



TAPinto Bloomfield

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Bloomfield's Bike Depot Mural Officially Revealed to the Public

By JOHN LEE

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BLOOMFIELD, NJ - Bloomfield's bike depot mural was officially revealed to the community on Thursday in Bloomfield Center. The mural, by Bloomfield artist [Papa Gora Tall](#), is the result of a collaboration between the Township of Bloomfield, New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition and Halcyon Park based VELO Bloomfield.

The mural, entitled "Love and Family on the Road," takes inspiration from both the roads on which cyclists traverse the community and the sense of peace that comes from riding in a bike-friendly community.

The bike depot, the second in the state, opened earlier this year in a ceremony attended by local dignitaries including Freeholder Brendan Gill and Bloomfield Township Mayor Michael Venezia. The depot itself has become popular with the locals, each day bikes of all colors fill the racks in the secure, weather-

protected space. Despite this, Tall felt it lacked something. The concrete walls were, well, just concrete enclosed in glass: the space was empty.

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Inspiration for the mural came from the space itself. Built inside a parking deck, essentially a transportation terminal, the area within the enclosed space spoke to Tall. The existing yellow stripes on the floor were extended up the wall into the mural. The yellow lines, Tall explained, convey the existence of the road. The blue was chosen as it reflects peace, not only the peace of a blue sky, but the sense of peace that comes from riding in a bike-friendly community.

Bloomfield Council person Nina Davis told those who gathered that the mural reflected not only the tradition of African art, but also the African American art experience. The inclusion of old style bikes, as well as more modern tandem bikes, tells a story of reaching into the past and moving into the future together. It was not lost on members of the community that the old-style riderless bike was on the wall closest to the interior of the depot, the bike ridden by a happy family was closest to the exit of the parking deck, a nod to the notion of freedom that comes from sharing the bike experience with friends and family.

Tall, a native of Senegal on Africa's west coast, came to the United States about 20 years ago. He settled in Bloomfield a decade ago in part because of the growing and thriving arts community in the township. Located between Newark and Montclair, two communities known for their art museums, he described Bloomfield as the 'heart of Bloomfield Avenue' because it is the center of the arts.

Mayor Venezia explained that when New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition (NJBWC) Board Chair Brian Stolar and Cyndi Steiner approached the council it fit with what the council was trying to accomplish. The project was about sustainability, and getting more people to ride bikes. During the day most of the bike depot patrons are residents secure their bikes before taking the train to work in the morning, in the evening, the depot is used by people dining in the thriving restaurant scene in the area.

Stolar explained that depot celebrates freedom comes from using a bike as transportation. The Bloomfield depot is the second in the state, the first one is located in Montclair's Bay Street station. Future depots are planned for Elizabeth and Morristown.

At the end of the gathering, Tall declared "I love bikes."

TAPinto Bloomfield first reported on the mural in July: [Senegalese Artist Paints Mural for Bloomfield Center Bike Depot](#)

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