

Center City Development Corporation

Board Meeting

To: Center City Development Corporation (CCDC)
From: DMC Staff
Date: July 8, 2026
RE: Exterior Improvement Grant Request – 477 S. Main St., Spoken For

The enclosed Exterior Improvement Grant (EIG) application has been submitted for consideration at the July 15, 2026, CCDC Board Meeting.

Project: **477 South Main St., Spoken For**

Applicant/Tenant: Teddy Jasper
Spoken For – a neighborhood cocktail bar
477 S. Main St. (proposed location)
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant's Request: Exterior Improvement Grant in an amount up to \$9,933.

Project Description: The subject property is a vacant commercial space located on the ground floor of the Arrive Hotel at the corner of S. Main Street and Butler Avenue. The approximately 4,500 square foot space is accessed from Butler Avenue and has remained vacant since the previous tenant, Longshot, closed in mid-2024.

The grant applicant has executed a lease for the space and is preparing to reopen it as Spoken For, a neighborhood cocktail bar. The concept is intended to serve Downtown Memphis residents, hotel guests, visitors, and employees.

The space currently retains exterior signage from the former tenant that is outdated and no longer reflects an active business at the location. The EIG Grant will support the installation of new high-quality illuminated signage that identifies the business while enhancing the building's appearance. The new signage will be designed to complement the character of the historic building and will be consistent with the scale, materials, and aesthetic quality of the signage being replaced.

Timeline: Contingent upon EIG approval, the applicant anticipates installing the new signage soon, following Design Review

Board approval, with a goal of opening the business within the next 3-6 months.

EIG Budget:

The EIG supports exterior improvements only and requires a 1:1 dollar match from the applicant. For properties located within the South Main Retail Node, the maximum grant award is \$60,000. The EIG operates on a reimbursement basis, with the final award amount determined by approved receipts following the successful completion of all eligible work.

The budget below outlines the proposed grant-eligible work:

Sources:

Applicant's contribution	\$9,933	(50%)
CCDC EIG Grant	\$9,933	(50%)
Total Sources	\$19,866	(100%)

Eligible Uses:

New primary sign	\$9,660	(48%)
New sign over Butler entrance	\$7,900	(40%)
Permitting & fees (estimated)	\$500	(2%)

<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$18,060</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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Contingency	\$1,806	10%
Total Uses	\$19,866	(100%)

Design Review:

The applicant will submit design plans to the DRB in the coming months. DRB approval is required prior to the commencement of exterior work. Approval from the Memphis Landmarks Commission will also be required given the site's location within the South Main Historic Preservation District.

Staff Evaluation:

The Exterior Improvement Grant (EIG) supports high-quality exterior improvements that enhance curb appeal, attract customers, improve street-level activity, and contribute to stronger Downtown neighborhoods.

Reactivating ground-floor commercial vacancies within the South Main Retail Node is a key priority of the DMC's Retail Strategy. The proposed improvements will return a prominent vacant storefront near S. Main Street and along Butler Avenue to active use, replace outdated signage from the former tenant, and support the opening of a new locally-

operated business. The project will increase pedestrian activity, enhance the streetscape, and expand amenities for Downtown residents, employees, hotel guests, and visitors.

The project advances the Downtown Memphis Action Plan by supporting small business growth, reducing vacancy, and strengthening South Main as a vibrant, walkable mixed-use district. The requested grant is a targeted investment that will encourage small business owners to invest in Downtown and help return a long-vacant space to productive use.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of an Exterior Improvement Grant in an amount up to \$9,933 based on approved receipts and subject to all standard closing requirements and conditions.