



January 14, 2022

The Honorable Board of Mayor & Selectmen
City of McComb City
City Hall
115 Third Street
McComb, MS 39648

RE: American Rescue Plan Funding Proposal

Dear Board of Mayor & Selectmen:

Please accept the attached American Rescue Plan Funding Proposal submitted to you by the McComb Arts & Entertainment District Coalition. The Coalition is a working committee formed by participants of the McComb Arts & Entertainment District project conceived by Pike School of Art – Mississippi as a part of our National Endowment for the Arts “Our Town” Grant.

The McComb Arts & Entertainment District Coalition is open to all community stakeholders and currently consists of representatives from the Black History Gallery, Cross Tech Cultural Center, McComb Main Street Association, Palace Foundation, Pike County Arts Council, Pike School of Art – Mississippi, State Street Junior Players, Southwest Mississippi Art Guild, Summit Street Unity Festival, and Y.U.N.G. Citizens.

The McComb Arts & Entertainment District Coalition has identified nine “shovel ready” projects that, once completed, would greatly improve our arts community infrastructure. A relatively small amount of the American Rescue Plan Funding coming to McComb could be the impetus to creating a thriving McComb Arts & Entertainment District, both for the benefit of our residents and to attract tourism. As projects from the proposal are put into motion, the Coalition will gather citizen input and involve community stakeholders, creating a powerful lever for community engagement and revitalization.

According to the National Governors Association, "The question of how to foster high-quality places is one of the most important in economic development today. By providing amenities, connectivity, and sense of place, public art and well designed public spaces can be part of the

answer." Economic benefits are not the only rewards that McComb would derive from vibrant places. Place making through the arts creates vibrant areas marked by their livability, quality of life, and creativity.

The fact that a coalition like this can come together demonstrates an unprecedented level of stakeholder engagement. We understand the immense responsibility the City of McComb Board of Mayor & Selectmen has in appropriating the American Rescue Plan Funding. We also understand how investing in the McComb Arts & Entertainment District may seem outside the traditional realm of infrastructure. But according to the report "Art as Infrastructure," published in 2018 by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, "Like libraries, parks and recreation centers themselves, artwork is part of civic infrastructure, understood as physical structures and spaces, as well as social processes of management and use that animate them. Programs offered in these spaces are part of the infrastructure that builds and supports relationships between community members."

Of the total of \$3,199,183 American Rescue Plan Funding, the nine projects we have identified would cost \$276,000 which represents 8.63% of the ARP funding. We appreciate you taking the time to consider the McComb Arts & Entertainment District Coalition's proposal to utilize a small portion of the American Rescue Plan Funding to greatly improve our arts community infrastructure and improve the quality of living for the community at large.

Thank you,

Jim Alford, Palace Foundation

Kev Brown, Y.U.N.G. Citizens

Torium Brown, Summit Street Unity Festival

Hilda Casin, Black History Gallery

Fern Crossley, Cross Tech Cultural Center

Jamie Hewitt, Palace Foundation

Kendal Miller, Pike School of Art – Mississippi

Calvin Phelps, Pike School of Art – Mississippi

Jason Van, Palace Foundation

Debbie Watkins, State Street Junior Players

Vickie Webb, McComb Main Street Association

Debbie Whittington, Southwest Mississippi Art Guild

American Rescue Plan Projects

1) Entry Ramp & ADA Compliance

The Black History Gallery is seeking funding to install a ramp and make other ADA Compliance improvements to the gallery to provide greater accessibility for the community.

2) Façade Grant Program

The McComb Main Street Association is seeking funding to create a Façade Grant program for Downtown McComb and the McComb Arts & Entertainment District.

3) Summit Street Beautification

The McComb Main Street Association is seeking funding to create a public art project for the beautification of Summit Street in the northern section of the McComb Arts & Entertainment District.

4) Theater Mural Preparation

Palace Foundation is seeking funding to prepare the theater wall facing North Front Street for a mural celebrating the history and culture of McComb.

5) State Street Theater Renovation

The Pike County Arts Council, through the efforts of Debbie Watkins, State Street Theater Manager and Director of the State Street Junior Players, is seeking funding to renovate the city-owned State Street Theater located in the heart of the McComb Arts & Entertainment District.

6) Bathroom Renovation & ADA Compliance

The Pike County Little Theater is seeking funding to renovate their bathroom and make other ADA Compliance improvements to provide greater accessibility for the community to the theater located in the heart of the McComb Arts & Entertainment District.

7) McComb Renaissance

Pike School of Art – Mississippi is seeking funding to install a series of murals on the city-owned parking garage on the 100 block of North Front Street in the heart of the McComb Arts & Entertainment District.

8) Public Art Mini Grant

Pike School of Art – Mississippi is seeking funding to create a competitive public art program for the City of McComb.

9) PSA-MS Gallery Renovation

Pike School of Art – Mississippi is seeking funding to renovate a portion of the City-owned property — formerly the McComb City Jail and the Pike County Juvenile Detention Center — located in the heart of the McComb Arts & Entertainment District at 100 Fifth Avenue.