INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Community Engagement Plan (CEP) is to maximize participation and decision-making among underrepresented populations (e.g., people of color, low-income individuals and households, persons with disabilities, to name a few) in public planning processes related to land use and transportation improvements along the Bottineau Corridor. With the Corridors of Opportunity initiative focusing on unlocking human capital through the build out of a multi-billion dollar transit system, the Twin Cities has become an important pilot region in developing new approaches for community engagement.

As a component of the Corridors of Opportunity, the intent of the Bottineau Corridor CEP is to be a guide and resource for project planners and other project representatives for how to successfully involve underrepresented populations in the on-going evolution of the Bottineau Corridor. Many different organizations and agencies were consulted in the preparation of the CEP. Therefore, any recommendations contained in this plan are not intended to replace or supersede the community engagement efforts and strategies by others. Ideally, this plan is meant to complement such work.

Components of the CEP include:

- Description of the methodology used to prepare the CEP
- Inventory of current community engagement activities targeted to underrepresented populations in the Bottineau Corridor
- Identification of underrepresented populations with engagement barriers along the Bottineau Corridor and any gaps of populations currently not targeted for engagement
- Recommendations specific to the Bottineau Corridor for improving inclusion and engagement of underrepresented populations

Although adapted to the Bottineau Corridor, many of the principles and recommendations contained in the CEP have been around for some time and build upon the rich tradition of community engagement. In order to have a strong foundation of the basic principles that drive effective community engagement among underrepresented populations, it is recommended that one refers to the report titled “The Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities” prepared by PolicyLink and the Kirwan Institute in 2012, which can be found at: http://www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/COMMUNITYENGAGEMENTGUIDE_LY_FINAL.PDF
BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The CEP was developed from a series of generalized observations from community and neighborhood meetings, a survey and research of best practices, as well as meetings with members of the Corridors of Opportunity Community Engagement Team (CET), city staff from municipalities along the Corridor, staff from Hennepin County, staff from the Metropolitan Council, and other community engagement experts.

Persons and resources that contributed to the CEP were identified from research and through meetings with Corridor of Opportunities advisors and grantees. Although every effort was made to include as many voices and perspectives as possible regarding community engagement in the Bottineau Corridor, given scope constraints and the uncertainty of the locally preferred alternative (LPA) during the course of this research, some but not all organizations and individuals actively involved in community engagement along the Bottineau Corridor were able or willing to provide insights for inclusion in the CEP.

Primary data consisted mostly of interviews and meetings with Corridor city staff, Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council, existing community engagement organizations, and other non-profit groups associated with providing services to underserved populations. Inquiries with these various primary sources generally revolved around current or past engagement practices designed for a targeted population to determine the barriers to access and level of participation. Secondary data was collected and analyzed to determine the location and characteristics of underrepresented populations. Sources of secondary data consisted primarily of census information, municipal websites, and www.citydata.com.

In evaluating community engagement activities appropriate for the Bottineau Corridor, the consultant team applied consumer involvement models developed for the marketing and advertising industry. The models were applied to assess the capacity of each community engagement activity to maximize participation and engagement of underrepresented groups. Of particular importance was the concept of “consumer marketing”, coined by Krugma and Schiffman, which says that consumers approach the marketplace with varying levels and intensity of interest when making the decision to consume information or purchase a product or service. The involvement of the consumer can vary for numerous reasons: differentiation between other offerings; the situation or reason for using the offering or service; ease of learning about the offering; depth of knowledge required to be an informed consumer; and the time commitment to interact.

In a busy world with competing demands for involvement, future planning efforts would benefit from broadening the venues and number of ways to inform and engage underrepresented groups in transit planning. The effectiveness of future planning efforts could be improved by applying the consumer involvement approach to measure engagement provider activities and to broaden the outreach and impact of outreach activities throughout the transit planning process and subsequent Corridor community development processes.

Relationship of CEP to Corridors of Opportunity

A key partner in the development of the CEP is the Corridors of Opportunity Community Engagement Team. Mentioned previously in this report, the Corridors of Opportunity (COO) is a regionally-based effort intended to apply new tools and techniques in the leveraging of transit investments in order to meet a broad set of goals related to economic development and social equity. One of the tools being applied is the use of an independent team of advocates (i.e., Community Engagement Team or CET) whose charge is to evaluate and distribute grants to specific community-based organizations involved in outreach. The efforts of COO form the foundation of the CEP. However, COO funds are limited and cannot be distributed to every outreach group. Therefore, one of the main purposes of the CEP is to complement COO’s efforts by identifying important gaps in existing outreach efforts and to recommend specific strategies for outreach that may serve as a referral source for future outreach efforts that continue beyond COO funding.
INVENTORY OF CURRENT BOTTINEAU CORRIDOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The first step in the development of the CEP is the identification and inventorying of current community engagement activities along the Bottineau Corridor. This inventory has several purposes. First, it allows users of the CEP to better understand what is currently being done in the Corridor and thus possibly avoid duplicative efforts. Second, it can alert users to where or how new engagement activities may complement or be synergistic with current or on-going activities. Third, the inventory can help identify where gaps in service or constituents may exist to better target new engagement activities.

The inventory was developed primarily through interviews and meetings with Corridor city staff, Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council, existing community engagement organizations, and other non-profit groups associated with providing services to underserved populations. Table 7.1 lists current providers of community engagement in the Bottineau Corridor noting what types of services they provide, the underrepresented communities they typically serve, and the geographic extent of their services according to station area. Twenty-three organizations were identified, including seven economic or service-based organizations, six ethnic or religious-based organizations, five municipalities, four neighborhood-based organizations, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Municipal and neighborhood-based organizations have a strong geographic scope to where they provide services. In contrast, economic, service, and ethnic-based organizations tend to be located where their constituents are most concentrated, which in many cases is throughout the entire Bottineau Corridor.
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<tr>
<th>PROVIDER</th>
<th>TARGETED BOTTINEAU STATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Career, Education and Resources (ACER)</td>
<td>• 97th Avenue • 93rd Avenue • 85th Avenue • 63rd Avenue • Brooklyn Boulevard • Robbinsdale</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>Serves people of African descent. ACER focuses on engaging business owners, youth and renters, African immigrants and African Americans. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> ACER host community forums, workshops, transit field trips. Languages: Liberian, Nigerian, French, Spanish. Host an annual resource fair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance for Metropolitan Stability</td>
<td>• All stations</td>
<td>Community Engagement Team (CET) Member</td>
<td>Coalition of grassroots organizations that advances racial, economic and environmental justice in growth and development patterns in the Twin Cities region. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Organizes roundtables and is a member of the Community Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Asamblea de Derechos-Civiles</td>
<td>• 97th Avenue • 93rd Avenue • 85th Avenue • 63rd Avenue • Brooklyn Boulevard</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>A faith-based organization serving the Twin Cities and St. Cloud; builds leadership in Hispanic communities and brings their collective power to change the politics that affect the destiny of Hispanic people. Primary constituency is Latino immigrants from local Catholic Churches. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Cultivates leaders through transformational trainings and mentorship programs guiding their participation in public life. Through the Emancipation Campaign of Corridors to Freedom, they organize Latino faith community members at St. Alphonsus (serving resident of Brooklyn Park along the Bottineau Corridor). They host public forums, conduct community surveys, provide leadership training for community members, and organize meetings between residents and decision makers. Language: Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Economic Development Association</td>
<td>• All stations</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>Creates culturally competent teams to organize Southeast Asian communities along the entire Corridor. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Efforts will bring non-English speaking Southeast Asian into the land use planning discussion through the use of the trusted advocate model and a transit and community development &quot;blueprint.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Media Access</td>
<td>• All stations</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>Utilizes media and technology for engaging communities, institutions and businesses, especially underrepresented Southeast Asian populations in voicing their opinions and needs. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Organizes seminars, workshops and host booths at community events. Develop an online interactive map as tool for communication between community members and policymakers. Languages: Hmong and Loa</td>
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### Table 7.1 Cont’d - Organizations Involved in Community Engagement along the Bottineau Corridor

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<tr>
<td>Broadband Access Project</td>
<td>• All stations</td>
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<td>An initiative of the University of Minnesota’s Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) to improve high-speed internet (broadband) access, awareness, in poverty zones in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The project supports development and enhancements of 11 community-based public computer centers for underserved populations, including African-Americans, Latinos, American Indian, and Asian and African immigrants. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Access to on-line surveys and community meetings for low income, youth, seniors, disabled and all ethnic minorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha</td>
<td>• All Stations</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>Clients work jobs along the Bottineau Corridor. Grant funding will set up structures to ensure the long-term involvement of their clients in Corridor development. Research current working conditions, and emerging job opportunities. Educate clients on transit corridor development process and engage members to participate in development processes. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Host meetings. Trusted advocates translate and survey Hispanic immigrants in every community along the Corridor. Language: Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Brooklyn Center</td>
<td>• 63rd Avenue (Brooklyn Park) • Bass Lake Road (Crystal) • Downtown Robbinsdale (Robbinsdale)</td>
<td>Member of the Bottineau Community Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Completed the <em>Future Concept</em>, a study to plan the revitalization of Brookdale Boulevard including the 65th Ave Brooklyn Center Transit Center. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Focus groups, information on the City’s web page and news alerts. Community paper: Brooklyn Center Sun Post. Annual community Event: Earle Brown Festival, fourth Thursday through Saturday of June, sponsored by City of Brooklyn Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Brooklyn Park</td>
<td>• 97th Avenue • 93rd Avenue • 85th Avenue • 63rd Avenue • Brooklyn Boulevard</td>
<td>Member of the Bottineau Boulevard Partnership and Community Advisory Committee</td>
<td>The work that is being done right now is creating an “intended future” for Brooklyn Park by engaging the members of the community. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Information is posted on the website, at booths, and at community events. Ambassadors’ faith based and community organizations, business associations and the technical colleges bring diverse voices to set transit goals, monitor progress and sustain momentum. Community papers: Brooklyn Park Sun Post. Annual community Event: Tater Daze, second Thursday through Sunday of June, sponsored by City of Brooklyn Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Crystal</td>
<td>• Bass Lake Road</td>
<td>Member of the Bottineau Boulevard Partnership and Community Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Administration department under the direction of the City Manager who oversees community engagement. The City recently completed a Comprehensive Plan. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Community newspaper is the Crystal-Robbinsdale Sun Post. Community Winterfest is the annual festival. It is on the first Saturday of December and is sponsored by Crystal Recreation Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Golden Valley</td>
<td>• Golden Valley Road</td>
<td>Member of the Bottineau Boulevard Partnership and Community Advisory Committee</td>
<td><strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Conducts surveys, focus groups, and brainstorming sessions to create the “A Shared Vision for Golden Valley.” The city planner has made a special effort to encourage the underserved populations to use City Hall services. Community newspaper is the Golden Valley Patch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Minneapolis</td>
<td>• Penn Avenue</td>
<td>Member of the Bottineau Boulevard Partnership and Community Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Five Minneapolis neighborhoods abut the Bottineau Corridor: Harrison, Near North, North Loop, Sumner-Glenwood, and Willard-Hay. Since 2000, the City has completed three small area/neighborhood plans addressing future change in several of the neighborhoods abutting the Corridor. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> To assist with community engagement, the City of Minneapolis has a dedicated department for Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR). In addition, the City has a special commission to further facilitate engagement called the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Robbinsdale</td>
<td>• Downtown Robbinsdale</td>
<td>Member of the Bottineau Boulevard Partnership and Community Advisory Committee</td>
<td>The City has conducted extensive community engagement to revitalize the downtown, plan transit and commercial development and active senior housing. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> The City Community Development staff uses the City’s website, community meetings and the annual Wiz Bang Festival and Friendly Robins Club senior clubs for formal outreach activities. Local faith based institutions provide informal engagement for underrepresent population. The community newspaper is the Crystal and Robbinsdale Sun Post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Neighborhood Association</td>
<td>• Robbinsdale</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>Serves the Cleveland Community in North Minneapolis bounded by Penn Avenue on the East, Victory Memorial Parkway on the West, Dowling Avenue on the North and Lowry Avenue on the South. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> The Bus Shelter Workshop Toolkit is a set of engagement tools used to set-up a “workshop” within a bus shelter to engage transit-riders while they are waiting for the bus in a rapid but appealing and informative way about Transitway-related impacts and how residents can become involved in the process. The toolkit could include, but is not limited to, posters/maps for displaying within a bus shelter, handouts, or interactive displays.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harrison Neighborhood Association</td>
<td>• Van White Boulevard</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>Serves the racially diverse North Minneapolis Community and, through the Corridors of Opportunity, partners with the Heritage Park Neighborhood and the Lao Assistance Center of MN. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Trained leaders to advocate community position and to create land use planning stakeholders for the development of the Van White Station. Language: Hmong and Lao.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masjid An-Nur</td>
<td>• Golden Valley Road</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>Serves the North Minneapolis Muslim and East African population. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Can increase awareness and educate and recruit community advocates. Language: Somali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masjid An-Nur</td>
<td>• Penn Avenue</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masjid An-Nur</td>
<td>• Van White</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Interfaith Council of Affordable Housing</td>
<td>• All stations</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td>This project brings together the members and resources of four organizations around the shared goal of engaging residents of North Minneapolis with supporters from communities along Bottineau transit way to engage community members on the Northside to assure that development decisions benefit everyone in the community. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Presentations, forums and dialogues comprehensive training will be held for community members, host meeting and access to their social media network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis Park &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>• Golden Valley Road</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Engages and involves the public in the park planning. MPRB uses community engagement to provide consistent practice in working and communicating with Minneapolis residents and park users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis Park &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>• Penn Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN Center for Neighborhood Organizing</td>
<td>• All Stations</td>
<td>Community Engagement Team (CET) Member</td>
<td>Serves neighborhood and resident organizations. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> MCNO builds the capacity of residents and neighborhood organizations to successfully take on local concerns by developing the skills of neighborhood organizers and leaders. MCNO has the potential to engage populations along the entire Corridor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN Center for Neighborhood Organizing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nexxus Community Partners</strong></td>
<td>• All Stations</td>
<td>Community Engagement Team (CET) Member and Policy Board</td>
<td>Works at the intersection of community building and community development, engaging communities of color and immigrant communities to achieve equitable, sustainable revitalization. Nexus considers the engagement of communities of color and immigrant communities essential to equitable community revitalization. Community Engagement is a key strategy in their broader work. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Community building, and includes multiple concepts and techniques used to promote excluded residents’ participation in community life, and to strengthen neighborhood revitalization efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northside Resident Redevelopment Council (NRRC)</strong></td>
<td>• Golden Valley Road</td>
<td>Corridors of Opportunity Grantee</td>
<td><strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Informs, engages and facilitates resident participation in activities that improve the community in the Jordan, Near North and Willard Hay neighborhoods. NRRC manages the Northside Transportation Network (NTN) the joint North Minneapolis Advocates for Transit Development. NRRC and NTN will facilitate extensive outreach to engage underrepresented communities in collaboration with Asian Economic Development Association, Asian Media Access, and Lao Assistance Center, Masjid An-Nur, Northside Achievement Zone, North Point Health and Wellness Center, Minneapolis Urban League, Harrison Neighborhood Association, Heritage Park Neighborhood Association and other local groups, businesses and institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Northside Partnership (UNP)</strong></td>
<td>• Golden Valley Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>A community alliance of Northside communities, the University, Hennepin County, and the city of Minneapolis that work together to resolve challenges facing residents on the north side of Minneapolis. The UNP focuses on the community-identified issues of ISAIAH, and Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. <strong>Engagement Services:</strong> Leadership and facilitation education, health and wellness, and community and economic development. A Community Affair Committee (CAC) meets monthly and serves as the operational arm of the UNP. At CAC meetings, interested participants discuss potential strategies for using research and developing partnerships to address these issues.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| West Broadway Business and Area Coalition (WBC) | • Golden Valley Road  
• Penn Avenue | Community organizer | An alliance of business and nonprofits and neighbors whose mission is to create a vital and thriving West Broadway Commercial Corridor in North Minneapolis. Many of the business owners are from underrepresented populations. Meets monthly and can host transit discussions meeting.  
**Engagement Services:** WBC could disseminate literature, survey members and post information on their website. |
| Works Progress                                | • All Stations                   |                      | An artist-led public art & design studio based in Minneapolis, creates artistic platforms for people to engage, connect, converse and create within their neighborhoods and across creative and culture boundaries.  
**Engagement Services:** Works Progress works collaboratively with other artists and organizations and produces public art projects and programs, organizes underrepresented residents around transportation equity issues by engaging them where they live. |
IDENTIFICATION OF UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS ALONG THE BOTTINEAU CORRIDOR

The second step in the development of the CEP is the identification of underrepresented populations along the Bottineau Corridor. Because some underrepresented populations are currently being targeted by organizations for community engagement, as evidenced by Table 7.1, of particular concern is the identification of underrepresented populations currently not being engaged for involvement in community planning processes.

Identifying which population groups are underrepresented and where they are located involved the analysis of demographic data available through the U.S. Census, municipal websites, and third party providers, such as www.city-data.com. Meetings with city staffs and community engagement experts active in the Corridor helped identify populations not apparent from the demographic data. For example, because of the ethnicity limitation of the Census, new immigrants to a community may not be counted by the Census, especially if numbers are statistically small.

The CEP identifies the following underrepresented populations: African-Americans, African Immigrants, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islanders, persons with low incomes and female heads of households, persons with limited English proficiency, persons with low educational attainment, zero car households, persons with disabilities (sight or hearing impairment, physical mobility), youth (age 14 to 24), and seniors (age 65 and older).

The following maps are examples of the resources used to identify where concentrations of underrepresented populations exist along the Corridor.
Figure 7.3 - White Population along Bottineau Corridor

Figure 7.4 - Hispanic Population along Bottineau Corridor
Figure 7.5 - Household Income along Bottineau Corridor

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census*

Figure 7.6 - Foreign-Born Population along Bottineau Corridor

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census*
Figure 7.9 - Senior Housing facilities
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT OF UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS

The recommendations for enhancing community engagement in the Bottineau Corridor are the result of synthesizing findings from the inventory of current community engagement activities and the identification of underrepresented populations along with established best practices.

Community Engagement Definition
Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest, or affiliation or identity to address issues affecting their well-being. The linking of the term ‘community’ to ‘engagement’ serves to broaden the scope, shifting the focus from the individual to the collective with the associated implications for inclusiveness, in order to ensure consideration is made for the diversity that exists within any community. (Source: International Association of Public Participation; http://www.ipa.org)

The CEP seeks to incorporate the principles of good community engagement which are:

- Informs, consults, involves, collaborates and empowers participants through formalized methods of listening and reporting of feedback
- Ensures that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision making
- Supports sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of the participants
- Provides information in meaningful ways
- Communicates how the community input affects the project
- Recognizes that every community is unique and all people have common interests

Suggested activities are intended to support efforts to reach a broader representation of underserved groups to share information to assist them in understanding the benefits, options, policies and decisions of proposals and the pros and cons of each station location to help them be engaged, involved and informed decision makers.
Community Engagement Activities for Underrepresented Groups
The following are recommended community engagement activities for underrepresented populations in the Bottineau Corridor.

Mass Media Techniques
To reach the majority of stakeholders including underserved populations in future planning efforts, it will be essential to use a wide variety of mass media including electronic and print media (e.g. community/ethnic papers), internet media, public presentations, billboards, radio (e.g. ethnic stations/programs), targeted television programming (e.g. ECHO), and bus shelters. To reach underrepresented groups with low English language proficiency, all mass media materials should be provided in multiple languages. Specific efforts should consider the use of short targeted messages that have broad appeal to inform and engage and share progress and results.

For invitations and announcements, the use of text messaging, social media, email alerts, Facebook, and Twitter should be considered. In addition, the use of informal social networks and Facebook can help build a fan base with multiple links through informal trusted connectors.

Open Houses
To reach parties interested in learning more about the transit land use plans, it is recommended that local governments and stakeholders host open houses that are Corridor-wide as well as specific to each community group. Open houses should present information and give attendees opportunities to build their knowledge. The data presentation should include portable message boards in multiple languages. It is best to host open houses in locations of community focus: coffee houses, community schools, grocery stores and at annual community events. To increase participation of underrepresented populations, open houses should be held where the population lives, works and congregates. Meetings should provide incentives (raffles, prizes and tokens), childcare, meals or refreshments, and free transportation, if necessary.

Small Group Meetings
For broad participation on specific issues, it is recommended to use small group meetings. Many communities have block clubs, tenant associations to host small group engagement meetings. Group hosts can help locate and engage residents in specific geographic areas. Neighbors of all ethnicities will respond to an invitation from a resident on the block. Limit the engagement to 60 minutes, offer refreshments, prepare a short (8 minutes) opening and spend the rest of the time in small group discussion. Bring topic questions and collect
responses. To increase the participation of underrepresented populations, especially blocks that are the most likely to have residents with low-educational attainment, low English proficiency, and unmotivated residents, ask a local host to make special efforts to reach specific groups.

**Use of Trusted Advocates**

The use of the trusted advocate model can help in engaging all communities, especially underrepresented populations. It is recommended that a community-based organization lead the implementation of the trusted advocate engagement process. This organization, however, must be trusted by the community, other community-based organizations involved in the planning process, and by the government agency leading the planning process.

The trusted advocate is a member of the community who can work to engage and empower other members of the community to participate effectively in the project planning and decision-making processes. The trusted advocate will know how to engage their respective community and can guide other organizations involved in the planning process in how to facilitate engagement through the clear communication of how and at what point community members can most effectively influence the decision-making process.

**Focus Groups**

Focus Groups should be used to learn about perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes. Questions should be prepared in advance and a majority of the time should be spent soliciting information. Hire an impartial facilitator. Use language appropriate to the audience. Keep the meetings short (90 minutes) and only address a few topics. Where appropriate, use of visual aids is recommended to facilitate discussion and help participants see, organize, and work through thoughts and ideas. Record information and share with the group as soon as possible. Summarize the results with surveys and evaluations at the end of each session. To reach target populations, locate focus group meetings in partnership with community-based engagement providers, faith based institutions, block clubs and house parties, where affiliate groups are free to talk and feel connected.

**Be Present at Community Festivals and Events**

Currently, the communities along the Corridor host a number of annual festivals and events sponsored by municipalities and local non-profit organizations. Examples of events include Earle Brown Days in Brooklyn Center, Tater Daze in Brooklyn Park, and the Urban League Family Day and FLOW in North Minneapolis. Festivals and events are an excellent opportunity for community engagement. Therefore, it is recommended that engagement efforts include the establishment of an information booth to inform, survey, and collect contact information.
for residents at these annual events. To reach target populations, constituents should be asked to complete short surveys and indicate their ethnicity. One possible approach is to attend the Minneapolis Urban League Family Day to reach African Americans. Partnering with community organizations for specific festivals can help keep messaging consistent and build trust within the community.

**Surveys**

Surveys, both paper and electronic, can help efficiently collect information from a large number of individuals. Surveys should be used to collect qualitative information, specific opinions, and ideas. Keep the survey short and be specific. Surveys can be easily adapted to a variety of environments and should be considered at community festivals, grocery stores, focus groups, small group meetings, Facebook, and webpage community events. Surveys are easy to administer and replicate and can be customized throughout the planning process. To reach target populations, surveys should be written in the language of the identified non-English underrepresented populations. Be mindful, however, that written surveys do not always translate well, especially when using rating systems or technical terms. Therefore, use of pictures and graphics can help minimize confusion.

Trusted advocates can help persons with low educational attainment or people with limited vision by assisting with the filling out the surveys. The respondent can self-identify ethnicity and income for a more accurate representation and to increase participation. Low income underrepresented populations can be incentivized to participate in surveys with gift certificates. For instance, the use of $5 gift certificates to community businesses can often substantially increase participation.

**Street Outreach**

Street outreach is also recommended as an additional versatile way to collect opinions from a majority of stakeholders. The method can reach target populations, diverse populations and engage in short personal discussions in informal comfortable settings where people are. To identify targeted populations, offer gift certificates (e.g., $5 gift certificates to community businesses) or entrance in a raffle to win special prizes. Coordination with a community-based organization or trusted advocate can help facilitate a street outreach process while at the same time strengthen the overall planning process.
"Meeting in a Box"
To help reach youth, the use of “meeting in a box” is recommended. All materials necessary to hold successful meetings are in a prepackaged box and are designed with language, terms, and graphics that are appropriate for younger persons. Typically, the meeting is hosted by a guide, a trusted advocate or a facilitator with an affiliation with the targeted group. The meeting host is provided with an instruction sheet and discussion guide. Following the discussion guide, the group discusses any relevant planning issues. Meeting attendees are then asked to individually complete response forms. All forms are collected and the box with meeting results is forwarded to the project team for incorporation into the study. Although “meeting-in-a-box” can work in a number of environments, it is recommended that any effort be coordinated with persons or organizations familiar with working with youth in the targeted community. Example partners include youth who have previous experience with public engagement, park and rec boards, Big Brother/Big Sister organizations, community centers, and other youth-based agencies and organizations.

Use of Incentives
To reach underrepresented groups, offer incentives for involvement such as small gift certificates for local businesses, gas cards or bus tokens. Advertise meals and childcare. Take the meetings to them. People completing surveys are entered into a raffle or given a Metro Transit gift card.

COO grantees are employing some of these strategies. Future grant objectives should include plans to track participation, increase unduplicated attendees and reach people where they live and work.

Strategies for inclusion were derived from several sources including:

1. “Nexus Engaging Community for Sustainable Revitalization, Key Trends”
**Generalized Community Engagement Development Process**

When to apply certain strategies and techniques depends on a number of factors. In some instances, the technique will need to be on-going. In other instances, the technique will be most useful when a key planning decision is imminent. Figure 7.10 helps illustrate the process for developing and monitoring community engagement.

*Figure 7.10 - Generalized Community Engagement Development Process*
### Targeted Group: Low-Income Seniors

Low income seniors live throughout the Corridor. Ethnic minority seniors, in particular, are one of the poorest groups in every community; but most significant in North Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park.

- Transportation
- Language
- Previous and negative engagement experience
- Fear of crime
- Mobility
- Awareness

#### Technologies and Services

1. Mass media
2. COO grantees working with the ethnic minorities should reach out to seniors
3. Community News outlets
   - City of Brooklyn Park and Center, Crystal; Robbinsdale: Sun Post, City of Golden Valley; Golden Valley Patch, North Minneapolis; Near North News media
4. Host open houses and small group engagement meetings at senior centers in public housing facilities and provide involvement incentives, such as a taxi voucher.
5. Partner with trusted senior citizen advocates for focus groups facilitators. Use information booths to conduct surveys.
6. Conduct street outreach.
7. Collaborate with AARP, Volunteers of American, faith-based institutions and public housing providers.
8. Host events and meeting during the day or other times to facilitate attendance.

### Targeted Group: Ethnic Minorities

Different concentrations of ethnic minorities make up the majority of low income people in each community. North Minneapolis: African American, Hispanic, Asian and Hispanic; Brooklyn Park: White, Hispanic, African American; Brooklyn Center: African American, White, Hispanic; Golden Valley: African American.

- Language
- Previous and negative engagement experience
- Low-educational attainment
- Transportation

#### Technologies and Services

1. COO grantees and other community engagement providers (Table 4) serve many of the ethnic minority groups and partnerships with other social service organizations.
2. Translate materials in other languages
3. Mass media
   - Place ads in ethnic newspapers; Media Directory http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/refugee/ethnicmedia.pdf
   - KMOJ radio
   - KFAI radio
4. Provide childcare, transportation and incentives (grocery, gas card and discounts).
5. Host open houses and small group engagement meetings in public housing projects, low income apartment complexes, at schools, faith based institutions, etc. and provide involvement incentives. For instance, provide taxi vouchers for attendees.
6. Conduct street outreach.
7. Partner with trusted advocates for focus groups facilitators, stage information booths and to conduct surveys from the community.
8. Small group engagement meeting
9. Find language interpreters
### Young Populations

Young people make a significant percentage of low income people who live throughout the Corridor. Ethnic minority groups’ youth are the poorest groups in every community, but most significantly in North Minneapolis, Brooklyn Center, and Brooklyn Park.

**Targeted Barriers to Engagement**
- Low educational attainment
- Awareness
- Time
- Limited civic engagement experience

**Activities for Inclusion**
1. Social Media, contests, surveys with incentives gift card to local businesses
2. A Meeting-in-a-Box gives youth all the materials necessary to hold a successful self-guided meeting. A volunteer, who could be a responsible student or adult, facilitates the meeting with an instruction sheet and discussion guide.
3. Host focus groups and surveys at Adult Basic Education Centers
4. Host open houses and small group engagement meetings in high schools, North Hennepin Community College and Dunwoody College and provide involvement incentives. Provide taxi vouchers for attendees.
5. Partner with trusted youth advocates to serve as focus group facilitators, staff information booths, conduct surveys and street outreach.
6. Conduct street outreach at places frequented by young people (Brunswick Entertainment Center, Brooklyn Park, YMCA, North Minneapolis).
7. Develop partnerships with YWCA, YMCA, and youth service organizations.
8. COO grantees working with the ethnic minorities should reach out to young people.

### New Immigrants

New immigrants and elders in some ethnic minority groups have limited English proficiency.

**Targeted Barriers to Engagement**
- Low educational attainment
- Limited civic engagement experience
- Awareness

**Activities for Inclusion**
1. COO grantees and other community engagement providers (appendix 4) serve many of the ethnic minority groups and partnerships with other social service organizations.
2. Mass media
   - Place ads in ethnic newspapers; Media Directory [http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/refugee/ethnicmedia.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/refugee/ethnicmedia.pdf)
3. Host open houses in public housing projects, low income apartments, at schools, faith based institutions, where new immigrants frequent etc. and provide involvement incentives. Provide taxi vouchers for attendees.
4. COO providers’ language services
   - ACER- Nigerian and Liberian and French
   - Asian Economic Development Association- Laotian, Hmong, Vietnamese
   - Asian Media Access – Hmong and Laotian
   - Harrison Neighborhood Association- Lao, Hmong, French
   - La Asamblea de Derechos Civiles – Spanish
   - Masjid An- NUR – Somali
5. Host focus groups and surveys at English as Second Language and Adult Basic Education Centers
### Targeted Group Barriers to Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targeted Group</th>
<th>Barriers to Engagement</th>
<th>Activities for Inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-Income Whites</td>
<td>• Not receiving any services</td>
<td>1. Host focus groups and surveys at Adult Basic Education Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Previous and negative engagement experience</td>
<td>2. Host open houses and small group engagement meeting at senior center in public housing and provide involvement incentives. Provide taxi voucher</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low-educational attainment</td>
<td>3. Offer classes at Workforce Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Immigrants</td>
<td>• Not receiving any services</td>
<td>1. Media ethnic newspaper Zerkalo Russian language newspaper: <a href="http://www.zerkalomn.com">www.zerkalomn.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Language</td>
<td>2. Host meeting with trusted advocates and interpreters at the Dover Apartments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Limited engagement experience</td>
<td>3. Host focus groups and surveys at Adult Basic and English as a Second Language Education Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low-educational attainment</td>
<td>4. Partner with trusted advocates for focus groups facilitators, Information booths to conduct surveys, street outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Dig into the census numbers and find out if other Russian Immigrants are in other communities, along the Corridor and seek an organization to serve this populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Educational Attainment</td>
<td>• Previous and negative engagement experience</td>
<td>1. Host open houses in communities where low educational attainment is noted. Provide incentives to help increase participation. Possible settings include apartment buildings with meeting space, schools, places of worship, and libraries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>COO PROVIDERS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• African Career Education Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Asian Economic Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Harrison Neighborhood Association</td>
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<td>• La Asamblea de Derechos Civiles</td>
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<td>• Masjid An- NUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Native American CDC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Northside Resident and Redevelopment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other activities:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Small group meetings, street marketing and opportunities for training will overcome educational issues associated with limited experience and ability to understand complex transit planning issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Take meeting to GED/Workforce Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Host meeting in partnership with Emerge, Pillsbury United, Way to Grow, Parents in Community Action, Goodwill, Salvation Army, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Low-income persons are defined as having incomes at or below the state’s poverty level. In Minnesota, as of 2012, the poverty threshold is defined as an annual income of at or below $11,702 for a single adult and at or below $23,050 for a family of four.
Community Engagement as Part of Station Area Planning in the Bottineau Corridor

Previous sections of this chapter presented a generalized process for community engagement (Figure 7.10) and an outline that identified appropriate activities for reaching underrepresented populations in the Bottineau Corridor (Table 7.2). This section merges those two elements into a strategy adapted for station area planning in the Bottineau Corridor.

Step 1: Design Key Messages

The lead agency in charge of facilitating the station area planning process will need to build key messages around the purpose of the planning process and why it is relevant to the community and is of value to them before they can become truly engaged. Without identifying key messages, there is risk that the community may perceive its involvement by project planners as superfluous or simply another check box to be ticked off in a long list of planning tasks.

Designing key messages will likely require consideration not only about how station area planning fits into a larger planning framework but also how key objectives will need to match up with expected outcomes for the plans. For example, one might design a key message around how an improved transit system serving the affected communities could result in housing changes around station areas.

The building blocks of Step 1 are well under way in the Bottineau Corridor as a result of work related to the Alternative Analysis, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), and the Station Area Pre-Planning Study, which this community engagement plan is a part of. Regardless, the community engagement process is such that even key messages which may have been defined early in the process are almost always subject to change. In station area planning, communities should be able to build upon this previous work to create messages tailored to individual station areas.

Step 2: Identify Barriers

By identifying the barriers to engagement, particularly among underrepresented populations, planning can begin on how best to engage the community. This would involve identifying which best practices can be employed, which community-based partners are most appropriate to work with, and what kind of timeline might be appropriate. For station area planning in the Bottineau Corridor, this step is largely complete with other sections of this chapter addressing those elements.

Step 3: Develop Messages to Reach Target Groups

Step 3 builds upon steps 1 and 2. With key messages defined and underrepresented populations and their barriers to engagement identified, targeted outreach messages and work plans can be created by working with identified partners within each community group.

This should occur prior to the broader public participation process associated with station area planning because the engagement of underrepresented populations will require on-going relationship building as well as education of how they can effectively participate in the broader public participation process, which may include more traditional engagement techniques such as large public meetings or open houses. By engaging underrepresented populations first, they can be encouraged to participate in the general input process or, at a minimum, their comments can be brought forward by staff or others involved in the process.

For the Bottineau Corridor, this will mean coordinating with community-based organizations, especially those with grants from the Corridors of Opportunity, to develop strategies for how and when to conduct outreach. For groups not currently being served by community-based organizations, project planners will need to coordinate outreach efforts separately or with other government partners at the municipal, county, or regional levels.

Step 4: Post Messages and Invite Participation

Begin the outreach process by communicating key messages to targeted groups through the use of channels appropriate to each group, such as text messaging, social media, radio, newspapers, schools, places of assembly, etc. At the same time, start scheduling specific opportunities for engagement including meetings, attendance at events, and preparation of surveys. It will also be essential as part of Step 4 to begin the process of arranging incentives, if necessary, and other accommodations that would enhance participation, such as travel vouchers, child care, refreshments, etc.

Step 5: Implement the Plan

In addition to attending meetings and events, conducting surveys, or any other outreach activities identified in Steps 3 and 4, project
planners will also need to be prepared to advocate for underrepresented populations at critical public meetings in the event that representatives from those groups are unable to attend such meetings. Ideally, the goal is to empower underrepresented groups to understand when critical decisions are made during the station area planning process and to be a part of that decision-making process. The reality, unfortunately, is that all too often underrepresented populations are unable to attend certain planning functions even with the benefit of a robust community engagement plan. In these instances, project planners or other identified parties, having assisted in the implementation of a community engagement plan, could serve as advocates for an underrepresented group. Moreover, project planners may also have a responsibility to inform underrepresented groups about the status of the project and key decisions that were made.

Step 6: Evaluate Progress and Modify
Throughout the station area planning process, progress of the community engagement plan should be evaluated to ensure goals and outcomes are being reached. Periodic evaluation will allow the ability to modify the plan if necessary and potentially avoid duplicating or delaying elements of the larger planning process because targeted engagement goals were not met. Who is responsible for monitoring progress will also need to be determined early on, perhaps in an earlier step. Depending on where a station area is located might determine whether the monitoring is done by the lead agency in charge of the project or a collaboration of different agencies and community-based organizations.

It will also be important as part of Step 6 to track outcomes. This can be achieved by tracking participation through the number of names on sign-in sheets, the number of flyers distributed, the number of inquiries or tweets, survey responses, etc. Outcomes can also be tracked by updating those elements of the community plan that identify the location and size of known population groups that tend to be underrepresented in the Bottineau Corridor as well as the community-based organizations that serve or work with those groups. This type of tracking, which would include monitoring change in the demographic composition of the study area, is especially helpful if the station area plans are intended to be updated over time or integrated into a larger planning process.

Step 7: Report Progress
Progress and outcomes of the community engagement plan will need to be documented as part of the station area plans. Although it is common among most station area planning projects to broadly document public participation, it may be necessary to specifically document the steps and outcomes associated with reaching those underrepresented groups identified in the community engagement plan. Again, which agency responsible for reporting will need to be determined.
Additional Observations and Recommendations Specific to the Bottineau Corridor

As part of the process of participating in numerous meetings and interviews, additional insight was learned about the community engagement prospects in the Bottineau Corridor. These observations are summarized below.

- Given more than twenty years of nearly continuous transit planning and the recent D1 alignment decision, many persons along the Bottineau Corridor have engagement fatigue. Community meetings have at times been tense with discussion often dominated by a small number of individuals. As a result, many residents have stopped attending such meetings out of frustration that their voice is not being heard. Therefore, it will be important that any subsequent planning process to be continually building leaders in the community to account for this dynamic and make new attempts to reinvigorate community engagement activities for the next series of community engagement.

- Transit planning is the lynch pin for cost-effective investments and works best when collaborated with other development plans. In North Minneapolis there are many economic development, health, and employment improvement plans, but no overall development plan that coordinates these efforts and brings to bear the financial and human resources needed for transformational, neighborhood-wide change. Poor coordination of various planning activities has at times in the past led to negative community engagement experiences among residents due to meeting fatigue and unresolved contentious issues. Moving forward, therefore, it will be important to coordinate other planning efforts with transit planning in order to minimize meeting fatigue. It will also be important to identify, acknowledge, and address past unresolved issues that have at times divided the community. Furthermore, less formal communication methods that are targeted to where people live and socialize will help mitigate fatigue associated with traditional meetings. Also, the use of mass media can also minimize meeting fatigue.

- Another interesting finding from the research is the erroneous assumption that all ethnic and racial minorities have significant barriers to engagement due to issues of English proficiency, low incomes, or the like. In Golden Valley, for example, the Russian immigrant population, which is considered racially white, is often underrepresented at community meetings because of low English proficiency. Whereas in other parts of the Bottineau Corridor, African immigrants are often bilingual and speak English and regularly attend community meetings. Simply stated, ethnicity should not presume the necessity for special outreach and engagement planning, unless other factors such as poverty, language and low educational attainment are also considered.
Poverty appears to be one of the most important barriers to engagement. Incentivizing low-income persons with gift certificates, meals, child care, and free transportation can make it easier for them to participate and demonstrate value their time and opinions. Going to the targeted low income populations instead of expecting them to attend meetings would be an effective strategy. Best practices include street outreach and repeated messages in mass media that invite people to get involved.

During community meetings, it is recommended that presentations be more straightforward with information and well-rehearsed in order to generate more input. This will have the added benefit of shortening meeting times by limiting the focus of the meeting to a few key issues. In addition, offering more formats and venues to share information would also give facilitators more time for community dialogue. If resources are available, consideration should be given to working with local marketing firms (or schools) to create simple messages for social and community media when planning each station area. Trusted advocates can use the messages and collateral documents to consistently communicate the process and accomplishments, solicit input, and share progress.

The community engagement process has been repeated numerous times for many community level development projects along the Corridor. The CEP recommends collecting contact information on the people to track outreach results and developing and maintaining a community contact data base. For example, the Miami Dade MPO maintains a public involvement database that stores all correspondence from the public and creates customizable outreach lists. The database contains businesses and organizations that the MPO’s Public Involvement Office can call upon when organizing community outreach events, mailing newsletters, and for other correspondence. For example, the MPO distributes “Citizen Guides” in English, Spanish, and Creole, which are intended to assist the public in understanding the transportation planning process. The MPO also distributes a “Call for Ideas” brochure to contacts in the public involvement database early in the plan development process.

Delving into the number and street level assessments should be one of the first activities of the planning process. This activity helps identify needs of traditionally underrepresented populations. This is a fundamental step in engaging populations whose abilities and constraints don’t favor their participation in planning events and are crucial to the development and implementation of the public involvement plan.

Building a profile by locating defined underrepresented, alone will not identify the reason for lack of participation. Planners will have to conduct field visit to verify data, identify businesses, schools, faith-based organizations and social service providers informal connectors and places where targeted groups frequent.

As a reminder, door-to-door doorknocking and engaging community members on a one-to-one basis should not be undervalued. Although doorknocking has become more difficult in recent years due to changing communication patterns, community engagement is ultimately about relationship and trust building and sometimes the resources needed convene a large group far outweigh what it takes to knock on the same number of doors.