



Cultural Placekeeping 8/27/2025 Meeting

METRO Blue Line LRT Extension (BLE)

General Summary:

Attendees: Zakcq Lockrem, Sandy Meulners, Lyssa Washington, C Terrence Anderson, Amáda Márquez Simula, Marlissa Karpeh, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Adrian Lowe, Philli Irvin, Heather Rand, John Sutter, Richelieu Morris, Anna Beth Gunderson, Ryan Kronzer, Nkongo Cigolo, Brett Buckner, Etta Gbeizon-Bornor, Richie Song, Joshua Uloth, Jonathan (Hansen) Healy, Shaun Young, Malcolm Brom, Laichee Yang, Jan Peterson, Jeffrey Kanne, Daniel Green, Jan Dickinson, Erin Merrill, Scott Veatch, Cara Donovan, Ben Hansen, Nina Vongpheth, Ange Hwang, Stephen Lu, Felicia Perry, Wanda S. O.

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 previous meetings.
 - Ground level rendering 11x17 print for each station as desired.
- Soul Food 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.
- Staff provided a moment for reflection on the horrific event that happen that morning and offered participants to take time and leave for the prayer service at Holy Angels in Richfield, MN at 7pm that evening.

■ Presentation by Project Staff

- Reviewed meeting agenda.
- Reminder of the group's shared meeting agreements.
 - Grace, Respect, Patience, and Humility
 - Respectful communication
 - Meetings will start and end on time
 - Raise hand or signal to speak
 - Discussion should remain focused on agenda items
 - Decisions will be made by consensus if possible and by vote if not
 - Don't make assumptions, ask for clarification
 - Discussions and sensitive information shared should be confidential
 - Constructive criticism is welcomed, but should be presented in a respectful and constructive manner
 - No side conversations
 - Limit cell phone usage
 - A summary of the meeting and action items with due dates will be assigned after the meeting
- Overview of Anti-Displacement efforts that extend beyond project scope.
 - Cultural placekeeping is one portion of the project design. Cultural placekeeping focuses on elements that can be paid for with project funds and can be physically constructed within the project limitations.



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- Overview of constraints due to federal funding.
 - Non-functional art (e.g. murals) and non-functional landscaping are among a few items that are not eligible for federal funding.
 - Source: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/grant-programs/art-and-non-functional-landscaping-federally-funded-public-transit>
- Overview of where we are in the timeline and goals for this meeting.
 - The end of this August meeting marks the halfway point.
 - Goal for this meeting was to move beyond themes and transition into application to opportunities to keep with intended timeline and outcomes.
 - On-platform opportunities will be discussed first with off-platform opportunities provided ideally in September.
 - This group's final meeting is on November 19, 2025.
- On-Platform Opportunities
 - 00 Base Design
 - Shows the current design without any Cultural Placekeeping elements.
 - Only includes the functional needs for this light rail project.
 - All architectural elements are shown in neutral colors as these have not yet been selected.
 - These opportunities are shown through an example of a center platform configuration (platform location is between train tracks).
 - Some stations are side platform configuration (two smaller platforms with train track running between platforms).
 - All opportunities are the equivalent between both side and center platform configurations with minor modifications due to space limitation.
 - 01 Electrical and Communications Cabinets
 - Vinyl wraps at utility cabinets on platform.
 - 2 cabinets per platform.
 - Relatively inexpensive and flexible canvas for cultural expression.
 - 02 Light Pole Mounted Elements
 - Canonically referred to as Banners.
 - Can be implemented both on and off platform.
 - Can be different materials – metal panel or fabric banner depending on longevity and maintenance.
 - 4 light poles per station – 2 light poles present on the sloped walkway at each end of every platforms.
 - 03 Infill Panels at Sloped Walkways
 - Potential for unique materials, colors, and textures.
 - Examples can be found on the existing Blue Line that runs to the Mall of America.
 - 04 Station Marker
 - Visible from both on and off platform.
 - Serves as a beacon to the broader community.
 - Potential to integrate decorative lighting.
 - Material will be steel panel for longevity and maintenance.
 - 05 Interpretive Windscreen Panel
 - Human-scaled cultural representation at center canopy on platform.



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- Locations selected with sensitivity to safety and security concerns at the platform.
- Element Combined
 - Showing all 5 opportunities combined in a single image.
 - Ability to tell a continuous story throughout the platform.
 - All opportunities are subject to feasibility and funding decisions, but these 5 elements provide the best opportunities with consideration to accessibility, feasibility, longevity, and maintenance concerns.
- Question and Answer:
 - Q: The alert signs are always on the screen - can they be used as an opportunity (e.g., for art)?
 - This is an ongoing conversation with the marketing team.
 - Potential for another public art program by Metro Transit to accompany the Rider Alerts.
 - Funding
 - Some elements can be funded; others cannot.
 - There is a commitment to finding the right pathway to get things done and explore possibilities for implementation.
 - Q: Can we have a color inlay instead of just a metal panel on the station marker?
 - This seems to be a question about allowable materials.
 - It's unlikely the station marker will be anything other than metal.
 - Durability and ease of maintenance over time are key considerations.
 - Q: What about vinyl wrapping?
 - Yes, this is something that can be done.
 - Q: What about lighting or vinyl wraps that change for seasons or special events?
 - The most likely candidate for seasonal change is the banners on the light poles.
 - Vinyl wraps have a longer lifetime and would not be a candidate for seasonal changes.
 - Lighting changes for decorative lighting only may be possible.
 - Q: What about sound as art? Are there ordinances that impact this?
 - Technically feasible, but still under review.
 - Operational and safety implications are being considered before any decision is made.
 - Q: What about use of space around the stations?
 - The city will lead station area planning in the near future.
 - Q: Are there opportunities to use the concrete for art?
 - This is not being considered currently, as concrete is replaced over time, replacement likely would not happen, ice melt often ruins specialty concrete designs, and it could be an accessibility issue.
- **Artist Theme Development**
 - Brooklyn Park → Crystal
 - Brooklyn Park Concepts – visuals included, see 8/27/2025 slides
 - Artist Presentation
 - Multicultural identity & community trust



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- Emphasis on breaking bread, sharing food as a symbol of community trust – cookout as a symbol of community gathering.
 - Parks and food as cultural gathering points.
 - “Blossoming” or “blooming” as a metaphor for community growth.
 - Blended patterns or motifs representing cultural mixing: melting pot, salad bowl metaphors.
 - Representation of local languages and communities (e.g., Liberian, Hmong).
 - Possible symbol: a family to represent trust and connection.
- Group Feedback
 - Include multicultural patterns and motifs that have common visual elements.
 - Consult with North Hennepin Community College Art Department for guidance or collaboration.
 - Consider blended flavors or combination imagery to reflect the multicultural fabric.
 - Engage community representatives to help blend cultural patterns intentionally.
- Crystal Concepts – visuals included, see 8/27/2025 slides
 - Artist Presentation
 - Home, longevity, and legacy
 - Seen as a “forever place” with lasting homeownership.
 - Walkable marketplace and strong community pride.
 - Legacy of the Crystal Airport and aviation history.
 - 14-point star representing the 14 neighborhoods.
 - Simple house motif – symbolizing Crystal’s identity, possibly with elements shown inside the home.
 - Group Feedback
 - Long, linear storytelling could work well with the on-platform opportunities – representing a timeline or history.
 - Topographic or rail design motif, possibly symbolizing Co Rd 81 or rail lines – Crystal city staff to share BLE railing concept from 2018.
 - Consider shadow forms or cutout projections for layered visual storytelling.
 - View design from the perspective of the train – as if seeing a plane taking off or people traveling through the line.
- Robbinsdale → Minneapolis
 - Artist Presentation
 - Artists looked to create a framework or unifying theme to then develop the individual identity for each station within to organize the feedback and create a story with throughlines for the stations.
 - Core Concept:
 - “Journeys of Connection” as a narrative framework.
 - 7 stops within Minneapolis and Robbinsdale
 - Inspired by:
 - 7 Ojibwe Grandfather Teachings
 - 7 Principles of Kwanzaa or Nguzo Saba
 - Colors of the Rainbow



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- Station breakdown:
 - Robbinsdale – Wisdom / Unity
 - Birdtown history, Terrace Theatre, streetcar heritage, gathering spaces; imagery of birds in flight linking past and present.
 - Lowry – Respect / Self-determination
 - Healing, safety, and care; hospital history and community health resilience; native medicinal plants.
 - Penn – Love / Collective Work
 - Black cultural history, Minneapolis Sound, community markets, music and rhythm as neighborhood heartbeat.
 - James – Bravery / Cooperative Economics
 - Micro-economy, small businesses, markets; colorful storefronts and sidewalk life.
 - Lyndale – Honesty / Purpose
 - Oral histories of elders and youth; river and migration imagery showing truth-telling across generations.
 - West Broadway – Humility / Creativity
 - Native plants and pollinators, gardens, and DIY creativity; community-made tiles or murals.
 - Plymouth – Truth / Faith
 - Reflection of all colors; mirrored or light-based installations that reflect neighborhood faces and skyline.
- Group Feedback:
 - The blend of cultural teachings (e.g., Ojibwe + Kwanzaa) is appreciated – ensure respectful and accurate representation.
 - Consider consulting Native elders to gather deeper stories and color meanings related to the 7 Grandfather Teachings.
 - Consider how each theme reflects the past, present, and future of each stop.
 - Buddhist/Asian culture also have 7 parts – Asian/Laotian temple nearby.
- Break Out Discussion
 - Brooklyn Park and Crystal
 - Looking for ways to connect the entire corridor and teach others to connect
 - Water could be an interesting theme that connects the whole corridor and relates its name “Blue Line” and somewhat follows the Mississippi River.
 - Tree branching / Vine-like growth / Blossoming of opportunity along the corridor
 - Reaffirmed that each station needs its own identity and any throughlines or connections would be a bonus – goal is to make each station unique.
 - Most people won’t ride the extension end-to-end.
 - Many stations are spaced out significantly.
 - Each area has its own uses and identity that should be reflected.
 - Oak Grove Parkway Station
 - Nothing but Target North Headquarters currently, but looking to future development possibilities - offices and mixed use in the future.
 - Bur Oak Leaf could be a good symbol – relates to name and native to MN.



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- Branches of a tree – end of the Blue Line Extension but the major connection for further suburbs especially because of future Park and Ride.
- Basin of water also basin of gathering for the beginning/end of the extension – again about connecting to further neighborhoods.
- 93rd Avenue Station
 - Industrial and big business
 - Connection to trash day
 - Surrounding area is split between two very different uses – Ebenezer church and lots of residential on one side and big industrial businesses and warehouses on the other side
- 85th Avenue Station
 - Educational area by nature – new library, North Hennepin Community College
 - Visually distinctive area of Brooklyn Park
- Brooklyn Boulevard
 - Strip malls and many small businesses
 - Multitude of dining and food shopping options – many of which are Asian
- 63rd Avenue
 - Mainly residential area – mostly single family but some larger apartment complexes within walking distance
 - Park and Ride will be an important element
 - Can the overhead pedestrian bridge be an opportunity?
 - Potentially, need clarification and many safety constraints will apply.
 - Also close to the Crystal Municipal Airport
 - Serves New Hope and Crystal residents though technically in Brooklyn Park
- Robbinsdale and Minneapolis
 - Participants expressed disagreement regarding pursuing overarching themes or individual expression at stations.
 - Ensure Robbinsdale's identity is fully represented – some expressed concerns that it may be subsumed by larger cities
 - Others sought to avoid perpetuating separation and historic harm between Robbinsdale and Minneapolis
 - Consider a visual and thematic throughline between all locations by considering an overarching theme that unifies the corridor but still allows for local distinctiveness – not just between Robbinsdale and Minneapolis, but the whole corridor.
 - Acknowledge all 13 stations as individuals.
 - Artists representations seemed to follow very different paths between northern group and southern group.
 - Liked the spaces where the intentional connection between theme and location made the most sense (for example, the James Station highlighting small business as a key theme element) this should continue to be emphasized.
 - Important to reflect both historical context and current community identities.
 - Amplify Native presence, Asian/Hmong influence, LGBTQ symbology, and other underrepresented voices.
 - Opportunity to connect cultures across the corridor, while also highlighting unique aspects of each place.