



To: Center City Development Corporation (CCDC) Board of Directors  
From: DMC Staff  
Date: August 8, 2018  
RE: Maggie H. Isabel Street & Rendezvous Alley Improvement Project

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**Background:**

In recent years, the Downtown Memphis Commission (DMC) and the CCDC have embraced public art as an important community development tool. The DMC views public art not as an unnecessary luxury, but rather a vital building block for creating places that people care about. In 2014, the CCDC funded a collection of 8 temporary art installations known collectively as South Main Mosaic. The majority of those pieces are still extant and continue to receive praise. For example, the “I am a Man” mural painted by Mr. Marcellous Lovelace is often photographed and has been featured in a variety of media outlets.

In 2015, the CCDC funded The Collaboratory, a partnership with local artist Cat Pena designed to draw focus on the emergent Edge neighborhood. Over the course of a year, eight local artists worked in the neighborhood to conduct research and create public art. One result is Ms. Pena’s sculpture at the intersection of Monroe and Marshall titled “There is more to be proud of.” The work features the use of blue streamers on cables and is a much-loved neighborhood landmark.

Beginning in 2016 with Barboro Alley, the CCDC made a strategic investment in public art and enhanced lighting to improve the pedestrian experience in one of Downtown’s most frequently walked alleys. While many alleys in Downtown Memphis function primarily as service areas for garbage collection and other back-of-house needs, some alleys experience high pedestrian activity due to location and proximity to points of interest. The Barboro Alley project, also known as The Artery, was a success with the addition of new string lighting and seven public art installations.

**Proposal:**

The DMC staff requests funding to undertake a project in the public alley known as Maggie H. Isabel Street and Charlie Vergos Rendezvous Alley. The alley runs in a north-south direction in the Downtown Core, with our area of focus being from a half-block north of Madison Avenue to a half-block south of Monroe Avenue. This alley is frequently visited by tourists and locals alike since it connects Union Avenue, The Peabody Hotel, Rendezvous Restaurant, First TN Building, Madison Park, and Madison Avenue. See location map on page 3 for more information.

**Scope:**

Staff recommends a combination of three significant investments to this alley. The goal is to provide a clear signal that this alley is a place where people are both allowed and welcome. The following improvements are proposed:

- The alley will be repaved with stamped asphalt to provide a consistent, safe, and visually attractive surface for pedestrians.
- String lights will be added to improve the appearance of the alley at night.
- Public art will be added where possible to provide visual interest, color, and animation to otherwise blank walls and utilitarian surfaces.

Contingent upon contractor availability and receipt of any required approvals, alley paving should be completed this fall. Weather and temperature considerations make paving the most time-sensitive step in the process. Lighting installation will follow immediately after. The goal is to complete alley paving and lighting installation by the end of 2018.

**Public Art:**

Following CCDC approval, DMC staff will prepare and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to help identify and select artists. DMC staff will work with adjacent property owners to identify potential public art locations and receive approval. Final art proposals will be chosen by a public art selection committee consisting of CCDC members, Design Review Board (DRB) members, key stakeholders, and neighborhood representatives. The goal is to finish the installation of public art in the alley by the end of April, 2019. The work will be installed sooner if possible.

The total number of public art installations added to the alley will be directly related to the budget of the submitted proposals and the size of the selected sites. However, our goal is a minimum of four mural installations and at least one sculptural piece. Each piece will be suitable for outdoor display and designed to be low-maintenance.

**Budget:**

Staff proposes a total budget of up to \$207,250 to include the following:

Repave alley w/stamped asphalt (approx. 900 sq. yards)	\$90,000	(43%)
Install new string lighting (approx. 710 ft.)	\$31,000	(15%)
Public art	\$80,000	(39%)
Art installation contingency & site preparation	\$5,000	(2.4%)
Artist honoraria (5 @ \$250 each)	\$1,250	(0.6%)
Total	\$207,250	(100%)

**Staff Request:**

Staff requests a project budget of up to \$207,250 to complete the Maggie H. Isabel Street & Rendezvous Alley Improvement Project. Staff will proactively identify opportunities to promote diversity and inclusion in contracting for the included work, in full compliance with the DMC’s Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) program.

# Focus Area for Alley Improvements

