



## READING, PA MAIN STREET PUBLIC ART INITIATIVE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Help Reading, Pennsylvania make its downtown more vibrant! Applications for a community-centered downtown public art initiative are now being accepted. Applications will be accepted from artists who have demonstrated capabilities of creating high-quality works of art, and have further demonstrated a passion for community improvement through the arts and an ability to collaborate with others. The deadline for submitting application materials is **4:00pm on Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>**.

### **PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT:**

Our community yearns for a more vibrant downtown. That was the impetus behind the City of Reading seeking and obtaining Keystone Community Designation from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 2013 to implement a Main Street program. To support its efforts to make downtown more vibrant, the City of Reading has been awarded funding from the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) *Our Town* program and RiverPlace Development Corporation. This funding will go toward developing and implementing a public art project that fosters community interaction while building upon and shaping a sense of community identity in addition to making downtown more vibrant.

### **ABOUT THE CITY OF READING AND ITS DOWNTOWN:**

Reading is a community of over 88,000. Like so many other cities in the United States, it flourished due to its railroad and manufacturing industry in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but has seen a decline in jobs and an increase in levels of poverty over the past several decades. As a result, downtown Reading has suffered from disinvestment, and is not as vibrant as it once was.

Despite the city's challenges, Reading has a wealth of assets. Throughout times of hardship and success Reading has maintained an industrious and diverse citizenry. The ethnic makeup of the city is primarily Latino (58%), and the city also boasts a proud history of migration of people of German, Polish, Italian, Greek, and African-American descent. These citizens and other stakeholders continue to seek opportunities to contribute to the growth of the city.

In recent years, the revitalization of Reading's commercial corridor has been identified as the key to changing the trajectory of our city and spurring its growth, and the community has been eager to get involved in the process. Many residents and business owners within the downtown area are involved in standing Main Street committees, and therefore will be involved in the Public Art initiative. By involving residents and stakeholders in creative placemaking, their artistic environment will reflect the diversity of the city and instill a sense of community pride while increasing vibrancy downtown.

### **ELIGIBLE TYPES OF ART:**

Public art is art in any media that has been planned and executed with the intention of being staged in the physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all. In order to enhance vibrancy within this unique community, we welcome innovative and imaginative concepts for public art. In addition to murals, mosaics, sculptures, furniture, we welcome concepts that involve creative/artistic public lighting or any other form of high-quality, vibrancy-enhancing, community-transforming art suitable to the public spaces in which they will be permanently installed.

Some examples of innovative, high-quality public art can be found at the following links:

- <http://www.mcfarlanedouglass.com/2013/10/willis-tower-spider-planters/>
- <http://www.saffroniabaldwin.com/2013/12/20-amazing-public-art-installations-that-will-make-your-jaw-drop/>
- <http://inhabitat.com/tag/public-art/>
- <http://www.bloomberg.org/program/arts/public-art-challenge/>
- <http://www.newamericanpublicart.com/bluehour/>
- <http://www.muralarts.org/collections/featured-murals>
- <http://www.muralarts.org/collections/projects/light-drift>
- <https://publicart.arlingtonva.us/locations/corridor-light/>

Proposed public works of art should be designed:

- For a location for which site permission has been obtained, or
- For any other location within the boundaries of the Main Street Program for which the artist can gain proof of permission from the owner to place artwork at the site. The Main Street program boundaries extend between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street and between Franklin St. and Walnut St. (*See Main Street Program Area map on page 9 for details*). Please note that even with permission from the owner, the site may be subject to further review/approval before the artwork is placed.
- As a permanent outdoor work of art that can withstand harsh weather conditions
- To be created and installed before August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016

#### **LOCATIONS:**

Artists may submit a public art concept for any space in downtown Reading, and the proposal will be considered. However, if permission cannot be obtained from the property owner, artwork cannot be installed.

So far, site permission has been acquired for the following properties/sites (*See pages 6-8 for pictures of these sites*):

1. 525-527 Franklin St. (Rear of Mosaic House building, facing Cherry St.)
2. 36 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. (Façade of ATV Bakery)
3. 334 Penn St. (Side of New Hunan Restaurant facing parking lot)
4. 240 Penn St. (Side of DeCarlo's Bar and Grill facing parking lot)
5. 422 Penn St. (Side of building facing Santander Courtyard)
6. Sidewalk planters in the 500 Block of Penn Street (2 circular, concrete planters)
7. Median planters in the 400 and 500 blocks of Penn St. (4 rectangular concrete planters separating eastbound & westbound traffic)
8. 300 Cherry St. (Kopicki Photography Building)

Site permission may be obtained for the following sites, but permission has not been acquired yet:

9. 20 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. (Inter-city bus terminal - May not be used for a mural because of original brick)
10. 348 Penn St. (Side of building, facing parking lot – Historic, needs permission from historic preservation entities)
11. 305 Penn St. (Side of Andrea's Bridal Shop)

Artists submitting proposals are strongly encouraged to take a walk around downtown Reading, and get inspired!!! In addition to building facades, downtown Reading has sidewalks, empty tree pits, courtyards and other open spaces which may serve as canvases/sites for public art. Artists are encouraged to submit proposals for sites for which owner permission has already been obtained. However, artists are also free to identify additional spaces and submit a concept proposal with the understanding that artwork may not be installed unless permission is granted by the property owner. Main Street partners will assist with trying to obtain site permission, but artists are encouraged to reach out to site owners for preliminary

permission before submitting a proposal for a site not on the above-mentioned list of sites for which permission has been obtained.

#### **AVAILABLE FUNDING:**

Artists should consider submitting proposals that will have a great impact on downtown vibrancy at a reasonable cost. A total of \$50,000 is available for this initiative. Artists may submit proposals for projects with a budget of up to \$50,000. However, artists should keep in mind that project budgets and whether or not expenses are reasonable and eligible will be considered in the selection of the proposal. Eligible expenses include artist fees, materials, and rental of equipment needed for installation.

#### **ARTIST REQUIREMENTS:**

Selected artists will be paid to coordinate the design, creation and installation of a public work of art. Artists will be expected to work directly with a committee of community members to fully develop their concept. Artists will therefore, need to be available to travel to Reading for community design/input sessions in March 2016. They will also need to be able to travel to sites for installation and unveiling ceremonies if their artwork is selected as part of the project. Artists will be expected to adhere to the timelines and complete the activities that are all part of the community engagement, design, creation, and installation process outlined below (under "PROCESS/TIMELINE").

For this project, we are looking for artists who:

- Demonstrate a commitment to their career through an existing body of work
- Have achieved a high degree of creative ability, display obvious talent, and have nurtured an individual vision
- Are creating original art – the artwork must be the artist’s original concept and produced by the artist
- Show proven ability in their chosen medium through some combination of the following:
  - participation in juried shows
  - professional experience
  - in the case of emerging artists, a reference from teacher or mentor, presentation of portfolio, slides or photos for review
- Have demonstrated ability and enthusiasm for working effectively with the public/community
- Have created works of art that may be installed in public (outdoor) spaces
- Can demonstrate how their project will engage residents in the design, creation, and installation process
- Are willing to actively engage stakeholders in the process of creating art by facilitating at least two sessions with community "Concept Development Teams".

#### **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:**

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. In order to qualify, the following must be submitted:

- [ ] The "Artist Application" form
- [ ] Hard copy slides and/or a CD with renderings of proposed site-specific work with summary page of title, medium and size (submission of both hard copy and electronic files is preferred)
- [ ] A budget for each proposed work
- [ ] An artist’s statement that discusses relevant experience (three pages or less)
- [ ] A current resume
- [ ] Any additional support materials you believe are relevant (i.e. reviews, recommendations, or any other evidence that you meet the artist requirements)

**Slides:** Label slides with "top" (written in the upper right hand corner) and title, size, and medium on the front of the slide or on separate sheet with a corresponding number to the slide. Print your name on the back of each slide.

**CD-ROM:** For those wishing to submit digital images, please follow these guidelines. Each image must be at least 72 DPI and sized to 250 pixels at its greatest dimension. Included on your CD should be a document listing the size and medium. This listing must be in the same order as the works appear on the CD.

**PROCESS/ TIMELINE:**

In order to fulfill the community involvement requirements as well as the deadline for expenditure of the grant, the following process/timeline has been established. Please carefully review the timeframes/deadlines and activities in the chart below, before considering submission of a proposal.

| <b>Timeframe/Deadline</b>  | <b>Action</b>   |
|--|---|
| By November 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2015                                      | Initial applications/proposals due  |
| By December 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2015                                       | Committee reviews proposals for eligibility/feasibility, and decides whether or not proposals meet basic criteria. Artists notified of their project eligibility/feasibility.   |
| December 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2015 through February 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2016 | An exhibition of all submissions is set up in a gallery space at GoggleWorks Center for the Arts. At some point, a community event may be held at the GoggleWorks to allow artists to speak to the public about their proposal. |
| December 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2015 through February 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2016 | The public will be invited to come in and view the artwork. Comment boxes will be placed by the artwork to allow the community the opportunity to give their feedback on the initial artwork proposals.                         |
| By February 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2016                                      | Selection committee reviews each of the proposals as well as public comments, and selects finalists.  |
| By March 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2016  | Finalists notified.   |
| During month of March 2016   | Finalists given planning grant to fully develop their concept. Artists will work with “Concept Development Teams” consisting of members of Main Street committees and community stakeholders to fully develop concept.          |
| By April 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2016  | Artists complete concept and present to selection committee.  |
| By April 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2016   | Selection committee reconvenes to decide on the winner(s) and winners are notified.   |
| May – August 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2016                                     | Artwork installed – ALL ARTWORK MUST BE COMPLETE BY AUGUST 15 <sup>TH</sup> , 2016!   |
| By August 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2016  | Official unveiling/dedication ceremonies held.  |

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Please mail completed hard copy application materials to:

Charles Broad, Executive Director  
 Downtown Improvement District (DID)  
 645 Penn St., Suite 505  
 Reading, PA 19601

Please email completed electronic application materials to [info@downtownreading.com](mailto:info@downtownreading.com).

Questions can be directed to: Crystal Edwards at [crystal.edwards@readingpa.org](mailto:crystal.edwards@readingpa.org).

## Artist Application

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (cell): \_\_\_\_\_ (home): \_\_\_\_\_

Medium: \_\_\_\_\_

### COMMUNITY

One of the goals of the Main Street Public Art Initiative is to engage the community. As such, Community “Concept Development” workshops will take place in Reading, and will allow local stakeholders the opportunity to engage in the final design of the proposed art project. Are you willing and able to participate in **at least 2** Community “Concept Development” sessions (*circle your answer*)?    YES    NO

### IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

The project will be funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This grant requires a dollar for dollar match, which may come in the form of in-kind or monetary contribution. For this project, indicate if you would be willing to:

Contribute in-kind volunteer time totaling \_\_\_\_\_ hours over the duration of the project.

Contribute materials worth \$\_\_\_\_\_ over the duration of the project.

Contribute space for community input sessions or art creation worth \$\_\_\_\_\_ over the duration of the project.

*Please note that in kind and/or monetary contributions from artists are **not required** as part of this project. Your willingness to provide in-kind contributions will not affect the eligibility of your application.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/ Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

**Photos of Potential Sites**

1. 525-527 Franklin St. (Rear of Mosaic House)



2. 36 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. (ATV Bakery)



3. 334 Penn St. (Side of New Hunan Restaurant)



4. 240 Penn St. (Side of DeCarlo's Bar & Grill)



5. 422 Penn St.



6. Planters (2 in the 500 Block of Penn St.)



7. Median Planters (4 in the 400 & 500 Blocks of Penn St.)



8. 20 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> (Inter-City Bus Terminal)



9. 300 Cherry St. (Kopicki Photography)



10. 348 Penn St. (Side of Catering Business)



11. 305 Penn St. (Side of Andrea's Bridal Shop – facing 3<sup>rd</sup> St.)



# Appendix II - City of Reading, PA - DID/Main Street Program Area

