



CHICK WEBB RECREATION CENTER

623 N. EDEN STREET, BALTIMORE, MD 21205

CALL FOR ARTIST PROPOSALS

CITY OF BALTIMORE:



*Public Art Design & Installation -
Wall Mural and Decorative Crosswalk*
Brief

Reissue: September 10, 2024

Chick Webb Memorial Recreation Center Call for Artist Proposals: Brief for Public Art Design & Installation

Introduction

The Baltimore City Recreation and Parks Department is seeking to commission an artist to create a two-component art installation for the newly renovated Chick Webb Memorial Recreation Center that will open to the public in the Spring of 2025.¹ The building is located at 623 N. Eden Street, Baltimore, MD 21205. ***The proposed art components include an exterior wall mural and a decorative crosswalk to be sited on the sidewalk between the school parking lot and the Center's front courtyard*** (see attachments for context map, aerials of previous building site, and specific locations for proposed mural and crosswalk).

These components will complement an interior interpretative exhibit spaces that elaborate on the life of jazz musician Chick Webb, his contemporary collaborators, the history of the recreation center, and the East Baltimore African American community.

Background

The Chick Webb Memorial Recreation Center is the first recreation center in Baltimore City that was funded and built by the African American community to provide for healthy recreational opportunities for East Baltimore youth as well as to commemorate Chick Webb's achievements as a musician and fellow Baltimorean.

The center was constructed between 1947 and 1960 in multiple phases. The first phase, completed in 1947, included a two-story building with a lounge, kitchen, club rooms, game rooms, offices, restrooms, and a meeting room with a projector. The center offered classes and opportunities for activities including rhythm band, dance instruction, arts, and crafts, reading, religious instruction, vocal groups, and sports such as basketball. Later, the center was fitted with an indoor swimming pool and a gymnasium.

In the late 1940's Black Baltimoreans had access to less than half of the city's community centers and playgrounds. When the Chick Webb Memorial Recreation Center was constructed, it was seen as the largest and most up-to-date center in the city. It was also the only center with an indoor swimming pool for African Americans. By 1960, the center also included a social hall that was constructed above the indoor swimming pool as part of the third phase of the center.

Today, the Chick Webb Memorial Recreation Center is undergoing an extensive renovation and an expansion. The modernized facility will include a new entrance lobby, gymnasium and multipurpose space for cultural activities, an elevated walking track, new locker rooms, a fitness area, group fitness space, a recording studio along with other updates. The center is anticipated to reopen to the public in Spring/Summer of 2025.

¹ The building and site are currently under construction with an anticipated completion date of late spring/ early summer 2025.

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The Chick Webb Memorial Recreation Center renovation is one component of an extensive redevelopment effort in East Baltimore which includes the construction of new public, affordable and market rate housing, commercial retail, two new parks, a new City Springs Elementary and Middle School and the phased renovation of the existing City Springs Park with a new pool, community garden, playground, and park entrances.

Vision

The commission to create a two-component art installation for the newly renovated Chick Webb Memorial Recreation Center should create a dynamic relationship not only between the exterior of the building and the interior, but between the building and the surrounding site.

The exterior mural will be located on a wall of the original recreation center building. The position of the mural will dominate the exterior entrance courtyard and will be adjacent to the new building entrance. The decorative crosswalk will invite and guide center users from the adjacent parking lot across a pedestrian walkway to the gated courtyard entrance.

Both mural and crosswalk will create important first impressions of the recreation center and the important role it has played and continues to play in the community. The art should convey both a welcoming and joyful presence.

The theme of the wall mural should relate to the musician Chick Webb and a combination of the following themes: his connections to Baltimore, his love and mastery of the drums, his success as a bandleader and recording artist, the efforts to carry on his dream to provide a recreation center for the youth. The theme for the crosswalk is more open ended but should relate to one or more of the following themes: African American jazz music or musicians, East Baltimore-past and present, and recreation.

The mural and decorative crosswalk will create first impressions of the recreation center and the important role it plays in the community. The art should convey a welcoming and joyful presence. As both art components have the potential for being seen together, they should complement, and play off one another. The art installation should also consider how it may relate, reference, or complement a jazz themed walk which will be constructed as part of the new Nathaniel McFadden Learn and Play Park, just one block west of the recreation center, fronting on South Central Ave.

Community Involvement

The project will involve the local community to identify and understand important historical and contemporary themes to incorporate into the project to ensure local resonance. Community participation in the image making or aspects of the production process is highly encouraged but not required.

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Sizes and Surface Materials

The dimensions for the exterior mural are 50' x 22' and the mural will be required to be applied to a stucco wall surface.

The crosswalk dimensions are open to be defined by the artist, however, the piece will be required to be applied to concrete pavement.

Budget

The selected artist(s) will receive a commission to design and install the mural and decorative crosswalk. The total project budget of \$66,000 will be divided amongst the mural and the crosswalk. An artist may be selected to do the mural, the crosswalk, or both and the contract amount for each artist is to be determined. The project budget is inclusive of travel, expenses, taxes, materials, design and installation.

Request for Creative Proposals

Interested artists are to submit a creative response to this brief embracing the themes of Chick Webb, jazz, East Baltimore past and present, and recreation which demonstrates an individual approach to this commission.

Required Submission Materials:

- A creative proposal reflecting the themes identified above
- Relevant examples of their previous work demonstrating their ability to interpret and communicate themes and messages, and experience working with and knowledge about types of mural and crosswalk materials, projects of this scale and size. All previous work examples should include the work dimensions and materials used.
- A budget for the proposed work that includes a breakdown of costs and materials.
- A plan describing how the artist will engage with the community
- An anticipated project schedule.

Attention should be paid to creating and fabricating designs that ensure long term weather resistance and minimal maintenance.

Submission Deadline:

The deadline for artist proposals will be due by close of business on **Friday October 11, 2024. Proposals must be submitted digitally via email to:**

1. Ms. Kate Brower, Design Planner, Baltimore City Recreation & Parks - kbrower@baltimorecity.gov

AND

2. Ms. Arlisa Anderson, Manager of Choice Neighborhood Initiative, Housing Authority of Baltimore City - arlisa.anderson@habc.org

If the proposal file is too large to attach to an email, the proposal file may be uploaded to a share folder for ease of access and shared with two emails listed above.

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Selection Process and Criteria

All submissions will be reviewed by a Working Committee composed of residents, the architect, art professionals, music historians, and city agency representatives from the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP), Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC), the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). A select number of Artists will be invited by the Working Committee to make a presentation of their proposal. The selection process and anticipated schedule is listed below.

Creative responses will be reviewed and scored against the following criteria: CREATIVITY (40%), COST (40%), & EXPERIENCE (20%). The artist will be required to consult with the project architects and Recreation and Parks project manager throughout the commission regarding design, use of materials, and installation. Correspondence and meetings with the general contractor will be necessary to coordinate on site work, material, and equipment storage.

Anticipated Project Schedule:

- September 10, 2024 – Call for Artists Issued
- ***October 11, 2024 – Artist Proposals are to be submitted digitally by email by the close of business day. No late submissions will be accepted.***
- November 2024 - Selected artists will be invited to present their proposals, methods, budget, and prior experience in a formal in person presentation to the Working Committee and to members of the public at a date to be determined.
- December 2024 – Working Committee conveys offer of commission to chosen artist or artists.
- January 2025 – Artist(s) to engage with community to discuss project and solicit input. The format of this community engagement will be discussed with the Working Committee who will assist with outreach.
- February 2025 – Draft sketch and work plan to be presented to the Working Committee for discussion and approval. This meeting will also be an open to members of the public.
- March 2025 – Final sketch and work plan to be approved by Working Committee. This meeting will also be open to members of the public.
- March -May 2025 – Artist(s) to undertake and install mural and crosswalk artwork.

Artist Resource List:

<https://www.amazon.com/Rhythm-Man-Changed-CULTURAL-BIOGRAPHIES/dp/0190055693>

<https://direct.mit.edu/daed/article/148/2/36/27288/You-Can-t-Dance-to-It-Jazz-Music-and-Its>

<https://sleepingbearpress.com/shop/show/52530>

<https://www.baltimorejazz.com/2023/08/baltimore-born-drummer-chick-webb-a-retrospective/>