



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Portland City Council advances next phase of Portland State University's Performing Arts + Culture Center

Council action moves forward planning for a new Broadway-capable venue in downtown

PORTLAND, Ore. — Portland City Council today voted 8-4 to advance the next phase of Portland State University's proposed Performing Arts + Culture Center, a new approximately 3,000-seat, Broadway-capable venue on Portland State's downtown campus.

The resolution directs City staff to work with PSU to evaluate funding strategies and develop a Project Commitment Agreement establishing the scope, schedule and governance framework for the project. The resolution does not commit City funds and requires future Council approval for any future City financial obligations.

The City first asked Portland State to explore a Broadway-capable venue on its campus in 2023. This resolution is the result of three years of public process involving an RFI, seismic studies, facility condition assessments, market and economic analyses, cost estimating, operations studies and recommendations from independent advisory groups — all of which underscore the benefits of building at the Portland State site.

"Three years ago, we answered the City's call with a bold vision: a cultural campus that goes beyond a Broadway theater to create opportunities for audiences, artists, students and community organizations while strengthening Portland's entire arts ecosystem," said Sarah Schwarz, president of the Portland State University Foundation. "This is the moment we move from planning to problem-solving. Our partners are at the table, and we are ready to get in a room, roll up our sleeves and determine how we can make this opportunity a reality for Portland."

The Center has strong support from the regional construction trades. The Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council represents more than 20,000 construction professionals across 22 local unions and has entered into a Project Workforce Development Agreement with PSU. The new venue is also endorsed by IATSE Local 28, the union for entertainment workers and stagehands, and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council.

"This project represents a tremendous opportunity to put Portlanders to work while investing in the future of downtown," said Randall Friesen, executive director of the Columbia Pacific

Building and Construction Trades Council. “With an estimated 2,000 construction jobs and 400 permanent jobs, this new facility can put cranes in the air, create opportunity for workers and help bring new energy to downtown Portland. We are proud to endorse the Portland Performing Arts + Culture Center and look forward to helping get it over the finish line.”

A new Broadway-capable venue would provide Portland a modern home for large-scale touring productions while creating additional opportunities for local arts organizations and performers to connect with audiences.

“Arts organizations like Oregon Children’s Theatre need a strong cultural infrastructure to thrive, and the Performing Arts + Culture Center would be an important part of that future,” said Jenn Hartmann Luck, producing artistic director of Oregon Children’s Theatre. “This is about making sure Portland continues to be a place where artists can build careers, families can experience the arts, and young people can see themselves as part of our creative community.”

The next phase of work will bring City and Portland State experts together to evaluate potential funding strategies and identify additional resources. The City and PSU are expected to work toward a Project Commitment Agreement by Dec. 1, 2026.