

Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - CPED

Date: January 5, 2010
To: Council Member Lisa Goodman, Community Development Committee

Subject: Forecast Public Art – Temporary Art Installation on City-Owned Property

Recommendation:

- 1. Authorize staff to enter into a temporary license agreement (and other agreements as necessary) with Forecast Public Art, with terms as described herein.

Previous Directives: On November 22, 2002, the City Council authorized execution of a purchase agreement between the City and Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority to acquire the Parcel E property as a part of the implementation of the Guthrie Theater development. From approximately 2002 – 2006, the City Council approved a number of actions related to a development proposal from Rottlund Homes for the site; the redevelopment contract for that proposal has since expired.

Prepared by: Amy Geisler, Senior Project Coordinator, (612) 673-5266 and Carrie Flack, Senior Project Coordinator, (612) 673-5010
Approved by: Charles Lutz, Deputy Director, CPED _____
Thomas Streitz, Director, Housing Policy and Development _____
Presenters in Committee: Carrie Flack, Senior Project Coordinator

Financial Impact

- No financial impact
- Action is within the Business Plan

Community Impact

- Neighborhood Notification – DMNA, the East Downtown Council, and the Elliot Park neighborhood were all notified of the initial RFI.
- City Goals – Connected communities, Enriched environment, Premier destination.
- Sustainability Targets – A vital community; arts and the economy
- Comprehensive Plan – Policy 9.4: Strengthen the City’s public art program by providing a definite funding commitment and confirming policy. Policy 9.6: Promote collaborations among arts and cultural organizations, artists, the City, and other partners.
- Zoning Code – will comply; any proposed sponsorship information will need additional review by CPED.
- Living Wage/Business Subsidy Agreement Yes No
- Job Linkage Yes No
- Other

Supporting Information

Overview

The City owns the vacant liner parcel that wraps the Riverfront Ramp, across from the Guthrie Theater on the corner of 2nd St and Chicago Ave. In the interest of improving the

site until development conditions are more favorable, staff released a Request for Inspiration (RFI) last spring, which was broad call for ideas on how the site might be used on an interim basis. The RFI was open in terms of what types of uses would be considered; the primary selection criteria were a preference for proposals with limited site improvements, and those that did not require City funds for site preparation, implementation, or operations. These two criteria eliminated eight of the nine proposals that were received.

The ninth proposal was from Forecast Public Art, for a temporary public art installation to be attached to the Washington Ave and Chicago Ave facades of the Riverfront Ramp. The City would need to enter into a license agreement to allow the installation on City property, and to define the terms of said agreement.

Forecast anticipates a design and fundraising process of approximately 6 months, with installation possible in June or July of 2010. Forecast will be fundraising for all aspects of the project. They have requested the ability to display sponsorship information on a small portion of the installation (possibly several square feet in size); City staff will need to review this request in more detail as the design process moves forward.

The design process itself will be managed by the Public Arts Administrator, in consultation with the Minneapolis Arts Commission, in accordance with the City's adopted Public Art Policies. Staff from Public Works, CPED, and other departments as necessary will have the opportunity to review the design and provide comment prior to installation.

Pertinent License Terms

- Forecast Public Art will be responsible for all costs associated with design, installation, maintenance, and eventual removal of the art installation.
- The installation will begin in Spring 2010 and will remain in place for a minimum of 1 year, and a maximum of 3 years.
- Forecast Public Art will remove the installation, upon 30 day written notice from the City.

Attachments:

- Forecast proposal letter
- Concept images (for illustrative purposes only)

March 6, 2009

Ms. Amy Geisler

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development

City of Minneapolis

105 5th Ave. South, Room 200

Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Ms. Geisler:

I am pleased to provide you with Forecast Public Art's proposed ideas for the interim use of the City-owned property at the Southwest corner of South Second St. and Chicago Avenue South in Minneapolis, emphasizing dynamic surface treatments of the municipal parking garage facing both Washington and Chicago Avenues.

Forecast Public Art, the premier public arts organization in the Twin Cities, and collaborator Joshua Sarantitis, a nationally renowned muralist, are excited by the potential of this site to be an interactive community-gathering place. Forecast proposes to transform the four-story parking garage on the site into a monumental, colorful attraction and backdrop for a wide range of potential activities that could be programmed on the surrounding site. We are confident that this will be the ideal interim use for this site and will encourage neighborhood partners to invest in this site.

Description of Idea

Forecast Public art is pleased to provide CPED with a variety of rough concepts for artistic treatment of the outside surface of the parking garage, utilizing its existing chain link "skin" as a simple support system for attaching colored fabric.

Working in partnership with Sarantitis, we have prepared a selection of visual renderings, demonstrating different concepts and degrees of wall surface coverage. These concepts are flexible and may be expanded dramatically if sufficient resources are available, or scaled back (maintaining a bold impact with a more modest budget). One of the themes we are exploring is "Confluence," the notion of coming together, meeting at the corner, and joining forces. This theme is attractive when one considers the potential for additional arts based interactive programming on the site. Other concepts respond to the proximity of the Guthrie (utilizing a quote from Shakespeare) or Celebrating Diversity (illustrating working with Somali textile artists).

We have explored a variety of fabrics and materials that are inexpensive, available in many colors, and can be easily attached to the fencing in a grid-like fashion. In an effort to be environmentally conscious, we are researching biodegradable fabrics and

recycling remnant or mass quantities of swatch book materials. Utilizing a computer program developed by the artist, the final imagery would be scanned and pieces of colored fabric assigned to each "pixel" in the mural we create, guiding the installation to achieve pinpoint accuracy and

photorealistic imagery. By securing each square of fabric with a single rivet to the chain link wires, the entire image will be sensitive to wind, giving the appearance of movement or fluttering.

In addition to the Parking garage surfaces, we propose painting the concrete barrier along Washington Avenue. For this project, and for the lower portions of the large wall of the garage, we hope to employ youth workers and community members in the process of filling in the colors as outlined by the artist.

While this proposal specifically addresses a range of contemporary mural designs and innovative installation techniques, we also recognize the potential for additional programming. With a modest amount of site work, the open lot adjacent to the parking ramp would be ideal for a variety of short-term uses, such as an open-air market, performance events, large-scale sculpture displays, independent food vendors, and more. The neighborhood offers endless opportunities for collaboration with organizations such as the Guthrie, Mill City Museum & Market, McPhail School for Music, Open Book, and Marcy Open School (across the river) to name a few. While this idea, which we have dubbed “Confluence Corner,” is beyond the scope of this proposal, and would require more time to develop, it is clearly within the realm of possibility and with encouragement from CPED, Forecast can prepare a more detailed proposal. Regardless of this larger use strategy, we believe any interim use of the ground surrounding the municipal parking garage would benefit greatly from a bold, creative treatment of the two exposed wall surfaces.

Description of any needed site work

In order to create a uniform artistic statement on both walls of the parking garage (each approximately 250 feet long and 45 feet high), we propose adding four sections of chain link on the bare concrete vertical section at the corner of the ramp. Each section is 10 feet high by 12 feet long (the same as the other sections used on the structure), and mounted to the concrete. The fencing over the air intake should not reduce the movement of air, however we will consult with City staff prior to covering this section. If covering this section were not an option, we would opt to paint the concrete so that it is consistent with the rest of the mural design, and less distracting.

While our proposal does not currently utilize the ground area, we believe at the very least, the dirt should be leveled and seeded with grass seed (or sodded). Likewise, we would remove the construction fencing along Chicago and create openings in the concrete wall along Washington to allow for pedestrian access to the site. As a passive park-like space, at least picnicking and seating should be accommodated. The cost for our proposal includes estimates for these modifications.

Estimate of Costs and Sources of Funds

<i>Area of coverage in square feet (sqft.)</i>	<u><i>4,000 sqft.</i></u>	<u><i>15,000 sqft.</i></u>
Artist Design Fee	\$3,500	\$12,000
Fabrication pre-production with Tilepile software	\$2,000	\$4,500
Materials	\$5,000	\$20,000
Installation Labor	\$2,500	\$7,500
Youth Workers (and project assistance)	\$4,000	\$10,000
Rentals and Equipment	\$3,500	\$10,000
Remove fencing along Chicago	\$1,500	\$1,500

Remove fencing + two sections of concrete barrier	\$3,000	\$3,000
Landscaping: level dirt & plant seeds/lay sod	\$1,500	\$4,500
Project Management	\$4,000	\$12,000
Administrative Overhead	\$3,000	\$3,000
Liability Insurance	\$2,000	\$2,000
Promotion, PR and documentation (including web postings and e-mails)	\$2,500	\$2,500
Community Celebration (on site party for the community and workers)	<u>\$1,500</u>	<u>\$1,500</u>
TOTALS	\$39,500	\$94,000

Note: The cost per square foot for the \$39,500 version is approximately \$10 per square foot; for the \$94,000 version, it's \$6.20 per square foot.

In order to implement this project, as proposed, Forecast will need to secure both cash and in-kind contributions. With a formal endorsement from the City, we believe there are several potential sources of funds for this project. They include:

Government support (City of Minneapolis, including in-kind assistance with site preparation or installation equipment)

Private foundations (Minneapolis Foundation, Biem Foundation, Carolyn Foundation, others)

Corporations (Target, General Mills, Piper Jaffray, Fredrickson Byron, others)

Businesses (MSR Architects, HGA Architects, Hoigaard's, other)

Individuals (nearby residents, local philanthropists, others)

In-kind (goods and services from area suppliers and manufacturers)

Notes: If corporate donations are secured, a small portion of the wall surface would be made available for company logos and acknowledgments. Given the current economy, foundation grants are likely to be limited, and require several months to generate. Support for this project could grow over time as more funds are raised; additional funds for year two of this project are more likely, based on the interest and enthusiasm that the project will generate, and the level of participation that will follow.

About the Artist

Joshua Sarantitis, new to the Twin Cities, has been creating monumental wall art for almost two decades, with major commissions in Arizona, California and Pennsylvania. He also was a featured artist for the renowned Gallery 37 project on a vacant plaza site in downtown Chicago in 1998.

Specializing in collaborations with design professionals, arts administrators and communities, he pursues projects that are “rooted in a desire to find common language between our everyday lives and the arts.” Sarantitis has embraced the use of technology as a tool to aid in mastering media, including metal, concrete, glass, ceramic, paint and fiber. His recent large-scale mosaic project for the city of Philadelphia, entitled “Legacy,” encompassed 4,000 square feet of wall space. The one million glass pieces were placed by public school students to form a photorealistic mural using “Tilepile,” a computer program developed by the artist. The program translates designs—pixel by pixel—enabling complex imagery to be recreated on a monumental scale.

The artist also created a gateway bridge overpass in Tucson with a design team that included city staff, Arizona Department of Transportation and HDR Engineering. Plasma-cut steel elements and illuminated columns were used to illustrate the life and influence of Cesar Chavez. Many of his projects incorporate community components that allow for hands-on learning, demystifying the process and building pride in the finished product.

About Forecast

Forecast Public Art believes that public access to artistic experiences improves the everyday lives of all people. Our collaborative efforts to facilitate projects, inform audiences, and support artists enhances the vitality and authenticity of our shared spaces by fostering a culturally vibrant world where creativity and community connect.

Established in 1978, FORECAST strengthens and advances the field of public art by expanding participation, supporting artists, informing audiences, and assisting communities. We accomplish our mission through three programs: Artist Grants & Commissions, Consulting Services, and our national journal *Public Art Review*.

As the leading public art nonprofit in the Twin Cities for thirty years, we have supported hundreds of artists and fostered the creation of hundreds of unique public art projects. Among our most recent successes are the *Spontaneous Storefronts* projects in downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul, utilizing vacant commercial window spaces for temporary art installations (2007-08); *Speaking of Home*, the first major installation in a Minneapolis skyway, featuring 23 enlarged photo-transparencies filling the windows of the IDS-Macy’s skyway over Nicollet Mall (2008); and the *F-30 Pedal Cloud*, a ten-person bicycle car created by a team of artists and featured at parades and festivals throughout the Twin cities for our 30th Anniversary year (2008).

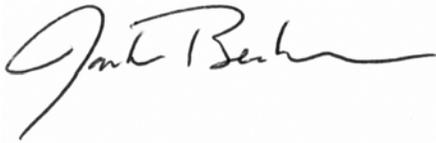
Forecast founder and executive director Jack Becker is a nationally acclaimed leader in the public art field. In 2007 he received the field’s highest honor, the Award of Excellence from Americans for the Arts and their Public Art Network Council. Becker has organized dozens of public art installations and consulted with numerous businesses and government agencies in the region, and nationally. Among his current activities are serving as Managing Editor for *Public Art Review*, developing a public art plan for the Midtown Greenway Coalition, facilitating the commissioning of three public art projects for private developers in St. Louis Park, and helping the Children’s Hospital in Minneapolis to add three new art projects to their expanded facilities.

Conclusion

I want to congratulate the City for your willingness to try something new and bold, and setting an example for other communities that are struggling with dormant properties and vacant storefronts. Given the high visibility of this particular site, and the incredible growth of arts and cultural amenities that have sprung up around it in the past few years, it makes sense to use the site to promote the arts, celebrate the incredible talent in our community, and invest in the long-term growth of this industry. With encouragement and support from the City, Forecast is prepared to move this project to the next level: refining the design, generating support, and taking full advantage of the opportunity!

Attached with this interim use proposal are the completed RFP Consent Form, renderings generated by artist Joshua Sarantitis, samples of his previous work, and summary report about Forecast's successful 30th anniversary year (2008). If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Becker", written in a cursive style.

Jack Becker

Executive Director

Forecast Public Art

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