



**TACOMA
ARTS LIVE**

To: Tacoma City Council
From: Clint Johnson, Board of Trustees President
David Fischer, Executive Director
Tacoma Arts Live
davidf@tacomaartslive.org
253.468.0749

April 27, 2021

Tacoma Arts Live is committed to our community as expressed through our **Vision**: A South Sound community that honors all cultures and enjoys shared prosperity and **Values**: Openness, Joy, Courage, Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Stewardship.

As the contracted managing partner in a 42-year long public-private partnership, Tacoma Arts Live is not willing to submit a response to Tacoma Venues & Events' Request for Proposal (RFP) to continue managing Tacoma's performing arts venues. The implied demands outline that Tacoma Venues & Events retain substantial venue control, while shifting increased burden, risk, and restrictions upon the selected Venue Manager. This fundamentally changes the philosophy of our successful public-private partnership in order to establish minimal liability on behalf of the City of Tacoma. This is not in alignment with Tacoma Arts Live's Vision, Values, or the needs of our community.

More specifically, we will not be applying because if awarded the management contract, we would be forced to accept:

- Not being allowed to simultaneously act as Venue Manager and be recognized as one of Tacoma's Resident Arts Organizations (RAO).
- Being required to fundraise on behalf of the City of Tacoma and establish a capital reserve fund. This is contrary to our 42-year practice where this work has been achieved by mutual agreement.
- Future hiring of key personnel would be subject to the approval of the Tacoma Venues & Events.
- Adoption of a method for minimizing the City of Tacoma's investment responsibilities. The burdens of managing 100 year old venues paired with rising inflation will make this impossible.
- Tacoma Venues & Events reserves the right to terminate the Contract for Management at any time, for any reason.

Since 1979, Tacoma Arts Live has procured investment from non-municipal sources on behalf of these City of Tacoma venues – with more than \$30 million raised by Tacoma Arts Live, including approximately 38% or \$10.1 million of all the asset improvements since 2005. For the record, Tacoma Arts Live has generated more through investment into City assets than we have been paid as manager.

Based on the above, we recognize that Tacoma Venues & Events desires to move in a direction that will preclude Tacoma Arts Live as Venue Manager. We accept this new approach as the City of Tacoma's prerogative.

OUR GREATER CONCERN

The City of Tacoma's values have been in parallel with Tacoma Arts Live's values until now. Tacoma Arts Live's Vision and Values place access and equity above profit and attendance. This RFP does just the opposite by establishing measures of success based primarily on profit and attendance, devaluing access and equity.

Tacoma Venues & Events has introduced a new policy that includes the following: demotion of both Tacoma Arts Live and Tacoma School of the Arts (SOTA) into a second-tier status that creates new obstacles to calendaring and RAO venue rental rates. **This policy change sets in place a structure that undermines access for SOTA and Tacoma Arts Live; creating inequities for the two organizations who are the top two renters of the venues, who serve the most diverse constituents, and who provide the most in educational services.** This translates into diminished capacity for each organization to serve our diverse audiences and youth. Per the RFP, Tacoma's RAOs: Northwest Sinfonietta, Puget Sound Revels, Symphony Tacoma, Tacoma City Ballet, Tacoma Concert Band, Tacoma Opera, and Tacoma Youth Symphony Association will continue to maintain their current RAO status and receive highest priority and benefits.

We believe it is within reason to expect equity and fairness for all nine of Tacoma's RAOs, particularly as we will no longer be serving as manager.

OUR ONE REQUEST OF CITY COUNCIL

Tacoma Arts Live formally requests that Tacoma City Council ensure it is adopted as City of Tacoma policy that both SOTA and Tacoma Arts Live remain co-equal peers among Tacoma's RAOs and are allowed to access equitable benefits such as calendaring, reduced fees, and venue rental rates in all venues, for all types of programs.