



Cultural Placekeeping 7/23/2025 Meeting

METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (BLE)

General Summary:

Attendees: Zakcq Lockrem, Sandy Meulners, Lyssa Washington, C Terrence Anderson, Nicholas Strunk, Amáda Márquez Simula, Marlissa Karpeh, Costanza Carballo, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Adrian Lowe, Philli Irvin, Heather Rand, John Sutter, Richelieu Morris, Anna Beth Gunderson, Etta Gbeizon-Bornor, Catherine Fleming, Qadiym Washington, Nate Musial, Richie Song, Joshua Uloth, Claire Bossert, Wanda S. O., Anthony Lincoln, Hsichun Yang, Jonathan Hansen, Phillip Gray, Stephen Klimek, Debbie Mukherjee, Marlina Gonzalez, Felicia Perry, Shaun Young

Location: Elim Lutheran Church Gymnasium (3978 West Broadway, Robbinsdale, MN 55422)

Duration: 5:00 – 7:00 PM (2 hours)

General Sequence of Discussion:

■ Shared Meal + Welcome

- Guests arrived and signed in receiving the following:
 - Agenda with update timeline and milestones.
 - Cultural Placekeeping (CPK) Binder if they did not attend the June meeting.
 - Aerial Rendering and Roll Plot 11x17 print for each station as desired.
 - Brooklyn Park public engagement summary and Jewel of the North engagement plan as provided by Cara Donavon (Brooklyn Park City Staff).
- Shawarma Bar was provided by Chopped and Served (caterer).
 - Guests shared a meal while everyone arrived and settled in for the brief presentation for artist introductions and announcements.
- Artist Introductions
 - Philli Irvin, Costanza Carballo, and Adrian Lowe introduced themselves to the group and showed some examples of their work.
- Staff clarified that the goal of this meeting is to provide feedback on high level themes throughout the corridor for our artists to begin visualizing these ideas. These artworks will be used to guide our development of design opportunities as we move through the rest of this process.
- Staff pointed guests to the engagement boards on easels and the feedback we have brought back from Robbinsdale Whiz Bang Days and Brooklyn Park Summer Splash and welcomed folks to look at how others in their community have responded to the same activities done with this group in the June meeting.
- The group divided themselves into two groups for break out discussions.
 - Minneapolis and Robbinsdale members stayed in the main gymnasium space.
 - Brooklyn Park and Crystal members moved into a classroom off the gymnasium.
 - Suggested discussion prompts were provided to help guide the conversation.

■ Brooklyn Park/Crystal Breakout Discussion

- Crystal Discussion:
 - Crystal is a smaller scale city.
 - Main development happened post-WWII (1945-1970) with the bulk of their development happening in the 1950's and 1960's which lends itself to smaller scale building types.
 - Many immigrant-owned businesses in Crystal.
 - Multicultural ownership is all next to each other.
 - Family connections and small-town feel are prevalent in Crystal.



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- Everyone knows each other and looks out for each other.
- Preservation of Mom-and-Pop style and diversity of culturally specific commercial business.
 - Residents build relationships through the business community.
 - Folks know each other's names and remember, for example, your order at local shops when you arrive.
 - People build intentional relationships in these commercial spaces versus them being primarily transactional.
- City staff supports small businesses and does all they can to aid development and longevity.
 - Grants, financial assistance through COVID, maintaining the small-scale built environment.
- Main Street on Bass Lake Road near future LRT station.
 - Mini Main Street.
 - City prioritizes maintaining on-street parking which has supported and saved those businesses.
 - Allows local business to set roots and the City of Crystal is committed to continue investing in this Main Street area.
- What is Crystal's vision for the future?
 - City Council is starting to vision for the main street area.
 - The city wants to support the main street and its businesses and retain small scale of the space and small shop nature.
 - At the same time, the city acknowledges that increasing population density is needed to maintain the city's vibrancy and health
 - Redevelopment will be mainly residential to increase population density of the city and focus on development models that make sense financially for developers and the city.
- Unity feels effortless in Crystal.
- Potential themes:
- Travel, but at the same time finding home back here or staying in a permanent place
 - Nature – connection to natural landscapes
 - "Fertilizes its roots"
- Existing mural that reflects the community well:
 - Shawn McCann "Hands" / "Fabrics of Community" mural
- How do you hope people will feel when they arrive at this station?
 - Like they have arrived at main street, and that this is a home for everyone
- Brooklyn Park Discussion
 - Most suburban of the cities along the Blue Line Extension corridor.
 - Offers wide-open spaces, quiet streets, and a feeling of room to breathe.
 - Residents build their own sense of home.
 - Strong DIY spirit – gardening, home improvement, neighborhood gatherings.
 - Abundant park space and natural sense of welcome.
 - Always a green space nearby for walking, playing, and connection to nature.
 - Diversity of residents.
 - Layered cultures and traditions in daily life.
 - Diverse food and festivals.



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- Diverse languages spoken.
 - Reserved and respectful community.
 - People make space for themselves and for their neighbors.
 - Shaped by immigration.
 - Families from across the world have made it their home.
 - Vibrant cultures that have become part of the city.
 - Many community members have worked hard to break down barriers for success and community-building through local advocacy and events.
 - Brooklyn Park works for unity.
 - What existing murals, public art, or design elements already reflect this community well?
 - Patchwork of small creative moments for example smiley face in park.
 - The colors of the city - blues and greens - mirror the lakes, parks, and open skies.
 - Much of the art is DIY
 - All colors can represent the community.
 - What symbols or visual styles feel unique to this neighborhood?
 - The smiley face stamp found on paths and trails is small but powerful.
 - Playful, human-centered approach to public space that's unique and memorable.
 - Suburban tranquility with global cultures.
- **Minneapolis/Robbinsdale Breakout Discussion**
- General Discussion:
 - The group went around, introducing themselves and where they live.
 - 6 Robbinsdale and 7 Minneapolis community members.
 - Question to the artists: How are the artists going to create art without specific parameters as to where it may go?
 - *Taking information in and like irrigation letting the various channels flow.*
 - *The art and its representation is to help us think through the process – is there symbolism to use in expression of the themes?*
 - Do not get too broad and water down themes to please everyone.
 - Use sound and color.
 - Where's the opportunity to be involved in a specific station?
 - Community members (in the room) have invested IP, energy, experience and labor in these processes dating back. How do we honor and acknowledge that?
 - Where does this process go for the artists and CKP members?
 - Intentional invite for the artists to a future RFP/ the community to evaluate?
 - Opportunity to hold project designers accountable to the thread through the process to the end product.
 - Could each artist be given/assign a stop ("adopt-a-station") – paid commission
 - Paying and crediting people for their work for ongoing engagement



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- Once built – continuous support for art installation in perpetuity – or for other artists to build upon initially installed work
- Challenge to think beyond the visual arts when developing ideas
- Are there other placekeeping elements to consider in this process?
 - Absolutely. Documentation of this and meetings like it will be shared with project partners
 - Continue to push the jurisdictions to think beyond the transit investment for improvements
 - “what do you want?”
- “If people can see themselves in the process, in the story it will lead to better and more engagement.”
- Ask of project team: Share art examples for/from Metro Transit (largest holder of public art in Minnesota) to social pinpoint
- Idea: use of technology/projections to identify crosswalks, elements within and near stops.
- Area of concern: at 4300 Robbins Landing – residents wondering if a soundwall will be built to mitigate sound
- The use of sound – any way alarms/warnings of approaching trains can be mitigated; changed.
 - Experience living near Blue Line – train noise was loud but warning speakers were more disruptive than the train itself.
- Themes Discussion:
 - Large themes to carry throughout LRT line: Safety, Accessibility, Walkability
 - Beyond the LRT:
 - Memorabilia that capture a place or places – i.e. coin print machine like Como Zoo that highlight/honor places along the Blue Line route
 - Micro/local economy support – examples like Berkshires (Massachusetts), Ithaca hours (NY) - supporting local businesses by incentivizing with a small discount. West Broadway area looking into how to accomplish.
 - Promotion of small businesses
 - Inclusivity - especially more about larger area, connections and places between stops.
 - Sounds - less alarming/more pleasant, enhance peaceful neighborhoods rather than disrupt.
 - Prioritize artwork that by the people, for the people – focus on the togetherness, gathering, and convergence of lives.
 - Moving/movement
 - History/memory
 - Specific stories from specific people - stories about the “everyday” of life - celebrating who’s here
 - Timeline – past, present, future
 - Change, as a constant in life
 - Idea to play oral histories inside the trains as background stories
 - Storytelling
 - 21st/Lyndale: Stories of people and places there
 - Embed stories within each station
 - Mobility and accessibility
 - 4 stages of life (baby, child adult, elder)



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- 7 principles of Kwanzaa (Nguzo Saba) - 7 stops in MPLS and Robbinsdale
 - Umoja – Unity
 - Kujichagulia – Self-determination
 - Ujima – Collective Work and Responsibility
 - Ujamaa – Cooperative Economics
 - Nia – Purpose
 - Kuumba – Creativity
 - Imani – Faith
 - The rainbow (MPLS/Robbinsdale have 7 total stops) – each stop could be a dedicated color story – together they are beautifully connected.
 - Nature themes are timeless and constant:
 - Native plants and habitats
 - Lakes as an example
 - Encourage natural ecosystems
 - Look to future technologies:
 - Live-stream camera – Portal with another location/city.
 - The train to look like/reflect (use of reflective material) like the neighborhoods its going through
 - Potential to use some of the themes or artwork from the anti-displacement work previously produced for BLE
 - Origins – where do you/are you coming from, where are you going?
 - Robbinsdale: Birdtown, Big Little Town, find a home in Robbinsdale
 - Addition of coffee shops/kiosks at platforms; creation of a “platform mayor” by creating a civic area to hang out, eyes on the street
 - Look for classic themes that will stand the test of time
 - Robbinsdale: Terrace Theatre – mid-century modern architecture – architects were known for many theaters in the area
 - Robbinsdale: Fawcett publishing started in Robbinsdale – Tie-in to comics and Whiz Bang Days (Wilford “captain Billy” Fawcett.
 - Robbinsdale: Andrew Robbins – founder of Robbinsdale – built his own streetcar when MPLS wouldn’t extend theirs.
 - Ojibwe: Seven Grandfather teachings (7 stops between MPLS and Robbinsdale)
 - Zaagidwin – Love
 - Mnaadendimowin – Respect
 - Aakwa’ode’ewin – Bravery
 - Debwewin – Truth
 - Gwekwaadziwin – Honesty
 - Dbaadendiziwin – Humility
 - Nbwaakaawin – Wisdom
 - Music – Minneapolis Sound
- **Next Steps**
- Compile and distribute meeting notes to all attendees.
 - Artists begin to develop ideas based on themes.
 - Set agenda for August meeting.
 - Begin August meeting by sharing ideas between small groups.