

City of Fort Worth, Texas

# Mayor and Council Communication

**DATE:** 10/19/21

**M&C FILE NUMBER:** M&C 21-0820

**LOG NAME:** 25ARPA-WRMC MURAL PLAQUES

## **SUBJECT**

(CD 7) Approve Allocation of \$300,000.00 in American Rescue Plan Act Funding and Reallocation of \$100,000.00 in Public Events Capital Funds and \$35,000.00 in Public Art Funds for Public Art Interpretive Plaques at Will Rogers Memorial Center, Adopt the Attached Appropriation Ordinances, and Amend the Fiscal Years 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Plan

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Approve the allocation of up to \$300,000.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act funds, Subtitle M (Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds) for a transfer to capital for the fabrication and installation of fourteen (14) plaques associated with each of the two (2) murals on the auditorium and coliseum at Will Rogers Memorial Center, in collaboration with the Fort Worth Public Art Commission;
2. Adopt the attached appropriation ordinance increasing estimated receipts and appropriations in the Grants Capital Projects Federal Fund, in the amount of \$300,000.00, from transfers from the Grants Operating Federal Fund, for the purpose of funding the Fort Worth Public Art Collection Management - Will Rogers Memorial Center Murals project (City Project No. 102933);
3. Adopt the attached appropriation ordinance, and amend the Fiscal Years 2022-2026 Public Events Capital Improvement Plan, by adjusting estimated receipts and appropriations in the Public Events Capital Fund, by increasing the Fort Worth Public Art Collection Management - Will Rogers Memorial Center Murals project (City Project No. 102933) by \$100,000.00 and decreasing the Will Rogers Memorial Center- Repair and Renovation programmable project (City Project No. P00054) by the same amount; and
4. Adopt the attached appropriation ordinance adjusting receipts and appropriations in the Specially Funded Projects Fund, by increasing the Fort Worth Public Art Collection Management-Will Rogers Memorial Center Murals project (City project 102933) by \$35,000.00 and decreasing the FWPA Collection Management programmable project (City Project P00056) by the same amount.

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## **DISCUSSION:**

This Mayor and Council Communication (M&C) allocates a total of \$435,000.00 in funding for the Fort Worth Public Arts Collection Management (FWPA CM)- Will Rogers Memorial Center (WRMC) Murals project that interprets the six (6) scenes associated with each of the two (2) murals

on the auditorium and coliseum at Will Rogers Memorial Center located at 3401 West Lancaster Avenue.

The bulk of the funding - \$300,000.00 - is proposed to come from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. An additional \$100,000.00 would come from a reallocation of Public Events Department capital dollars provided from the FY2022-2026 Capital Improvement Program; therefore the actions in this M&C will amend the Fiscal Years 2022-2026 Capital improvement Program as approved in connection with Ordinance 25073-09-2021. Finally a previous appropriation of \$35,000.00 for the Public Art Annual Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2021 (M&C 20-0678) will be adjusted to convert the WRMC Murals (City Project No. 102933) from a programmable project to convert into a static capital project. This action is needed as the scope of this project differs from that of the current programmable project.

Noted Fort Worth architect Wyatt C. Hedrick designed the auditorium, coliseum and tower for the Texas Centennial celebration in 1936. The auditorium and coliseum were adorned with two, 200-foot-long hand painted tile friezes in a style characteristic of other murals created throughout the United States in the 1930s. The murals were designed by architect Herman Koeppel and Kenneth Gale, artistic director at the Zanesville, Ohio, Mosaic Tile Company. The auditorium frieze traces the settlement and industrial development of the west, while coliseum scenes depict the romance of the range and the various settlers who shaped the cultural heritage of the southwest. The historical subjects depicted in the two large tile murals were selected by W.J. Hammond, who was a Fort Worth City councilman (later, Mayor) and head of the Department of History at Texas Christian University.

In September 2019, the Mayor's office met with City and Arts Council staff and determined that the City's advisory body, the Fort Worth Art Commission, should gather community input and make recommendations in response to the citizen's concern about the portrayal of African Americans on the tile mural on the auditorium.

At the October 7, 2019 special called meeting of the Fort Worth Art Commission, the City's Historic Preservation Officer, Murray Miller provided historic context of the mural in relationship to its creation and the architecture. Following the presentation it was the consensus of the Commission to hold a public hearing to gather citizen input on how to move forward. After three (3) public input meetings, community members supported keeping the mural intact and providing some form of interpretation of the murals. The following January 2020, the Commission approved recommendations, stating, "The Fort Worth Public Art Commission has determined that while the citizens' concerns were based upon possible misinterpretation of the imagery along with the negative response to the stylistic approach of the 1930s, it is vital that the City provide educational interpretation for the benefit of citizens and visitors who view the mural now and into the future." One of the recommendations was to convene an advisory committee to develop an approach that would allow visitors to better understand the historic perspective. The advisory committee met for the first time on February 27, 2020.

Advisory Committee Members:

- Estrus Tucker, Chair, Art Commission
- Leslie Thompson, Art Commission
- Maggie Adler, Art Commission
- Estella Williams, President, NAACP FW/Tarrant County
- Blake Moorman, NAACP FW/Tarrant County
- Frederick Cowlah, Artist / TROOF Graphics, LLC

- Jennifer Casler Price, Kimbell Art Museum
- Kevin Kemp, Assistant Public Events Director – Will Rogers Memorial Center
- Chris Harmon, Acting Capital Projects Manager – Public Events Department
- Justin Newhart, Historic Preservation Officer, CFW
- Michelle Gutt, Director, Communications & Public Engagement, CFW
- Martha Peters, Director, Fort Worth Public Art
- Jenny Conn, Public Art Collection Manager, FWPA
- Michael Asbill, Community Engagement, FWPA

The Art Commission recommended a project budget of \$35,000.00 for design work for interpretation of the auditorium mural, temporary signage, and print materials in the FY2021 Public Art Annual Work Plan. Elements of Architecture, LLC was contracted in December 2020 to provide final design and layouts, recommendations for materials, and a preliminary budget for the interpretation plan. Arts Council staff has provided research and drafted interpretive text.

On July 19, 2021, the advisory committee's recommendation for comprehensive interpretation at the WRMC auditorium mural was presented to the Fort Worth Art Commission. The recommendation 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.

Following approval of this M&C, Fort Worth Public Art will re-engage with Elements of Architecture, LLC to complete layouts for the Will Rogers murals while Arts Council staff drafts interpretive text, which will be submitted to the advisory commission. Following the advisory committee's review of final interpretation, they will make their recommendation to the Art Commission and 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 City Council for implementation.

As indicated above, adjustments will be made to previous appropriations to allocate \$35,000.00 in Public Art funding for design, temporary signage and print materials and \$100,000.00 of capital dollars of the Public Events Department for the permanent signage. Staff recommends the \$300,000.00 balance of the total \$435,000.00 project cost be allocated from funds provided to the City under Subtitle M (Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds) of ARPA as discussed in more detail below.

The Fort Worth City Council will have final approval of the Art Commission's recommendation concerning the design and narrative of the interpretive plaques.

## **ALLOCATION OF ARPA SUBTITLE M FUNDING**

ARPA allows local governments to invest in tourism-related programs to revive their visitor economies with Subsection 603(c)(1)(A) of Title VI of the Social Security Act (added by ARPA) specifically authorizing aid to "impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality." The FWPA CM – WRMC Murals project assists in the on-going recovery effort to strengthen the physical and economic health of the community and as such was determined a be a qualified

priority by City Management for ARPA funding as approved by the City Council in M&C 21-0445 on June 22, 2021.

The ARPA funding must be committed by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026. Staff foresees no issues with this project meeting that timeline.

The following chart reflects the current status for allocation of the City's ARPA funding under Subtitle M, including all M&Cs on the October 19, 2021 Council Agenda:

**M&Cs**

**Total CFW ARPA Subtitle M Funding**    \$173,745,090.00 21-0445

**Allocations Approved To-Date**    \$ 6,000,000.00 25ARPA-VFW-TDG

**Pending Allocation**                    \$ 1,000,000.00 13ARPA- ADMINISTRATION

**Pending Allocation**                    \$ 3,000,000.00 17ARPA ALLOCATION CDFI FRIENDLY AMERICA

**Pending Allocation**                    \$ 4,245,533.42 17ARPA ALLOCATIONS EVANS & ROSEDALE REDEVELOPMENT

**Pending Allocation**                    \$ 2,400,000.00 17ARPA ALLOCATIONS UNTHSC TECHSTARS

**Pending Allocation**                    \$ 10,100,000.00 19ARPA ALLOCATIONS TO HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES PROJECTS

**Pending Allocation**                    \$ 300,000.00 25ARPA-WRMC MURAL PLAQUES (This M&C)

**Remaining Unallocated Balance**                    \$146,699,556.58

A Form 1295 is not required because: This M&C does not request approval of a contract with a business entity.

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**FISCAL INFORMATION / CERTIFICATION:**

The Director of Finance certifies that funds are available in the Grants Operating Federal Fund and as approved in the Fiscal Year 2022 capital budget appropriation in the WRMC Minor Renovations & Repair programmable project within the Public Events Capital Fund, and that upon approval of the above recommendations, adoption of the attached appropriation ordinance and allocation from the American Rescue Plan Act, funds will be available in the Specially Funded Projects Fund, and Grants Cap Projects Federal Fund for the FWPA CM - WRMC Murals Interp project. Prior to an expenditure being incurred, the Planning and Data Analytics Department has the responsibility of verifying the availability of funds. Grant funds will be transferred to the Grants Cap Projects Federal Fund for the project on a reimbursement basis.

**Submitted for City Manager's Office by:** Jay Chapa 5804

**Originating Business Unit Head:** Michael Crum 2501

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Expedited