

A Resolution Regarding Central Avenue Art Walk Initiative

Date: December 15, 2025

Motion: Moved by: Seth Stattmiller Seconded by: Luke Van Santen

WHEREAS; MnDOT will be reconstructing Central Avenue NE (TH 65) from Broadway Street (CSAH 66) to 26th Avenue in 2028; and,

WHEREAS; The area of concern is the border of America's best Arts District¹, The Northeast Minneapolis Arts District; and,

WHEREAS; No other city in the United States can create such a distinct and impactful art space; and,

WHEREAS; According to the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Action Plan (NEMAAP), Northeast lacks large-scale gathering spaces, "specifically Central Avenue, affords no reason for people to be out and about in the evenings, after most businesses have closed," spaces that "bring people together for conviviality and shared experience,"; and,

WHEREAS; The NEMAAP goes on to say, "There is also a need for a gathering space for artists' use." Of such places, surveyed artists spoke "in glowing terms, discussing how the gathering place provides them with opportunities for sociability and collaboration that had been missing." "The ideal way to have a central gathering space – for artists and residents and visitors – is to build one."; and,

WHEREAS; The "Making Central Avenue Great" plan expounds on this idea. It acknowledges that "every community needs a center for its public life: a place we go to see people and to be seen." To meet this need, the plan proposes: "Central Avenue be enhanced for walking from activity node to activity node."; and,

WHEREAS; one of the objectives of the NEMAAP is to "Establish series of cultural events involving the performing and visual arts on streets within the Northeast Arts District,"; and,

WHEREAS; the goals of the NEMAAP are to "Create a cluster of attractions within walkable distance that encourage pedestrian traffic," and "Encourage the development of a vibrant business district in Northeast Minneapolis,"; and,

WHEREAS; the NEMAAP finds that Central Ave does not have "a critical mass of attractions within walking distance," and "Northeast is not a walkable, pedestrian-oriented community,"; and,

WHEREAS; city planning documents designate that commercial corridors, "must be either pedestrian-oriented now or progressing towards it,"; and,

¹ USA Today, Best Arts District, (2015, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024),
<https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/northeast-minneapolis-arts-district-minneapolis-minnesota/>

WHEREAS; The Art Walk would create a significant draw for a Minneapolis Cultural Corridor; and,

WHEREAS; This would increase the economic impact on the Central Ave business district and the greater Minneapolis Arts community; and,

WHEREAS; The Art Walk would make Central Ave significantly more pedestrian friendly; and,

WHEREAS; Public art has been shown to reduce crime; and,

WHEREAS; Engaging streets create driver awareness and calm traffic; and,

WHEREAS; There is significant local support for the Art Walk in this location; and,

WHEREAS; Creating space for the Art Walk could be accomplished without sacrificing any other major elements of the current MnDOT plans (drive lanes, turn lane, bus lane, bike lanes, parking); and,

WHEREAS; The Northeast Minneapolis Arts District organization will manage the Art Walk; and,

WHEREAS; The intended lifespan of the MnDOT project is 50 years or more. Due to the nature of this 50 year improvement the proposed changes to incorporate the Art Walk vision represent a once in a generation opportunity; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED;

The Hennepin County Active Transportation Committee supports the creation of the Central Avenue Art Walk through the inclusion of an 8' wide sidewalk to be combined with a 9' wide "boulevard" area or amenity zone along the entire Central Ave border of the Arts District (Broadway St to 26th Ave) on the west side of the street for the placement of public art, the preservation of existing trees, and to accommodate regular street markets. Furthermore, the Committee supports the inclusion of 15' x 15' art pads at each of the four corners of both Central and Lowry as well as Central and Broadway for the future addition of large-scale gateways to the Arts District.