More locations, artists announced in Mural Central project

No matter which way you travel Central Avenue between 26th and 28th avenues NE, you’ll see fresh murals. By now, we’re all familiar with the enormous mural on the north side of the Eastside Food Cooperative at 2551 Central Avenue painted by Four Story Collective and Creatives After Curfew. (We would love to have a nod to the Arts District at all major entry points. This is a great start.)

The newest piece is on the south side of 2000 Central. From a news release: 'The Mural Central collaboration brings artists and local business owners together to install murals in the Central Avenue Cultural District.'

Central is a project that brings artists and business together to enhance the vibrancy of the Central Avenue Cultural District through artistic storytelling. This unique collaboration will result in seven initial mural installations between 26th Avenue and 18th Avenue during the summer months of 2022.

Artists were selected from over fifty responses to a Request for Qualifications released in late winter. Artists were asked to submit portfolios and make connections to Northeast Minneapolis. Murals will be produced by local artists, members of corridor adjacent neighborhoods, and students from Edison High School’s IB Arts program.

Selected artists and business/property owners were then matched with a variety of factors including artist medium and expertise, mural surfaces and the potential scale of the project, as well as alignment with the business owner’s vision.

Witt Siasoco, Leslie Barlow, Hibaq Ibrahim, Martiza Thomer, Jordan Hamilton, Alex Smith, Silent Fox, Maiya Lea Hartman, Reggae LeFlore, Noah Lawrence Hold- er, Philipo Dyauli, Bo Young Anh, Jordyn Brennan, Blafra & Wundr, Gustavo Lira, Jon King, and Viktor Ypez are the artists collaborating with Central Avenue business partners Eastside Food Co-op, Football Pizza, Recovery Bike, Central Avenue Liquors, Momo Sushi, The Mill, Cornerstone Studios and Pillar For- um Cafe.

Mural Central is funded by a grant from the City of Minneapolis Great Streets Business District program, with supplemental financial support from local businesses. The project is administered and supported by the Northeast Minneapolis Cham- ber, Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA) and Public Functionary. Read more about the partners at northeasteastminneapolisartsdistrict.org.

(Mural photos by Margo Ashmore)

2040 Plan halted, what’s next?

by Josh Blanc

A recent lawsuit stopped the im- plementation of Minneapolis’ 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and it’s not clear yet whether officials will con- test the ruling or determine the plan’s environmental impacts – the curve ball that this suit threw. In ei- ther case, it’ll take time.

The plan’s intent, in part, was to promote denser, therefore walkabil- ity and less dependence on cars. But it also emphasized accommo- dating multi-family rental housing, which works against another priori- ty, said Carol Becker in a July 6 pub- lished in the Star Tribune newspa- per June 20, 2022. More of a private citizen, served from 2006 to 2021 on the city’s Board of Estimate and Taxa- tion, and has worked as an analyst for governments including the city. She suggests (pre-varioucs here) that the pandemic and the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd have changed major assumptions about the city and what should be import- ant in society’s interest, a plan based “on reality” is needed. For example, home ownership, not rental, is a key wealth-building tool that should be made more, not less, available to people of color.

Becker writes: “The existing 2040 Plan promises the city will grow by one-third over the next 20 years, more than three times as much as the Metropolitan Council projects. It is absurd to think that a fully built city would grow that fast, and that bad assumption drives other bad policies. The new plan needs to be based on accommodating 8.5% more people over 20 years, as the Met Council projects.” We agree, this warrants a closer look.

Before the lawsuit, Northeast Minneapolis Arts District represen- tatives started working with City Council Members Elliott Payne and Michael Rainville and city staff to mitigate the potential effects of the 2040 Plan on industrial land now in use for the arts. We believe they agree in principle that existing arts buildings should be preserved, but we still fear that existing arts buildings and businesses will be squeezed out by housing being built in too-close proximity.

City staff have stated that land zoned “production mixed use” is targeted for housing development. The Northeast hopes we would easily agree with having a (small) percent- age of each new development’s space being designated for makers. We’ve offered some nuanced ideas that we hope will help everyone.