



December 13, 2018

Mayor Jerry Smith  
City Council Members  
City of DeKalb  
400 S. Fourth St.  
DeKalb, IL 60115

Re: Egyptian Theatre TIF2 Funding  
135 N. Second Street

Dear Mayor Smith and City Council Members:

I am writing in support of TIF funding for the Egyptian Theatre's planned expansion and improvements. Sharp Architects Inc. has been working on design studies for the Egyptian Theatre since 2014. We have studied a broad range of projects from minor renovations to grand schemes and additions. Through this process we have learned a great deal about the needs of the Theatre, patrons, performers and staff. The Egyptian Theatre is an architectural gem which is rightly treasured by this community. It's also a facility which falls dramatically short on support spaces and features.

The concept we will bring to City Council on Dec. 18, 2018 is a modest addition that will greatly improve the experience of patrons to the Egyptian. Sharp Architects Inc. will lead the design team that will provide the design and engineering services for this project. This project has many benefits for the theatre and the wider community.

**HVAC IMPROVEMENTS:** There are two main benefits for the HVAC improvements.

1. **PROTECT THE BUILDING:** As architects, this issue is close to our hearts. Providing air conditioning for the existing building will dramatically improve the interior environment of the building and protect the architectural features of the structure. Most of the interior surfaces of the theatre are plaster. These include many of the plaster moldings and Egyptian motif details in the Lobby and Auditorium. The heat and humidity that these surfaces are subjected to cause the plaster to flake and crumble. Repair of these features is often labor intensive and expensive due to the craftsmanship required for it to properly to be done and the sheer height and location of the repair work.
2. **EXTEND THE CALENDAR:** Having this equipment will also allow the theatre to operate all year long and thereby increase revenue to the theatre. We also believe that it will increase usage in the spring and fall months which are currently only lightly scheduled.

**RESTROOM FACILITY EXPANSION:** The number of restroom facilities provided for the Public's use is woefully undersized for the size of the Auditorium. There is much anecdotal evidence that this issue directly influences patron's experience and likelihood to return for other performances at the Egyptian Theatre. The proposed addition provides additional fixtures as described below:

**EGYPTIAN THEATRE PUBLIC FIXTURE COUNT ANALYSIS:**

<b>FIRST FLOOR:</b>		<b>EXISTING</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>
<b>MEN</b>	TOILETS	3	<b>5</b>
	URINALS	3	<b>10</b>
	LAVATORIES	2	<b>6</b>
<b>WOMEN</b>	TOILETS	3	<b>16</b>
	LAVATORIES	2	<b>12</b>
<b>MEZZANINE LEVEL:</b>			
<b>MEN</b>	TOILETS	1	<b>2</b>
	URINALS	1	<b>5</b>
	LAVATORIES	1	<b>4</b>
<b>WOMEN</b>	TOILETS	2	<b>6</b>
	LAVATORIES	2	<b>4</b>

**EXPANDED CONCESSIONS:** Another feature is that we will be able to provide additional concession stations. Much like the restrooms, concession services are mostly used before the show and at intermission. There is a finite amount of time that patrons have to buy a drink, get some popcorn, or splurge on candy. With more stations the patrons' wait time will be reduced and more visitors will have time to make a purchase. Therefore, income will be increased to the theatre.

**IMPROVED FOYER SPACES:** We are all impressed by the two-story Lobby at the main doors of the theatre. We are fascinated by the Egyptian detailing of the Auditorium. We are unfortunately underwhelmed by the intervening Foyer spaces. This renovation will allow the First Floor and Mezzanine Foyers to be renovated to provide a seamless, stunning experience for visitors to the Egyptian Theatre.

**INCREASED STORAGE:** Although the public never sees these parts of the building, the additional storage being provided at both the Basement, First, and Mezzanine levels cannot be overstated. There currently is almost no storage room in this entire theatre. These new spaces will allow the theatre to better function and serve both patrons and performers.

All of these improvements together will help the Egyptian Theatre attract more performers and visitors to the theatre as a world class venue with a unique architectural history. What we are presenting with this proposal is a preliminary design and much more study needs to be done, but we can see the potential for the theatre and for the community. Approval of these funds is critical to completion of this project.

On a personal note, as owner of Sharp Architect Inc. this project is important to our firm. I grew up in this community. My husband and I raised our children in this community. My firm is located in downtown DeKalb, one block west of the theatre. Our home is seven blocks south of the Egyptian in a historic home on South Second Street. I still get teary-eyed when I think of our 6-year-old daughter singing a solo for the Lincoln Elementary Holiday program. Sharp Architect Inc. is local.

Approval of these funds will help my firm continue to thrive and share our expertise on a project that we're very excited about and is dear to our hearts. Approval of these funds will allow the Egyptian Theatre to thrive and to grow for the next ninety years. I encourage you to invest in the Egyptian Theatre and in the City of DeKalb with this TIF fund grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa F. Sharp  
President, Sharp Architects Inc.

Cc: Alex Nerad, Exec. Director of the Egyptian Theatre