



Cultural Placekeeping Meeting 6 Summary

METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (BLE)

Meeting Overview

DATE: OCTOBER 22, 2025

LOCATION: ELIM LUTHERAN CHURCH, ROBBINSDALE

This meeting of the Cultural Placekeeping Design Group convened community members, artists, project staff, and city representatives for a shared meal, reminder of the meeting agreements and process goals, further description of this work's grounding in anti-displacement, overviews of the artists' work to date, and an open gallery for feedback on theme development. Staff clarified that the meeting's purpose was to gather this group's feedback on high-level station themes to guide the development of cultural placekeeping opportunities in the station design.

Summary of Community Feedback on Theme Concepts

Plymouth Avenue Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants appreciated the design's connection to the area's industrial past and its ties to nearby warehouses in the North Loop.
- Many respondents highlighted themes of love, collective work, and local storefronts, noting that the color palette complements other artworks by the same artist and helps create a sense of cohesion along the corridor.
- The design was also commended for positively representing the last 60 years of Near North history – especially around Washington, Plymouth, and 12th Avenues – capturing the spirit of solidarity and community pride.
- Several participants shared personal stories about their long-term ties to the area, emphasizing its role as a starting point for their lives in Minneapolis and the sense of belonging it continues to evoke.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Participants encouraged making the artwork brighter and more modern while still honoring the area's warehouse and industrial context.
- A recurring suggestion was to increase the diversity of people represented in the design to better reflect the surrounding community.
- Some respondents also expressed a desire for a written or interpretive history at the station, allowing riders to learn more about the neighborhood's evolution.
- A few participants questioned whether the concept fully aligns with the North Loop's current character and recommended additional community review, including input from the North Loop Neighborhood Association's Planning and Zoning Committee.
- These respondents emphasized the importance of ensuring that the final design reflects the voices, stories, and aspirations of local residents and organizations.



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West Broadway Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants appreciated the theme's natural and symbolic concept of "earth, seed, and bloom," seeing it as a powerful representation of growth and renewal.
- The visual of the hand resonated as a symbol of care and cultivation, while the color palette and organic motifs were noted as appealing and well executed.
- Several respondents described personal connections to the area, recalling memories of gatherings, churches, and community spaces that made this part of North Minneapolis feel lively and meaningful.
- Others highlighted the design's clarity and supporting visuals, noting that the theme successfully conveys a sense of hope and vitality.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Some participants found the central figure of the woman difficult to relate to and suggested making her more representative of the community.
- Others recommended replacing black with blue in the color palette to create a softer, more inviting tone.
- There was also interest in connecting the theme more explicitly to the nearby river, given this station's proximity, as well as ensuring that the "earth and bloom" concept is more visibly reflected throughout the imagery rather than focused on smaller details such as the earring.
- Overall, respondents encouraged refining the visuals to strengthen the connection between the theme and North Minneapolis's identity while maintaining the concept's uplifting spirit.

Lyndale Avenue Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants appreciated the theme's symbolic focus on *earth, seed, and bloom*, describing it as a strong representation of growth, renewal, and care.
- The visual of the hand stood out as a meaningful metaphor for nurturing and community connection, while the organic forms and color palette were viewed as inviting and well crafted.
- Several respondents expressed personal connections to the area, recalling memories of gatherings, churches, and shared spaces that make this part of North Minneapolis feel vibrant and rooted in community life.
- Others noted that the overall design and supporting visuals communicate a sense of hope, energy, and continuity.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Some participants found the central figure of the woman difficult to relate to and suggested portraying someone who more clearly represents the community's diversity and character.
- Others recommended replacing black with blue to create a softer and more approachable palette.
- There was also interest in integrating references to the nearby river, given this station's proximity, and ensuring that the *earth and bloom* concept appears more prominently throughout the composition—rather than being limited to smaller details like the earring.
- Overall, participants encouraged refining the visuals to deepen their connection to North Minneapolis's identity while maintaining the design's uplifting and regenerative spirit.



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James Avenue Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants responded positively to the design's vibrant colors and youthful energy, describing it as lively, engaging, and well suited to a park setting.
- The flowy, dynamic style was seen as visually appealing and capable of drawing the attention of children and families who frequent the area.
- Several respondents felt that the artwork successfully captures the atmosphere of North Commons, evoking a sense of local pride and community vibrancy.
- Overall, the theme was viewed as playful and expressive, reflecting the spirit of activity and connection that defines this part of the neighborhood.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Some participants suggested aligning the color palette more closely with the established "key colors" used across the broader project for greater visual consistency.
- Others felt that the design's energy and park-oriented tone might make it a better fit for the Lowry Station rather than James, where it could more directly reflect nearby recreational spaces.
- There was also interest in ensuring that the artwork maintains a balance between creativity and coherence, allowing the dynamic visuals to resonate with both younger audiences and the broader community.

Penn Avenue Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants appreciated the design's vibrant colors and community-centered focus, noting that it captures the spirit of Penn Avenue as a connector between neighborhoods, downtown, and local gathering spots.
- Many praised how the theme celebrates everyday people and local talent rather than relying on famous figures, describing it as authentic and grounded in the area's culture.
- The bold color palette was well received, with several respondents highlighting its energy and visual strength.
- Some participants also emphasized Penn's role as a social and commercial hub – home to restaurants, small businesses, and familiar landmarks that have shaped community life for decades.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- A few participants found the "multidimensional" aspect of the concept unclear and suggested making the theme's message more legible and cohesive.
- Others expressed interest in incorporating stronger ties to the area's history and geography, such as the connection between Robbinsdale, Victory Memorial Parkway, and Minneapolis.
- Respondents recommended representing hospitality, bridges, and retail spaces along Lowry to strengthen the sense of place.
- Some also proposed exploring a broader color range – such as adding a hot pink accent – to complement the existing palette while maintaining balance.
- Overall, participants encouraged ensuring that the design continues to showcase Penn Avenue's role as a connector while deepening its reflection of local history, entrepreneurship, and everyday life.



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Lowry Avenue Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants praised the artist's creativity and technical skill, noting that the design demonstrates thoughtfulness and care.
- Many were drawn to symbolic imagery such as butterflies and wings, which they interpreted as representing migration, growth, and transformation.
- The inclusion of local references – like the loon and parkway – was appreciated for connecting the work to recognizable elements of the community.
- Several participants emphasized themes of honesty, purpose, and belonging, particularly those with long-standing ties to the neighborhood who expressed pride in their home and its evolving identity.
- Others appreciated the color palette and layered visuals, describing them as warm and expressive.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- A number of participants recommended shifting the focus away from the river motif, which they felt was not representative of this specific location.
- Many suggested that the design should instead highlight place-keeping elements tied to the area's true context – such as the hospital, Victory Memorial Parkway, and Robbinsdale's unique history as a point of convergence between Minneapolis and its surrounding communities.
- Respondents also requested the inclusion of the Robbinsdale bird logo or other locally recognizable symbols to strengthen identity. Several emphasized the importance of diversity in the human figures to reflect the community's demographics more accurately.
- Others suggested brightening the color palette to avoid overly muted or "drab" tones and incorporating themes of health, wellbeing, and trees near the parkway to create a more grounded and inclusive visual narrative.

Downtown Robbinsdale Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants appreciated the artwork's connection to Robbinsdale's history through references to the original trolley line, Terrace Theater, and local storefronts.
- The earthy color palette was well received, with several respondents describing it as warm and nostalgic.
- Many noted that the inclusion of birds, streetcar imagery, and musical or rhythmic motifs helped communicate a sense of unity and motion within the community. Some participants saw the swallows as representing robins – a fitting nod to the city's identity as "Bird Town" – and valued the theme's underlying focus on heritage and connection.
- The artists' skill and attention to detail were consistently praised, with respondents acknowledging their sensitivity in interpreting a complex local context.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Several participants recommended that the design focus more on Robbinsdale's downtown main street rather than the Terrace Theater, noting that the latter is geographically closer to another station area.



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- Others emphasized the importance of incorporating the Robbinsdale bird logo and consulting with the Robbinsdale Historical Society Museum and Art Gallery to ensure historical accuracy and authenticity.
- Many felt that using robins – or a mix of bird species – would better symbolize community diversity and inclusion than the current depiction of swallows.
- Concerns were also raised about the sunset-like color palette, which some felt carried unintended “sundown” connotations; alternative palettes inspired by Dakota cultural colors were suggested.
- Participants requested that the rendering of the Terrace Theater be truer to its original form, while keeping the design less literal and more symbolic.
- Overall, respondents encouraged the artists to create a balanced, forward-looking representation that honors Robbinsdale’s history while celebrating its evolving identity and diversity.

Bass Lake Road

■ What People Liked:

- Participants appreciated the theme’s inclusive representation of community life, noting how the incorporation of the city flag, neighborhood references, and active transportation imagery – such as biking and walking – captures the spirit of Crystal.
- The concept was praised for highlighting everyday activities that connect residents and reflect a sense of pride and belonging.
- Respondents valued the intent to unify multiple community elements under a shared visual identity, seeing it as a celebration of the city’s character and diversity.
- City staff and residents alike supported the use of the blue color palette to tie into the Blue Line Extension, provided it is applied thoughtfully.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Several participants felt that the artwork appeared overly busy or cluttered, particularly in its use of multiple star motifs and overlapping symbols.
- Some expressed that the added details distracted from the simplicity and strength of the Crystal star icon, suggesting a more focused composition that retains clarity and balance.
- Others proposed incorporating a single 14-point star as an anchor element rather than making it the dominant feature of the design.
- Feedback also called for more color to brighten the piece – especially incorporating blue, white, and complementary tones – to ensure visual appeal and consistency with city branding.
- City of Crystal staff recommended placing four neighborhood-related symbols (home, family, parks, and cyclist) in the corners of the artwork to represent the community’s core values and suggested that these could serve as “pillars” of the design.
- Some participants also advised including subtle references to cars to reflect everyday mobility, while maintaining the emphasis on active and connected community life.

63rd Avenue Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants responded enthusiastically to the quilt and tile concept, describing it as a meaningful and visually engaging representation of community connection.
- The “junction” metaphor was seen as especially fitting, symbolizing how people, histories, and cultures come together in this area.



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- Many appreciated the design's symbolism of unity and belonging, noting that the print and textile-inspired visuals reflect themes of gathering and shared identity.
- Several respondents highlighted the concept's inclusivity and its potential to evolve over time, suggesting that the artwork captures the spirit of a living, changing community.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Some participants recommended adding more color to make the design feel brighter and more celebratory.
- Others proposed including an open or blank space within the quilt pattern to symbolize future cultures and residents who will continue to shape the community.
- A few respondents noted that keeping people and symbols in separate squares weakens the "melting pot" idea and suggested blending the elements more organically to reflect integration and connection.
- There was also interest in establishing a stronger, cohesive color scheme to unify the design and enhance its vibrancy while maintaining its symbolic depth.

Brooklyn Boulevard Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants appreciated the theme's focus on family ties, describing it as heartfelt and representative of community connection and shared history.
- Several respondents noted that the concept resonates with how families in Brooklyn Park and along Brooklyn Boulevard have grown and traveled through the area over time.
- The bold, colorful composition and clear color blocking were seen as visually appealing and effective at drawing attention.
- Many participants found the overall concept imaginative and praised its potential to represent a sense of belonging and togetherness.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Some participants suggested expanding the concept to include themes of commerce and business, reflecting the economic activity and entrepreneurial spirit of Brooklyn Boulevard.
- Others recommended incorporating stronger Southeast Asian influences, noting that the station provides access to a major Southeast Asian supermarket and serves a diverse cultural community.
- A few respondents found the design unclear or too reminiscent of graffiti art and encouraged a clearer, more cohesive narrative that communicates the intended theme.
- Participants also mentioned ensuring that the design can be effectively implemented in its final form, maintaining vibrancy and legibility across materials.
- Overall, respondents encouraged a balance between cultural representation, visual clarity, and practical execution to ensure the theme feels authentic and inclusive.

85th Avenue Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants appreciated the theme of *Family Ties*, describing it as a meaningful reflection of community connection and shared values.
- Many found the concept fitting for this area and praised its potential to symbolize unity and belonging.



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- Several respondents expressed strong support for the design's foundation and suggested that it effectively captures the idea of relationships and interdependence among community members.
- The inclusion of simple, recognizable forms was also seen as a strength, providing a relatable visual framework for storytelling.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- Some participants encouraged expanding the concept to include themes related to education, noting the importance of North Hennepin Community College (NHCC) as a defining institution in the area.
- Others felt the design could be made more vibrant and distinctive to reflect the energy and diversity of the surrounding neighborhood.
- A few respondents found the current puzzle or connection motif confusing and suggested reworking it to communicate the theme more clearly.
- Feedback also emphasized brightening the color palette, as some felt the current tones were too subdued for such a dynamic, active community.
- Overall, participants supported the *Family Ties* concept but recommended enriching it with stronger educational, cultural, and visual references to make the station more unique and expressive of the area's identity.

93rd Avenue Station

• What People Liked:

- Participants expressed strong appreciation for the *Roots and Routes* theme, describing it as authentic, visually engaging, and deeply reflective of the community's identity.
- The use of soft green tones was praised for symbolizing growth and movement, while the design's storytelling focus was recognized as accurate and meaningful to the area.
- Many felt that the theme successfully connects past and present, conveying both rootedness and forward momentum.
- Respondents described the artwork as beautiful, thoughtful, and aligned with the spirit of the neighborhood – several stated that it “feels right for the community.”

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- A few participants felt the theme could be strengthened by including more representation of the local Liberian community, given the presence of a large Liberian church near the station.
- Others found the visual style somewhat abstract and recommended clearer cues to help communicate the theme's message more directly.
- Some suggested balancing the artistic expression with more recognizable cultural references to ensure the design resonates with all viewers.
- Overall, participants were enthusiastic about the *Roots and Routes* concept but encouraged small refinements to enhance cultural specificity and accessibility while maintaining its vibrant and hopeful tone.

Oak Grove Parkway Station

■ What People Liked:

- Participants responded very positively to the tree imagery, describing it as a powerful and fitting symbol for the station and the city's strong connection to parks and nature.



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- Many appreciated the creative representation of the Blue Line extension as the tree trunk, with the branches and leaves expressing community diversity and connection.
- The varying leaf colors were seen as a thoughtful metaphor for the people and cultures that make up the area.
- Respondents highlighted that the design feels organic, grounded, and well aligned with the city's identity and values around open space and environmental stewardship.

■ Suggestions for Improvement:

- A few participants felt the depiction of the tree could be refined to appear healthier and more vibrant, as some interpreted its current form as resembling a diseased or unsafe tree.
- Others questioned the use of fall colors, suggesting that a more seasonally neutral or evergreen palette would better represent the community year-round.
- Respondents encouraged maintaining the concept's symbolism while enhancing the color balance and vitality of the imagery to strengthen its sense of growth, inclusivity, and stability.

Overall Corridor Reflections

- Feedback on the overall Blue Line Extension corridor reflected a wide spectrum of perspectives – ranging from strong support for the project's artistic storytelling to deep concerns about its broader impacts on community identity and displacement.
- Many participants appreciated how the station themes collectively celebrate the corridor's diversity, cultures, and histories, describing the art as a meaningful effort to promote belonging and pride.
- Respondents valued the creativity, cultural representation, and attention to local narratives embedded in the designs, viewing them as opportunities for connection rather than division.
- However, others expressed frustration that community voices, particularly from North Minneapolis, have not been adequately incorporated, warning that the project could accelerate gentrification and disrupt existing neighborhoods.
- Several participants called for a stronger, unified visual identity across stations – one that ties together the corridor through consistent architectural or color elements, especially emphasizing the symbolic use of blue to represent the Blue Line.
- Additional feedback encouraged more equitable representation of all Asian communities, deeper integration of Dakota cultural motifs, and clearer acknowledgments of the corridor's Indigenous history.
- Overall, the reflections underscored both optimism and caution: while many see the project as a chance to unite and honor communities, others emphasized that authentic engagement, cultural sensitivity, and equitable design must remain at the forefront to ensure the corridor truly serves the people it represents.