



**SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT
COMMISSION
HISTORICAL MARKER RECOMMENDATION**

PETITIONER: W PROJECTS, Erin Wessling
FILE No.: 22-000965-PA
LOCATION: GWINNETT STREET/STILES AVENUE
DATE: April 7, 2022

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval for Phases 2 and 3 for the pedestrian walkway mural for the city property located along Gwinnett Street and Stiles Avenue. The Water Works Site Pedestrian Walkway mural will be painted directly onto the asphalt and concrete of the Water Works site which is adjacent to the Arena and developing Canal District Trail.

This commissioned artwork of five artist teams will be the largest asphalt mural in Chatham County, with each of the five murals at 120ft x 20ft or approx. 2,400 sq ft.

CONTEXT:

As per the applicant:

“With the completion of the first approved section of the mural by the McGregor group in February of 2022, the continued work of the following two murals will occur throughout the Spring of 2022. The Adolfo and Hebermehl groups will continue to fuse their designs into the Pedestrian Walkway, installing designs based on the natural environment of the community and the people who have lived throughout it.”

FINDINGS:

On November 4, 2021, approved the first phase of mural installation [21-005663-PA].

The following standards from the Historic Site and Monument Commission Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art apply:

Mural Policy. Statement of Purpose: *The purpose of regulating murals is to ensure the continued visual aesthetic of the community, by establishing a process for compatible artistic and creative expression through murals in appropriate locations and designs. The review criteria seek to establish guidance as to the compatibility and appropriateness of the theme, location and design of murals, with minimal intrusion into artistic expression and/or the substantive, personal or social/political expressive content of the artwork. Murals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*

Theme.

The theme of the mural should be respectful of the greater context of the community, including historic and socio-cultural contexts.

Board Recommendation – W. Projects, Erin Wessling

File No. **22-000965-PA**

Date: April 7, 2022

Page 2

The content of a mural is protected under the laws of free speech. The mural must comply with Georgia obscenity laws, as defined by O.C.G.A. § 16-12-80, and cannot depict sexual conduct or sexual explicit nudity, as defined on O.C.G.A. § 36-60-3, nor advertise any activity illegal under the laws of Georgia or the United States.

The standards are met.

Per the applicant, the theme of the mural is:

“Given its importance to the site and its neighboring communities, the artwork should encompass the theme of Savannah’s Pathways which can be taken from physical pathways such as roads, nature trails, and man-made paths, as well as the structures, natural and/or man-made, that line those physical pathways utilizing familiar landmarks and flora or fauna native to the Savannah Area. The artwork on each section of the mural will consist of flowing gestural lines or “paths” that connect figures and flora into one body, threading a thoroughfare to our collective path, present and future. Visitors and art enthusiasts alike will share the experience of seeing themselves in the works as well as marveling in the colorways, the formal aspects of the art itself, and the flowing shapes and interconnected lines. This work is designed to create an endless number of paths within the pathway.”

Location.

The installation of a mural should complement and enhance the building and be incorporated architecturally into the façade.

The location of the mural on the building should not cover or detract from significant or character-defining architectural features.

The mural is not on the Water Works building; however, it is intended to complement the building’s surrounding site and context. The standards are met.

Murals should enhance and complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Murals should not be located in an area which may cause undue distraction to drivers thereby creating a safety hazard.

The standards are met. The mural will be respectful to the greater context of the neighborhood and, because it is generally internal to the Water Works site, will not cause undue distraction to drivers.

Generally murals should be located in mixed use and commercial areas.

The standard is met. The mural is located within a mixed-use area.

Neighborhood support or opposition should be taken into consideration.

Board Recommendation – W. Projects, Erin Wessling

File No. **22-000965-PA**

Date: April 7, 2022

Page 3

The standard is met. The public was notified. No response was received.

However, per the applicant:

“During the RFP submission period an online Webinar was held for the public to answer any questions and expand on the concepts of both the mural pathway and the entire Water Works site activation. In addition, the Arena Community Task Force which is comprised of several presidents and active members of several West Wise Neighborhood Associations as well as Alderman Lanier, was presented the mural project concept, and chose the theme of the mural itself “Savannah Pathways.” Several of the chosen artist groups will be holding charettes with neighboring communities to present their designs and gain feedback and engagement.”

Murals should be sited far enough away from other murals as to allow the visitor proper appreciation of each individually and not cause visual clutter to the block face.

This application is for Phases 2 and 3 consisting of two murals

Murals are not permitted on unpainted historic materials.

The treatment and application of murals located on any historic material should follow all relevant Preservation Briefs as published by the National Park Service Technical Preservation Services.

The standards do not apply as the mural is not on the historic Water Works building.

Design.

The scale of the mural should be appropriate to the building and the site.

The mural should be appropriate within the context of the surrounding neighborhood.

The mural should be an original design.

The standards are met. The mural is large, which is appropriate as this is a large site. The mural is an original design and is appropriate within the context of the neighborhood.

Paint utilized should be of superior quality and intended for exterior use. Generally reflective, neon, and fluorescent paints should not be used.

If intended to be permanent, the mural should have a weatherproof and vandalism-resistant coating.

The proposed materials are:

- Behr Premium Tinted concrete paint with primer
- Behr White concrete base paint and paint tint

Board Recommendation – W. Projects, Erin Wessling

File No. **22-000965-PA**

Date: April 7, 2022

Page 4

- High quality exterior Modern Masters acrylic theme paint
- Exterior Water Based House Paint over top of Exterior Primer
- H&C SHIELD-CRETE Acrylic Clear Glaze Coat
- H&C COLORTOP Water-Based Solid Color Concrete Stain

Staff requests additional information regarding weatherproof and vandalism-resistant coating.

If other, non-paint materials, are proposed to be used, their lifespan should be considered and incorporated into the removal plan, if temporary.

No non-paint materials are proposed.

Artist Qualifications.

The artist should have completed projects of similar size and scale in the public arena and be able to provide appropriate documentation.

The artist should have an excellent reputation and be able to provide verifiable references attesting to the quality of work.

The artist should be able to provide images or samples of existing similar monuments or works of art.

The artist should be able to demonstrate the ability to meet the proposed timeframe.

There are four artist teams each led by experienced mural artists; the four mural artists are Adolfo, Amiri, Brian McGregor, and Hebermehl. Past work was provided for the selected mural artists; these artists were selected through an RFP (Request for Proposals) process; they were selected by a group of community members and public art enthusiasts within Savannah.

Per the applicant:

Timeframe for Mural 2 will be, upon approval, throughout April 2022, with Mural 3 taking place following the completion of Enmarket Arena parking garage slated for May 2022.

Funding.

Budget. *The Mayor and Aldermen do not fund new markers, monuments, or works of art. The applicant is fully responsible for funding the design, construction, installation, and any necessary landscaping, paving, or lighting involved with a new marker, monument, or work of art.*

The City is funding the project.

Public Notice:

As required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners, and the neighborhood association, within 200 feet of the subject property. A sign was posted on the property fifteen days prior to the meeting.

The standard is met. No comments were received from the public.

Board Recommendation – W. Projects, Erin Wessling

File No. **22-000965-PA**

Date: April 7, 2022

Page 5

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Prior to the meeting the petitioner had satisfied Staff’s condition of ensuring that mural has weatherproof or vandalism resistant coating.

RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL:

The Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for Phase 2 and # for the pedestrian walkway mural for the city property located along Gwinnett Street and Stiles Avenue, as requested, to be docketed on a City Council agenda because the proposed work meets the Master Plan and Guidelines.

DocuSigned by:
Kristopher Monroe April 7, 2022
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Mr. Kristopher Monroe, Chairman **Date**
Historic Site and Monument Commission

DocuSigned by:
Melanie Wilson April 7, 2022
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Melanie Wilson, Executive Director **Date**
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

DocuSigned by:
Olivia Arfuso April 7, 2022
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Leah G. Michalak, Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation **Date**
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

MW: LGM: MG