts Commission that looks like our city, and in which all Tacomans can see themselves represented and valued. We thank you for your consideration, and we would value an opportunity to speak with you about these recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Conklin, *Chair*

Rosie Ayala, *Vice Chair*

Michelle Douglas

Heide Fernandez-Llamazares

Davis Freeman

Anna Holcomb

Paula Jacobson

Johnaye Kendrick

Michael Kula

Liesl Santkuyl

James Stowe

Wanda Thompson

Paul Throne

Lynn Wilmot-Stenehjem

Sarah Woodson