

SOMA on the Move

Route #4: The Springfield Avenue Murals

Total length: 2.2 miles (1.1 miles each way)

Degree of Difficulty: easy, relatively flat with many benches along the route.

Mural 1: Many Hands Make Light Work by Elijah Minton, 1978 Springfield Avenue

Working with the theme "Our Community Looking Forward," Elijah used his memories and experiences working in Maplewood as a young teen as inspiration. He was struck by the diversity of the community and, just as much, by how the community works together to lift all people of all backgrounds and races to a better future. Known as the Art Alchemist, Elijah's goal is to paint as big as possible and inspire others to chase their dreams along the way.

Mural 2: I am Maplewood by Michael David Adams & Viktorija Bowers Adams, 1883 Springfield Avenue

Michael David Adams and Viktorija Bowers Adams are a husband and wife creative team living in Maplewood with their daughter. They created the mural "I am Maplewood" as a love letter to Maplewood and its people. The focal point of the piece is a "main character" or face, which is a collage comprised of many multi-cultural faces representing the diversity of people, ideas, thoughts, and activities that can be found in Maplewood. The mural highlights physical elements from the town.

Mural 3: Won't You Be My Neighbor by Brian McGowan, 1859 Springfield Avenue

When artist Brian McGowan first moved to Maplewood, he found a place where the benefits of city and suburb exist simultaneously. His mural seeks to translate the abundant sense of community and camaraderie in Maplewood into a welcoming and joyful mural. The bold and colorful characters are very different from each other, yet very much alike, alluding to the idea that they are a community of beings eager to immerse themselves in each other's cultures. A self-taught artist, Brian creates art because it provides him with a transformative space in which he can play with ideas. His goal is to invite the viewer to play in this space as well.

Mural 4: Firetruck by Vitaly Umansky, 249 Boyden Avenue

Vitaly Umansky wanted to create a mural that looks modern and also addresses the theme of safety and community. He decided to go to the core of any community: family. Since the location is a fire station, he incorporated a firetruck into the main design. It became a toy fire engine painted in the size of the fire engine used by the station, but we see a child's hand playing with it and an adult hand gently helping from behind. A child playing with a helpful adult nearby is a basic sense of safety that is relatable in any community. To create the modern visual look, Vitaly broke the image into segments of color, as if it is a mosaic or overlaid with photo filters. The color rectangles not only to make the image more dynamic and colorful but also represent the rich diversity of Maplewood.

Mural 5: Nest and Flight by Roberta Melzl, Hilton Branch Library, 1688 Springfield Avenue

Roberta Melzl's mural represents neighborhood, community, and growth. The nest is a reference to community and home. Like a library, a nest is a place that fosters growth and learning. The origami birds represent the surrounding community and are also a reference to projects offered at a library. The golden egg alludes to growth, evolution, and rejuvenation and is a symbol used in many children's stories. The piece is created from an accumulation of sources, built to form a multi-perspective and reshaping of real-world imagery.

Also at the library: the rain garden and 9/11 Memorial

Map created by:

