



Legislation Text

File #: 24-2200, Version: 1

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 25, 2024

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: JAMES SPENGLER, DIRECTOR, RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration and Approval of Accepting a Gift of the Public Artwork *Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies* from the Artist Olalekan Jeyifous and Gifting the Artwork to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for Placement at Braddock Road Metro Station.

ISSUE:

Consideration and approval of accepting a gift of the public artwork *Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies* from the artist Olalekan Jeyifous and gifting the artwork to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for placement at Braddock Road Metro Station.

RECOMMENDATION:

That City Council: (1) Accept the gift of *Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies* from Olalekan Jeyifous; and (2) Gift *Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies* to Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) for placement at Braddock Road Metro Station.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2018, the Alexandria Commission for the Arts approved Olalekan Jeyifous as the artist for the second temporary public art project in the Site See Series at Waterfront Park which opened in March 2020. Olalekan's artwork *Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies* was inspired by Alexandria's rich and complicated industrial and merchant history. In its early history, Alexandria evolved from a village of farms and plantations to a prosperous port town. Once home to one of the largest domestic slave markets in the country, Alexandria became a major center for shipping and manufacturing and is now a vibrant urban destination with historic charm.

The artwork consists of four powder-coated metal profiles embedded with iconography that pertain to four of

the major commercial industrial enterprises that Alexandria was known for: flour, tobacco, railways, and armory.

The exhibition of the artworks in 2020 was impacted by the global Covid-19 pandemic with a delayed opening and limited opportunities to gather on site to experience the work but was featured by national publications including Architectural Digest and Forbes.

After the installation ended, the four sculptures were temporarily re-sited near Old Town Pool (1609 Cameron Street) while on loan from the artist until a more permanent location could be identified. The site at Old Town Pool is expected to be unavailable due to upcoming construction within the next 2-5 years.

DISCUSSION:

In 2023, the Potomac Yard Metro Station became the first metro station in Alexandria to include public art. After the successful collaboration with WMATA Public Art, they inquired about whether *Wrought, Knit, Labors, Legacies* would be available to relocate to Braddock Road Metro Station. Staff reached out to Jeyifous to share the idea, which he endorsed.

To facilitate the installation of the artworks at Braddock Road Metro, the City is requested to accept the gift of the artwork from the artist and subsequently donate the artwork to WMATA.

While a final location has not yet been determined, potential locations within Braddock Road Metro have been identified (Attachment 3).

As part of the conditions of the donation to WMATA the artwork needs to remain within the City of Alexandria limits and cannot be relocated without written approval from the City and the City would have right of first refusal to reclaim the artwork if WMATA no longer wanted it.

The City of Alexandria will facilitate the delivery of the artwork to the new location including cleaning and repairing the artwork. WMATA will be responsible for site preparation to accept the artwork. The City of Alexandria will also commission Olalekan Jeyifous to design a new version of the mural for the new site, which may be used at the Metro Station as a vertical element, subject to approval and further funding by WMATA.

At their meeting on April 16, 2024 the Alexandria Commission for the Arts reviewed the proposal and has recommended that City Council accept the gift from the artist and gift the artwork to WMATA for placement at Braddock Road Metro Station.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact is estimated to be \$12,000 to have the artwork cleaned and repaired and then transported to the new location at Braddock Road Metro Station. The City will also pay \$5,000 to commission Olalekan Jeyifous to redesign the original mural for vertical placement at Braddock Road Metro Station.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Gift agreement from Olalekan Jeyifous - DRAFT
2. Gift agreement with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) - DRAFT
3. Map of possible art placement locations at Braddock Road Metro Station

STAFF:

Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
James Spengler, Director, Recreation Parks & Cultural Activities

Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities