

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council**

**August 24, 2021**

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**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON PROGRAM TO INTERPRET THE MURALS ON THE WRMC AUDITORIUM AND COLISEUM AND RECOMMEND FUNDING FOR PROJECT COMPLETION**

## Follow Up

The purpose of the Informal Report presented on August 2, 2021 was to provide an update on the continuing process associated with developing contextual interpretation of the Will Rogers Memorial Center Murals and to make a recommendation for funding of the project. During the Work Session, there was a request to provide visuals for a better understanding of the project.

Below is a photo showing the entire Auditorium mural. The mural traces the settlement and industrial development of the West and is divided into six scenes, each representing a period in Texas history.



The scene that created community concern in 2019 is shown below. It is this scene that caused some community members to ask for the removal of the mural.



Following three public hearings, it was determined that instead of removing the mural, a method to provide historical context should be explored.

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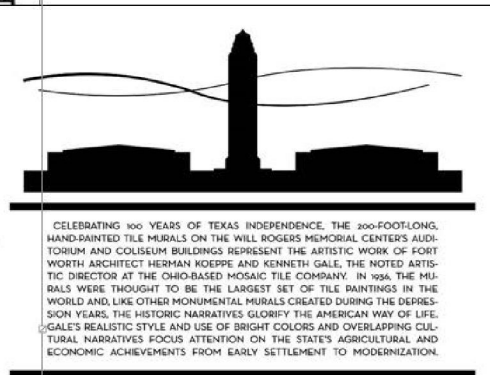
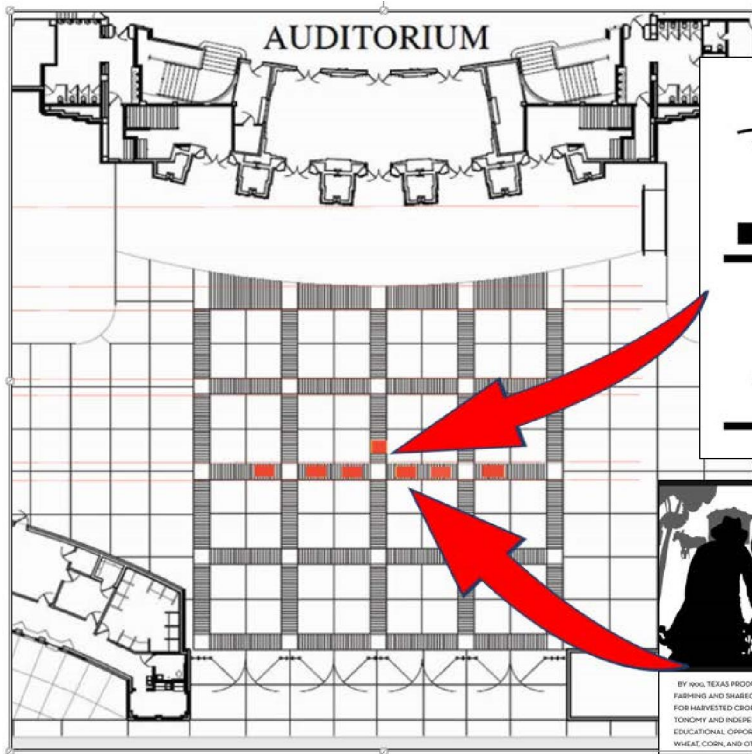
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The Advisory Committee’s recommendation, presented to the Art Commission, includes seven bronze plaques installed in the brick pattern on the plaza in front of the Auditorium and the Coliseum: one introductory plaque and six plaques corresponding to the six scenes viewable in each mural. Each of the six plaques features a silhouette of a specific scene on the mural with text descriptive of the time period represented and themes explored in the imagery. (Although text is presented in the following slides, that text is only a representation and has not been finalized.)



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF TEXAS INDEPENDENCE, THE 300-FOOT-LONG, HAND-PAINTED TILE MURALS ON THE WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL CENTERS AUDITORIUM AND COLISEUM BUILDINGS REPRESENT THE ARTISTIC WORK OF FORT WORTH ARCHITECT HERMAN KOEPE AND KENNETH GALE, THE NOTED ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AT THE OHIO-BASED MOSAIC TILE COMPANY. IN 1934, THE MURALS WERE THOUGHT TO BE THE LARGEST SET OF TILE PAINTINGS IN THE WORLD AND, LIKE OTHER MONUMENTAL MURALS CREATED DURING THE DEPRESSION YEARS, THE HISTORIC NARRATIVES GLORIFY THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. GALE'S REALISTIC STYLE AND USE OF BRIGHT COLORS AND OVERLAPPING CULTURAL NARRATIVES FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE STATE'S AGRICULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS FROM EARLY SETTLEMENT TO MODERNIZATION.

26" H x 31" W



BY 1900, TEXAS PRODUCED ALMOST ONE THIRD OF AMERICAN COTTON AND AGRICULTURE LED THE STATE'S ECONOMIC GROWTH. TENANT FARMING AND SHARECROPPING SYSTEMS WHICH ALLOWED WORKERS TO FARM RENTED LAND FROM LARGE LANDOWNERS IN EXCHANGE FOR HARVESTED CROPS, BARELY ADVANCED AFRICAN AMERICANS OR POOR WHITES TO FARM OWNERSHIP BUT IT DID PROVIDE MORE AUTONOMY AND INCOME. AS THE WORLD WARRIERS AND MANY SHARECROPPERS MOVED TO LARGER TOWNS FOR BETTER WORK AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. BY 1920, FARMING BECAME MORE MECHANIZED WITH OVER TWENTY-FIVE MILLION ACRES OF COTTON, WHEAT, CORN, AND OTHER CULTIVATED CROPS DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY.

31" H x 48" W

Following further development of layouts and text for the Coliseum mural, the Advisory Committee will present their recommendations to the Art Commission for approval and the Commission will then conduct a community input gathering process. Once the final design and text have been approved, the Art Commission’s recommendation for plaque design and interpretation will be presented to the City Council for implementation.

If you have any questions or concerns related to this effort, please contact Michael Crum, Director of the Public Events Department, at 817-392-2501.