

# Proposal for Chick Webb Rec Center Project Mural Masters, Inc

## **INTRODUCTION**

Please accept this application for either or both potential Chick Webb Recreation Center public art opportunities on behalf of the artist team Mural Masters Inc. We have a vast amount of experience in public art and a very strong interest in the Chick Webb Rec Center Public Arts Project. Mural Masters is firmly embedded in the Baltimore community.

Shawn James and Brian O'Rourke are the lead artists and represent Mural Masters Inc. We are a public and community arts team that has extensive experience with large scale public arts projects and working collaboratively with municipal organizations, private businesses, and community associations. We have worked with a variety of media within the public and private arts sector for a combined forty plus years.

Shawn James has overseen and managed hundreds of large-scale mural and public arts projects. He has worked for the Baltimore Office of Promotion and The Arts (BOPA) as the Community Arts Coordinator and the Director of the Baltimore Mural Program. During his time with BOPA, Shawn was the liaison between Baltimore City's arts districts, facilitated public arts grants, and was liaison and assistant facilitator of individual 1% for Art projects. Within five years he managed the creation of over 150 murals, public arts projects, and public arts initiatives within Baltimore City, while exponentially raising the amount of financial and social capital for the program, mural awareness, and Baltimore artists.

In 2003 Shawn James became the owner/operator of Mural Masters, Inc. (MMI), continuing his project/program management as well as expanding on his own public art creation. MMI has been commissioned for project management by BOPA, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Habitat for Humanity, Maryland Employees Credit Union, and St. Johns Properties to name a few.

This is on top of creating original public art works for almost every community in Baltimore City.

Brian O'Rourke is a public arts painter and owner of Supreme Nature Designs Studio. He has extensive experience with large scale murals and high detail aerosol creations. Brian has created numerous public and private paintings that have become city center pieces throughout the east coast.

## **MURAL EXPLANATION**

Mural Masters, Inc wants to provide an educational and welcoming experience to the entrance of the recreation center by applying an immersive augmented reality mural on the front facade. The neighborhood residents, rec center patrons, and employees will feel an increased sense of pride for their neighborhood. For visitors who pass by the mural on their way into your neighborhood they will feel welcomed and have a positive first impression.

Our mural concept is approximately 22' high by 50' wide and will be located in the center of the new wall construction. This is an initial concept that takes into consideration that some icons, color palette, and aesthetic components may change as we go into a deeper dialog with the larger community. Nevertheless, our approach will make the mural accessible, legible, and incorporate both pedestrian and automobile traffic.

The mural can be read from left to right, right to left, or from the center out. "Let's Get Together" was Chick Webb's first song with his band and the title alone says so much of what the Rec Center represents. Chick Webb is featured in the middle of the motif behind and surrounded by geometric shapes with vignettted images within them. The geometric shapes are of Webb's drum kit looking down from the top.

To the viewers left we have Webb's past, from his start, playing on steam boats, and becoming the "King of Swing". The dancing embodies Duke Ellington compliment, saying Chick Webb was a "dance drummer" and "painted pictures of dances with his drums", while highlighting Ella

Fitzgerald as Webb's protege and compatriot. To the viewer's right, the drum kit vignettes show some of the activities that the rec center offers such as basketball, swimming, and mentorship.

The lilies are a symbol of remembrance and growth. They pay homage to the memory and legacy of Chick Webb. He is on a backdrop of a shining sun which represents all the light he left in the community and his continue warmth that touches people today.

Overall the mural represents the inspiration that Chick Webb passed on to others. The same thing this community rec center does for the community wether its through sports, arts, or mentorship. The images flow from one to another, keeping the eye moving and the ideas interconnected.

Mural Masters will also work with Brand RX to incorporate an immersive augmented reality component to the mural. There will be a sign on or near the mural where pedestrians can use their phones to highlight a QR code. This QR code will send the viewer to a social media platform where they can view the mural through the lens of their phones or tablet. In doing so, aspects of the mural will come alive. Potentially the flowers will sway in the wind and or bloom. The sports players could be activated, Ella starts to sing, and music notes will fly around the viewer, all while a song from Chick Webb plays in the background. These are just a few examples of what could be possible with the AR component.

Overall the mural symbolizes community, growth, and prosperity, while the AR component provides an immersive experience. The mural will be more vivid than the rendering. The mural will also be viewable by passing cars and be read regardless of which direction traveled. We are open to aesthetic and narrative changes as we further our dialog with the community.

## **CROSSWALK EXPLANATION**

Mural Masters, Inc has submitted a placeholder proposal for the crosswalk. The design will be altered to fit the proposed space once completed. Though we have a preliminary design, we would like to directly engage with the community for input. We feel this will allow the community to

choose iconography that is tailored to East Baltimore and to the immediate neighborhood that the recreation center serves. The musical notes lead the patron from the parking lot to the building. The notes would be taken from a chosen Chick Webb song with a large logo in the middle. We would add color to the final piece to match the color scheme of the interior and the adjacent mural. This will make the crosswalk more vibrant, while the selected image could also be activated by the aforementioned augmented reality program. Patrons can click on the QR code and have the center piece spring to life and become three dimensional. As it stands, this would be a Pro Park and Thermoplastic crosswalk.

Thermoplastic is a durable pavement marking material used primarily for streetscape and traffic calming purposes on public roads and private properties. Available in 125-mil thicknesses, the typical 2 ft. x 2 ft sections of preformed thermoplastic sheets of interconnected material are easily lifted and positioned onto an asphalt or concrete surface for application with a propane heat torch or infrared heater.

## **Community Engagement**

Once Mural Masters is selected, in partnership with the City of Baltimore, we will engage residents throughout the entire mural process via regular community meetings, websites, and/or social media presence. We will coordinate with Park and Recs and the rec center to facilitate an initial introductory meeting and to plan any subsequent meetings with the broader community. These meetings will be an introduction to Mural Masters, our goals, and our preliminary concept. This mural explanation and editing process will included multiple opportunities for the community to give their feedback on the concept and allow input on the final design. As the mural gets painted we will post regular updates on your and our social media platforms.

## **Methods, Materials, and Maintenance**

Our methods for mural installation are straight forward. We will start by prepping the substrate by knocking down any dust or debris. Next we will

prime the entire area of the substrate where the mural will be installed using premium quality masonry primer/sealer. This will insure longevity and paint adhesion to the substrate. After the priming process, Mural Masters will blowout the background color field and project imagery and free hand draw the motif onto the wall.

Mural Masters always uses the highest quality materials available. We regularly use premium exterior latex acrylic paint from Nova Color or Sherwin Williams and Montana Gold aerosols.

Once all aspects of the installation are complete there will be no maintenance needed.