

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

A robust engagement plan was put in place that included stakeholder interviews, policymaker meetings, community events and a brand workshop.

“We have an opportunity to be the go-to place.”

“I want a brand that associates with the corridor.”

“We need to make it real.”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Objectives:

- Learn about current sentiments, hopes, dreams, concerns about the assignment
- Find community members to involve in the project

Methodology:

- One-on-one interviews with steering committee members, city staff & community advocates
- City visits – North Minneapolis, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley & Brooklyn Park

Key insights:

- Growing buy in—but also skepticism
- City pride is big—some have it, some are trying to garner more
- Not every city has clearly defined who they are
- All cities have “hidden gems”
- Excitement exists for access to other “hidden gems” along the corridor
- Perceptions and desires not aligned with Met Council and MnDOT
- Some communities are more engaged than others
- Marketing and communication infrastructures vary along the corridor
- Great spirit and desire for continued collaboration
- There is excitement for a unified corridor brand elevating all cities
- Community members wary of giving their input based on a history of not seeing outcomes
- Important to provide incentives & remove all obstacles for engagement participants
- Accessibility is a must—location, time of event, transit options
- Meet people where they are—farmers markets, high-density shopping areas, public transit, religious communities

“Will it even happen?”

POLICYMAKER MEETINGS

Objectives:

- Generate awareness of the brand development project/seek their council

Methodology:

- Presented at Connect Blue Line Now Monthly meeting
- Held meetings with Commissioner Opat & Commissioner Fernando
- Had discussions with other public officials during community engagement activities

Key insights:

- Although the brand is focused on the five cities, impact is for the broader region
- This area has been overlooked for economic development opportunities—desire to realize the same opportunities as Southwest & Hiawatha
- All communities will benefit as the region becomes stronger
- Imperative for community members to find themselves in the new brand vision
- Concern that the region will come out short
- Strong opportunity to create regional pride
- Support & champion the power of collaboration within the corridor

“There’s so much economic development potential.”

“We’ve bought into it...so should they.”

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Objectives:

- Gain community & city insights for future messaging/content development
- Discover commonalities within the region
- Start engaging people about the branding initiative



Methodology:

- Conduct engagement activities at various events to find what people love about where they live/work/play
 - What’s cool about your city?
 - Attendees could draw, write or post their response on social media
 - Bold and engaging posters to get attention
 - Engagement specialist invited participation/talked about the project

What's cool about your city?

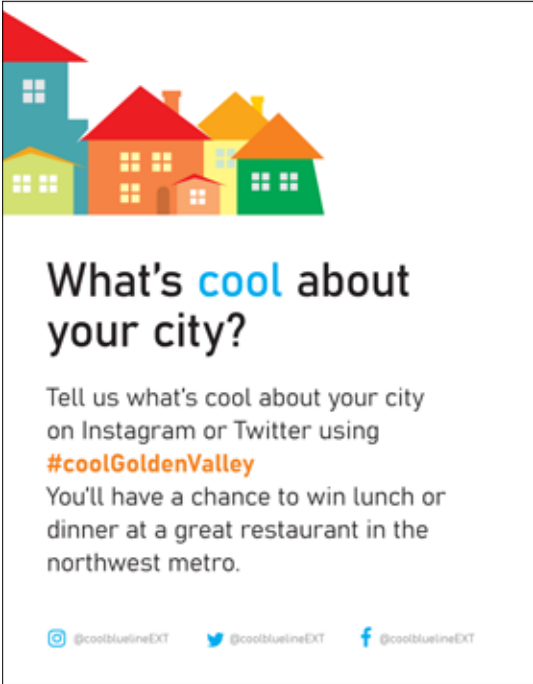
Tell us what's cool about your city and you'll have a chance to win lunch or dinner at a great restaurant in the northwest metro.

Your name and city

Email address and phone number

ENGAGEMENT ENTRY FORM

- Social media campaign
 - Social media handles on Twitter, Instagram & Facebook—CoolBlueLineEXT
 - Used to amplify the community engagement efforts
 - People encouraged to share what they love about their city using specified hashtag, #cool(city name)



ENGAGEMENT POSTER



ENGAGEMENT HASHTAG

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Key insights:

North Minneapolis

- “The awesome people.”
- “I like all the bike lanes and greenways.”
- “Physical programming that focuses on heart health and farming within the community.”



Golden Valley

- “Art Festival and biking trails”
- “Great library...accessible, well stocked and friendly.”
- “Parks”



Crystal

- “Crystal has an amazing cultural vibe! Embrace diversity!”
- “All of the parks so close to home.”
- “Non-chain options, local businesses.”



ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

BRAND WORKSHOP

Objectives:

- Tap into the aspirations, values & key differentiator for the corridor

Methodology:

- 2-1/2 hour interactive workshop
- Participants included a cross section of residents, business owners & workers from each city
- Discussions included city dreams, corridor gems, personality & vision



WORKSHOP IN PROGRESS



WORKSHOP IN PROGRESS

Key insights – City Desires

- North Minneapolis:** To be a colorful, walkable, friendly & diverse place where people respect each other
- Crystal:** To celebrate public art & have community gathering places
- Golden Valley:** To make Golden Valley a destination, building local pride & identity
- Brooklyn Park:** To be known for its arts & entertainment options & innovative green technologies
- Robbinsdale:** To have more locally-owned businesses, gathering places & a walkable city



ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



Key insights – Corridor Gems

- An integrated health services hub: world-class healthcare, women’s clinic, hearing center, etc.
- Regional/city parks & lakes
- Art community, e.g., Elision Play House, upcoming NHCC center for the arts
- Historical landmarks such as Prince’s home
- Many cultures make it a foodie haven



CORRIDOR-WIDE GEMS



Corridor Personifications



EAGLE REPRESENTING ASPIRATION, NATIONAL RECOGNITION, OPTIMISM



GIRAFFE REPRESENTING STRENGTH OF TODAY WITH THE VISION OF NEW HORIZONS



CHAIR REPRESENTING INTERWOVEN COMMUNITY



FOOD TRUCK REPRESENTING COMMUNITY AND CORRIDOR GEMS



STOOLS REPRESENTING STURDINESS, COMMUNITY

KEY TAKEAWAYS – GENERAL



CORRIDOR-WIDE GEMS

The following takeaways are a result of primary and secondary research conducted with diverse community groups, organizations and city stakeholders.

A regional brand is critical for future growth.

The region, for all intents and purposes, has been overlooked and undervalued. It hasn't received the same level of support as other areas in the Twin Cities. This needs to change.

Stakeholders understand the benefits of a unified corridor brand and see it as an important way to elevate individual cities and communities while also paving the way for new opportunities.

There is a strong appetite for continued corridor collaboration with each city in the region.

Corridor pride is a significant opportunity.

Pride is a common thread...of what already exists and what could be.

Stakeholders are very hopeful about the possibility of Twin Citians discovering the many "hidden gems" along the corridor. There is also genuine enthusiasm for northwest metro cities to explore each other's hidden gems:

- Authentic cultural experiences
- Destination restaurants
- Beautiful lakes
- Outdoor adventures
- Charming historic locations
- Must-see attractions (e.g., where Prince grew up)

There are impressive assets along the corridor to entice home buyers, renters, businesses and developers:

- Affordable housing
- Exceptional health care facilities
- Highly-regarded education facilities
- Emerging and well-established businesses

While there is excitement for the Blue Line Extension, there are also concerns.

Many wonder if the Met Council and MnDOT are really on board. There is skepticism that it will actually happen, especially since so much time has passed. And while development opportunities are exciting, there are also some concerns:

- Gentrification
- Increased property values
- Congestion, noise and loitering
- Potential crime

Not all cities are alike.

Some cities and communities are more engaged than others. Some cities are further ahead with their branding efforts and marketing/communications infrastructures. Others have not yet clearly defined who they are.



KEY TAKEAWAYS – CITY ENGAGEMENT



CITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

NORTH MINNEAPOLIS

- North Minneapolis is unique in many ways, one being that it's not a standalone city.
- It's a very diverse area (white, African American, Hmong, Hispanic, Native American and other immigrants).
- Many residents were displaced to Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center after the 2011 tornado but still have many cultural connections to North Minneapolis.
- There are strong neighborhood associations and an impressive concentration of education facilities (11 educational institutions within a mile).
- Great potential exists for economic development in this area.
- There is 50/50 engagement with the Blue Line extension—many don't believe it will happen.
- There are concerns North Minneapolis will be viewed as "pass through" LRT stops.
- Community members want it to be seen as the "go to" place.
- With a singular focus on roads, MnDOT is not in sync with community needs.

ROBBINSDALE

- Robbinsdale is very proud of their small-town charm and historic downtown within walking distance to the proposed LRT station.
- People are passionate about maintaining their independence and historic status.
- There are beautiful lakes in and around the city.
- There's also a thriving commercial district with attractive restaurants, shopping and entertainment options.
- Housing is affordable and diverse.

KEY TAKEAWAYS – CITY ENGAGEMENT



CITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS



- Residents and businesses are very engaged with the LRT initiative and see it as a great opportunity to be known as a must-visit destination (“I want to stop at the bird”).
- The city identified and invited people who live and work in the city to join a community working group.

CRYSTAL

- Crystal is the most affordable suburb in the region with modest single-family homes—it’s known as “the value suburb.”
- Perceptions remain of Crystal being an older, blue-collar community but recently, younger families have started to move in.
- Crystal has a very diverse population which includes people from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- The city is currently reconstructing Becker Park (\$6 million) to better suit the needs of its residents.
- Adjacent to the park is a concentration of immigrant businesses.
- Crystal enjoys strong collaboration with neighboring cities (Robbinsdale, New Hope and Brooklyn Park).
- They re-launched their city brand with a new logo and flag.

BROOKLYN PARK

- Brooklyn Park has suffered from negative perceptions, especially since it was previously known as a crime ridden area.
- The city has changed and they’re quick to note they’re not Brooklyn Center.
- 90% of people who live in Brooklyn Park, love it.
- Many don’t realize that Brooklyn Park is a food haven.
- The city is home to big corporations (Tesla, Target and Takeda)

KEY TAKEAWAYS – CITY ENGAGEMENT



CITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

- It was recently announced that they are the largest solar powered city in Minnesota—they are 100% sustainable.
- There is a great mix of culture with people of color comprising 54% of the area—they have the largest population of Liberians outside of Liberia; also Kenyan, Nigerian, Asian and Latino.
- Engagement activities include community events, meetings, public commentaries, surveys, churches, women’s groups, mosques, breaking bread after prayer, parks, etc.
- A new brand was recently introduced, the tagline is “Unique. United. Undiscovered.”

GOLDEN VALLEY

- Golden Valley is preparing to develop a new brand direction.
- Currently viewed as a bedroom community, they want to be seen as more urban and active vs. small town.
- With substantial open space, the city is reinvesting in new commercial business.
- Golden Valley has a lot to offer, including green spaces, golf courses, hiking trails, winter skiing, local art festivals, vibrant retail and lots of good restaurants.
- The daytime population is 30,000 and the nighttime population is 20,000.
- They developed an equity task force and are proud of putting themselves out in front with open arms.
- The community is diverse, including LGBT, Jewish, Russian residents.
- Engagement is strong with upper middle class, white families—need more diversity.

ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS



WORKSHOP IN PROGRESS



WORKSHEETS



ONE ON ONE INTERVIEWS

8 interviews between 7/1/19 and 8/30/19

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

8/28/2019, 16 invitees, Purpose: engagement plan input/outreach activities

10/3/2019, 15 invitees, Purpose: brand workshop debrief/next steps

10/29/2019, 12 invitees, Purpose: name consensus

12/13/2019, 19 invitees, Purpose: image system presentation

1/30/2020, 20 invitees, Purpose: messaging input

3/5/2020, 20 invitees, Purpose: wrap-up

CONNECT BLUE LINE NOW MEETINGS

8/5/2019

10/7/2019

12/2/2019

SURVEYS

Brand workshop (9/3/19): 55 respondents

Bottineau Corridor Input (11/7/19): 12 responses

NW Crossing Logo color/design (12/3/19): 22 respondents

NW Crossing Brand Review (2/7/20): 30 unique email addresses viewed page

WORKSHOP

Brand Workshop (9/25/19): 48 attendees

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES DURING CULTIVATE BOTTINEAU

North Minneapolis (8/24/19): ~50 people engaged

Golden Valley (9/15/19) ~300 people engaged

Crystal (9/28/19): ~75 people engaged

We received approximately 150 input cards from community activities, and 3 received \$50 gift cards to local restaurants via social media.