

Attachment A. Cultural Affairs Commission Activities and Accomplishments (2020-present)

The Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC) was re-established by City Council in July 2019 after a near decade-long hiatus. Their role is to act as ambassadors and advocates for arts and culture in Oakland; with a clear charge and workplan aligned with the Oakland's cultural equity vision and purview of the Cultural Affairs Division. The Commission dates back to 1980 when the Oakland Arts Council was established with City Council's adoption of [Ordinance No. 9969 C.M.S.](#) City Council created this volunteer body to advise the Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator on matters affecting cultural development in Oakland.

The Commissioners are the eyes and ears for the City— elevating opportunities and surfacing the needs and barriers for the many voices who represent the diversity of the residents of Oakland that are heard through cultural institutions and the work of artists/performers, etc. They do this work as members of the community by supporting and publicizing the work of the Cultural Affairs Division (CAD) to the community and the needs of the CAD to the Mayor, City Administrator and Councilmembers. They advocate for the allocation of the needed funding and resources for the CAD to work effectively and reach the goals of the [Cultural Plan](#) and serve the residents of Oakland.

- After a decade-long hiatus the Cultural Affairs Commission is re-established in 2019 by [Ordinance No. 13561 C.M.S.](#) In July of 2019 an open call to apply to serve on the Cultural Affairs Commission announced (over 90 applications received). Applications are reviewed and applicants vetted by Cultural Affairs Division (CAD) staff and Diane Sanchez and a list of potential candidates is sent to the Mayor Libby Schaaf for vetting and approval. In February 2020 City Council approves a slate of eleven appointments to the CAC.
- Due to Covid-19 Shelter in Place Orders and the City Administrator's policy, the Commission is not allowed to meet in-person or virtually until July 2020. The CAC has never had an in-person public meeting.
- The first order of business after our orientation, was to set-up ad hoc teams to begin to discuss key issues especially those pertaining to the impact Covid-19 had on the arts and culture sector and advocacy work. The CAC met virtually with all City Councilmembers and created documents to inform City Council of the CAC's role, highlight that City Council approved the Cultural Plan and request that no cuts to the CAD budget be made in the mid-year budget cycle. We were successful.
- Through the CAC's community work, they have become aware that a few (small and medium sized) venues that were shut down due to Covid-19 would not be able to re-open with the same tenants as performance venues and might not open again for this type of use. We began to inform City Councilmembers and discuss this issue in our meetings.
- The CAC established a relationship with the East Bay Venue Coalition and worked with them their members and the Alameda County Health department on assisting various venues in complying with Alameda County Health requirements for their various operations.

- We invited the Alameda County Public Health Department to present at CAC meetings and made recommendations to them about how their guidelines might be applied to various arts and cultural events. CAC co-hosts Oakland Town Hall: Re-Opening Live Events (w/Alameda County Healthcare Services Agency and East Bay Venue Coalition)
- As our work is guided by the City Council approved Cultural Plan, we looked at our activities and developed a Work Plan Template for tracking ongoing Commission activities and goals, based on the Cultural Plan and requests from elected officials and community needs input.
- In April of 2021 the CAD with the help of CAC members established Oaklands first Poet Laureate program – Dr Ayodele Nzinga is chosen as Oakland’s first Poet Laureate.
- The CAC took a leadership role in the East Bay Arts & Culture Alliance which secured \$1M in American Rescue Plan Act grant funds for artists in Alameda County. Oakland artists received approximately 45% of these funds. The CAC has worked with this group to request an additional \$1M form Alameda County for distribution in 2023.
- Beginning in April 2021 the CAC begins its advocacy efforts with the Mayor and City Council during the budget process. CAC works with community artists and activists on advocacy activities around City budget. The CAC makes a specific proposal for increased funding and increase staffing for the CAD. As a result of the CAC efforts and the support of the community as well as City council members, the CAD receives \$2M in funding over a two-year budget and an additional fulltime and a part time position are approved. (The org chart indicated that these positions have not been filled).
- As part of the process of moving permits away from OPD to the Special Activity Permits Division in the Economic & Workforce Development Department we reviewed the new language they would be using, and we reached out to the Arts Organizations who regularly received TOT funding for Festival Culture to assess the status of their operations and plans for events. We hosted these organizations at a CAC meeting so they could give voice to their plans, needs and concerns.
- At the request of Council President Bas, the CAC worked with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) in assessing the cultural and equity implications of various issues around the use of Lake Merritt both generally and with the special permit process that City Council put in place for vendors and cultural activities. CAC submits comments to the PRAC about an ordinance updating Section 12.60.020 of the Oakland Municipal Code
- The CAC provided culturally specific language on the draft plan for the renewal of Measure KK.
- The Ad Hoc Team: Community Cultural Development of the CAC reviews the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan (DOSP) and provides input.
- The CAC begins an ongoing effort to provide cultural policy and artist needs feedback to the planning department on the Oakland 2045 General Plan. The CAC has provided specific language suggestions to the planning department and plans to comment as appropriate on the other six elements of the General Plan.

- A feature of all our CAC meetings is our Artist in the Spotlight where we highlight the work of a specific Oakland artist. We have feature artists from a variety of disciplines and across all the districts in Oakland. There has been a heavy emphasis on early career artists. We have highlighted 14 artists.

Relationships Established as part of the CAC's work

- CAC establishes relationship with East Bay Venue Coalition
- CAC builds relationship with Favianna Rodriguez and The Center for Cultural Power
- CAC builds relationship with Ashara Ekundayo, Artist As A First Responder
- CAC establishes relationship with Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) as we work on a specific request from the city Council President.
- CAC renews a longstanding relationship with the members of the Malonga Casquelourd Center
- CAC establishes relationship with Corrina Gould (Co-Founder/Co-Director, Sogorea Te' Land Trust)
- CAC establishes relationship with Special Activity Permits Division
- CAC establishes relationship with the Department of Violence Prevention
- East Bay Arts & Culture Alliance
- California Humanities
- The Goldman School of Public Policy University of California Berkeley
- CAC establishes relationship with Bureau of Environment, Oakland Public Works Department

CAC Hosted Town Halls and Events

- In response to violence against Asians and tensions between the Asian and African American community in our city, the CAC worked with a variety of community groups and leaders from the Asian and African American communities as well as Asian and African American arts to co-host [Stories of Solidarity: API x Black Artists in Oakland Unite Town Hall](#) this virtual event drew more than 300 attendees. (February 2021)
- CAC organized artist community Town Hall for Malonga Center members (May 2021)
- CAC co-hosted [ARTISTS IN ACTION: Virtual Town Hall on the Future of Oakland Artists](#) (w/CAST and Center for Cultural Power) (May 2021)
- CAC co-hosted [Town Hall](#) with the Alameda County Public Health Department, Alameda County Healthcare Services Agency, and the East Bay Venue Coalition about re-opening music entertainment venues for live events during Covid-19 (April 2021)
- CAC assisted in the programming of the [Inaugural Address of Oakland Poet Laureate, Ayodele Nzinga](#) (October 2021)
- CAC welcomes National Endowment for the Arts Chair Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson to Oakland at panel discussion with Roberto Bedoya and reception co-hosted by the Cultural Affairs Division and OMCA (April 2021)
- CAC co-hosted a Mayoral Candidate Arts & Culture Town Hall (w/California Humanities and Youth Speaks) (October 2022)