

Memorandum

TO: City Council
FROM: David Yang , Staff Engineer
DATE: August 3, 2026
SUBJECT: Approve artwork for Highway 96 tunnel mural
ITEM NUMBER: 10.b
SECTION: GENERAL BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

To approve resolution 26-65 approving the artwork for the Highway 96 tunnel mural.

INTRODUCTION

Gallery 96 has hired two artists, Lili Lennox and Sara Herman, to design the artwork for the Highway 96 tunnel mural. City council approval of the artwork is required to proceed with installing the mural.

DISCUSSION

Gallery 96 and the Bikeways & Trails Committee successfully secured grant funding from the Shoreview Community Foundation and the Ramsey-Washington County Metro Watershed District, with additional support from the City of Shoreview, for the design and installation of a mural. The mural will be installed in the tunnel under Highway 96, located between the Community Center lower parking lot and Snail Lake. The tunnel is a highly valued community asset that allows pedestrians and bicyclists to travel between the Community Center, Commons Park, and the parks and trail systems south of Highway 96.

With the funding secured, a Call for Artist(s) was put out by Gallery 96 in April of 2026. Two artists, Lili Lennox and Sara Herman, were ultimately selected for the project out of 41 applicants. Lili and Sara have close to 20 years of experience painting together. They both started their painting careers painting backdrops and scenery for theaters. Since then, they have completed projects throughout Minnesota and Iowa, including in Chicago and Niagara Falls. Lili and Sara will work with community volunteers to paint the mural. Power washing, priming and anti-graffiti applications will be completed by city staff and a contractor, Painting by Nakasone.

Murals are known to add value to communities by transforming overlooked and mundane areas into vibrant, attractive, and inviting spaces. They also have the added benefit of deterring vandalism by removing blank canvases and fostering community ownership, cultivating a shared sense of community identity and character, and drawing attention to local natural resources and waterways.

The artwork specifically designed for this project is intended to transform the tunnel into a

living corridor. It depicts a journey through the habitats that sustain Minnesota's pollinators and the plants they depend on, rendered in bold, stylized patterns. The mural will feature native Minnesota plants in three distinct habitats: prairies, woodlands, and wetlands. A rendering of the proposed artwork and a list of the featured native plants and insects are attached.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the city council adopt resolution 26-65 approving the artwork for the Highway 96 tunnel mural.

ATTACHMENTS

[Highway 96 Tunnel Mural Artwork.pdf](#)

[Native Plants and Insects List and Project Timeline - Hwy 96 Tunnel Mural.pdf](#)

[Resolution 26-65.pdf](#)