

# Center City Development Corporation Board Meeting

To: Center City Development Corporation (CCDC)  
From: DMC Staff  
Date: July 17, 2019  
RE: South City Good Neighbor Grant Application – 358 Walnut St.

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The enclosed South City Good Neighbor Grant has been submitted for consideration at the July 17, 2019 CCDC Board of Directors Meeting.

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**Project:** **358 Walnut St. (OFF THE WALLS)**

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Applicant/Owner: Yvonne Bobo  
OFF THE WALLS  
358 Walnut St.  
Memphis, TN 38126

Applicant's Request: South City Good Neighbor Grant up to \$45,359.

Project Description: The subject property is located on the east side of Walnut St., in the block between Vance Ave. and St. Paul Ave. The site contains a 26,000 square feet two-story industrial building with a surface parking lot to the north. The owner, Yvonne Bobo, has recently purchased the building to house her studio, a collective of 15 artists and the non-profit OFF THE WALLS.

OFF THE WALLS is a non-profit that provides equitable access to art experiences for at risk youth, youth and adults. OFF THE WALLS impacts the community in two ways: through partnering and collaborating with local nonprofits to deliver workshops for the community to experience immersive arts, and by providing a Community Events Space, shared resources and financial opportunities to local artists.

With the renovation of 358 Walnut St. into artist studios and shared creative space, artists will be able to prosper through community and collaborative arts, shared resources, a safe work space and a community art event space. The applicant has already completed \$85,000 in interior renovations and some permanent building improvements including 7

renovated bathrooms, updated electrical, new windows, new doors, security system, lighting and fencing.

The applicant is requesting a South City Good Neighbor Grant up to \$45,359 to make additional exterior improvements and transform the curb appeal of the property. The proposed scope of work would include sidewalk repair, an ADA accessible ramp, parking lot improvements, exterior painting, signage and public art.

The applicant plans to begin renovation work in late summer/early fall 2019.

Estimated Budget:

The South City Good Neighbor Grant is a special program offered by the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) and the Center City Development Corporation (CCDC) in partnership with the City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the South City Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI). This grant is designed to help commercial property owners and businesses in the South City Neighborhood make exterior improvements to their property.

The South City Good Neighbor Grant is for exterior work only and provides up to 75% of the total project cost up to \$50,000.

Sources:

Owner-funded	\$15,119
<u>South City Good Neighbor Grant (CCDC)</u>	<u>\$45,359</u>
Total Sources	\$60,478

Uses:

Exterior Painting	\$19,800
Public Mural/Artwork and Signage	\$6,990
Parking Lot Repaving & Restriping	\$24,638
<u>Sidewalk Repair</u>	<u>\$9,050</u>
Total Uses	\$60,478

Design Review:

This project will be reviewed at the August or September meeting of the Design Review Board (DRB).

EBO Program:

Any project that is awarded financial incentives from the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) shall include a best faith effort to reach no less than 25% participation by minority and/or women owned businesses (MWBE) in the

project's development cost (design and construction hard costs). Compliance with this Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) Program is a closing requirement. **If the requirements of the EBO Program are not met, the CCDC will cancel the incentive.**

Based on the estimated budget, a 25% level of MWBE inclusion is approximately **\$15,119.**

**Staff Evaluation:**

The South City Good Neighbor Grant is designed to help South City commercial property owners and businesses strengthen or restore the character of important places within the community with high-quality improvements to the exterior of their property. A secondary goal of the grant is to help new and existing businesses succeed by enhancing their curb appeal in ways that might not be possible without assistance.

Staff is in full support of approving a South City Good Neighbor Grant for this project. This project is aligned with the DMC's & South City Good Neighbor Grant's primary goals of improving commercial property values and encouraging property investment within the South City Neighborhood.

As a new non-profit and arts collective in the neighborhood, awarding a grant to OFF THE WALLS will not only transform a neglected property in South City, but also help support a new artist collective that will be active in expanding the role of art in the neighborhood.

The scope of work will enhance the pedestrian experience along Walnut St., bring more activity to one of the gateways to the neighborhood and allow the exterior of the building to match its artistic interior use.

Staff believes that the proposed exterior will creatively introduce OFF THE WALLS to South City and allow it to have a positive impact on the direction of art & design in the neighborhood. Staff recommends approval to support this significant investment in South City and new non-profit partner in the neighborhood.

**Staff Recommendation:**

**Staff recommends approval of a South City Good Neighbor Grant in an amount up to \$45,359 based on approved receipts and subject to all standard closing requirements.**