



**Design Review Board (DRB)
Staff Report**

Public Art

Case # 19-148:

Equality Trailblazers
1 N Front St.
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant:

Mary Claire Borys
City of Memphis, Housing & Community Development
170 N Main St.
Memphis, TN 38103

Owner:

City of Memphis
125 N Main St.
Memphis, TN 38103

Background:

DRB review is required for all private development projects that receive a public incentive and any public project located Downtown, such as a new suffrage monument. This application involves a new monument in collaboration with the National Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission.

The monument will be located across from the overlook along the Bluff Walk on the river side of University of Memphis Law School (1 N Front Street). Completion is projected for March 2020.

The proposed monument is a collaboration lead by Paula Casey with Vote 70, Inc., the National Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission and Lequire Gallery.

With 2020 as the national centennial of the 19th Amendment's ratification, the applicant is proposing a new monument that will commemorate the significance of Tennessee and Memphis with women's Suffrage.

The monument aims to honor several trailblazing women who were leaders in the local fight for women's equality or were the first women to hold local government offices.

Sculptor Alan Lequire and Vote 70, Inc., along with numerous stakeholders, produced the design and are responsible for

fundraising for the project. The City has agreed to provide the above location within the public right of way and to assist with installation.

Project Description:

The monument will be visible from the Mississippi River, the I-40 bridge and Riverside Drive. It will be part of the TN Woman Suffrage Heritage Trail, the Memphis Heritage Trail, and the National Votes for Women Trail.

The proposed site layout will include 14 glass panels backed by steel panels (7 on each side, spaced 1 foot apart laterally and 1-foot step back for each panel) in a V formation. There will be 6 bronze busts on marble stands - 3 on each side, lining the sidewalk. The busts will be staggered between the glass/steel panels.

LED lights will be mounted at ground level to shine up on the glass panels and in between the layered steel panels. The designers also desire to have pole-mounted fixtures to shine down on the bronze busts (one light per bust, 3 lights per pole), but the specific location of these poles has not yet been identified.

The existing SkyCop/Call Box will be relocated and softscape plantings will be added to the site. The existing structural safety bollards will remain, and additional bollards will be added to protect the public art from vehicular damage because of the active driveway in between the law school and monument.

Staff Report:

The proposed monument is consistent with the Downtown Memphis Design Guidelines and DMC priorities of enhancing the public realm and honoring our heritage.

Improving the experience of pedestrians in the public realm is one of the DMC's priorities, and this project will help further that goal along the Bluff Walk while adding another point of interest Downtown.

The proposed design will create a high-quality landmark and further activate greenspace along the river.

Staff is supportive of the proposed design and feels that it is an appropriate direction for a new monument Downtown.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval.