



To: Center City Development Corporation (CCDC) Board of Directors
From: DMC Staff
Date: April 13, 2016
RE: Temporary Public Art Proposal - 82 S. Main St.

Background:

As part of the Downtown Memphis Commission's (DMC) focus on combating blight and strategically addressing vacant buildings in the Downtown Core, DMC staff is working with the property owner at 82 S. Main Street to incorporate public art as a short-term strategy for improving the appearance of the building and adding vibrancy to the block.

Located at the southeast corner of Union Avenue and South Main Street, this 3-story building is one of the last remaining vacancies on an otherwise healthy section of the Main Street Mall. While DMC staff is cautiously optimistic that the property owner is taking new steps towards redevelopment, the current condition of the building is no longer acceptable. Improving this site through artistic lighting and public art murals will serve as an immediate step in the right direction towards turning a long-vacant eyesore into a neighborhood asset.

Project Goals:

Primary goals for this public art project include the following:

- Add color, visual interest, sense of movement, and vibrancy to a vacant building
- Improve the pedestrian experience along the Main Street Mall
- Design the art to be as low maintenance as possible

Public Art Proposal:

Staff suggests a two-pronged public art approach at this site. First, a lighting installation will provide animation and signs of life at the corner during the evening hours. Secondly, public art murals will mask an empty storefront at the southern end of the property.

Artistic Lighting Design

Staff recommends that Ms. Robin Salant be commissioned to install the artistic lighting portion of the project. Ms. Salant is a local artist with relevant experience, including the well-regarded temporary lighting installation at Sears Crosstown. Her

proposal involves using light, motion, and shadow to provide pedestrian-level interest at the ground floor and light, motion, and color on the upper floors. The installation will be designed to last a minimum of 12-18 months, beginning in June 2016. A detailed proposal explaining the scope of work and artistic intent is attached to this memo. **The proposed budget for the lighting installation is \$12,480, which includes a 15% contingency.** The property owner will prep the site and provide electricity throughout the display period.

Public Art Murals

In addition to the artistic lighting installation, two (2) temporary public art murals will be added to the site. The property owner will remove the existing roll-up security doors on the two (2) southernmost bays along South Main Street. Similar to the approach taken by the CCDC with the temporary mural project at 107 S. Main Street, the property owner will construct plywood walls to serve as the mural canvas. It is estimated that the temporary plywood walls in each bay will measure approximately 10 ft. (h) x 30 ft. (w). The location of the proposed murals is shown on pg. 4 of the attachment.

The DMC will be responsible for selecting the artists and paying the cost to install the murals. In lieu of the traditional approach of picking a single artist to design and install a mural, staff is recommending that we use this space to highlight four (4) up-and-coming local artists. Each artist would be responsible for painting a single bay. Two (2) artists will install murals in June to remain on display for 6 months. At the end of that time, the other two (2) artists would paint over the existing murals and install new work to remain on display for at least 6 months.

The proposed budget for the public art murals is \$2,000 per artist, for a total of \$8,000. While the mural artists have not yet been selected, staff suggests that the DMC President, DRB Chairman, and CCDC Chairman form a committee to select the artists. In lieu of issuing a call to artists, staff is confident that the Selection Committee will be able to identify qualified local artists from amongst the proposals submitted for the temporary mural project at 107 S. Main St.

Budget Request:

Staff requests approval for a budget of up to **\$12,480** for the artistic lighting project.

Staff requests approval for a budget of **\$8,000** for the temporary public art murals.

It should be noted that adding public art at this site is only a temporary solution. DMC staff will be actively working with the property owner over the next 12 months to monitor and strongly encourage progress towards redeveloping the building in a permanent way.