

Actualizing Equity in Transit: A VISION OF ABUNDANCE

Blue Line Coalition is advocating for transformative shifts in transit development by leading with an abundance mindset. We know community has the abundance of expertise to create a successful transit line and corridor, and there is an abundance of resources to realize those solutions. At our April 2023 Actualizing Equity event, the Blue Line Coalition discussed: What elements compose such a vibrant community? And what would it take to materialize those collective outcomes?



What would abundance look like for the Blue Line extension project?



“It’s all about celebrating the diversity of North Minneapolis. It’s about building business and having a good time. I’ve always wanted to make sure that this extended Blue Line is about the people. That it has all the amenities, all the goodies that we deserved in this community. I’ve been talking about a party train with a disco ball and slot machines on it. I want to see vibrating, massage chairs and edible plants on the platforms. Let’s have some fun with this. Let’s get the people what they want.” -*Candy Bakion, Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICA) and Heritage Park resident*



“I want to feel like I belong here. That this is my train. Like there’s a mural on the building of Sammy’s Avenue Eatery of the Virgin of Guadalupe. That just makes me feel at home. And I want the train to reflect all of us, to make the community feel like home. For that to happen, we need a pool of funding for all residents and businesses, regardless of immigration status, to stay in their home and their communities with access to assistance throughout the project.”

-*Karla Arredondo, Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza*



“The neighborhood would be more accessible. It’ll be more healthy. It’ll be more safe, whether you’re walking, or riding your bike. I like to be on my bike or my roller skates. And it would also have a very strong youth presence and influence and ownership. And young people wouldn’t just have ownership of the things but in the ideas, in the plan, in this vision and in the strategy and the execution. Then it will really feel like this is their home as well and they get to create the world they’re going to want to live in.”

- *Felicia Perry, Partnership in Property Commercial Land Trust*



“Having walkable, accessible neighborhoods and amenities is super important. The areas of the Twin Cities that benefited from racial covenants are really well developed. They have access to schools, pharmacies, clinics, grocery stores, and the traffic noise is little to non-existent. People live near lakes. They’ve enjoyed opportunities for generational wealth. So a successful outcome here is neighborhoods constructed around communities’ imagination and ideation for the kinds of things that they’d like to see.” -*José A. Zayas Caban, Our Streets Minneapolis*

OUR VISION OF ABUNDANCE

We know the stories we share shape how we define the problem and how we approach solutions. That's why the BLC has adopted a proactive messaging strategy focusing on what's possible – and what our communities deserve.



From North Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park, whether you're a new immigrant or someone whose family has lived here for generations, we all want to be able to put down roots and be part of a vibrant, connected and caring community that we're proud to call home. We want our kids to grow up with their neighbors, we want our small businesses to thrive, we want our cultures to be seen and honored – and we want our voices to shape decisions about how our neighborhoods change.

But, once again, our local government leaders are prioritizing their political egos and the desires of big developers over us: the Black and brown, Asian and immigrant folks who have made the Bottineau Corridor home. Decades ago, policymakers under the sway of the car industry destroyed a thriving Black business district in North Minneapolis to build a dangerous highway. Now, government leaders claim they have our interests in mind as they push through a light rail project they know will cause property values and rents to skyrocket, pushing us

out of our homes and businesses – yet again. They pretend they can't change their harmful behaviors by claiming a scarcity of time and resources, pitting neighbors against each other.

We know better. We don't have to choose between fast, affordable transportation options AND stable neighborhoods that build wealth and belonging for our families and businesses. We can and must have both. We deserve public investments that increase our ownership of the places we live and work, worship and learn. We need government processes that build our collective power to rewrite color-coded and outdated rules so we can not just survive but thrive on our own terms.

By coming together, across race and place, we can tell politicians and project leaders that we can and must take a different route – a route that leads to a future where we get the resources we deserve AND can stay and flourish in our communities.

OUR POLICY AGENDA

Because of the advocacy of the Blue Line Coalition and other allies, project leaders established and funded a first-of-its-kind **Anti-Displacement Working Group** to listen to community concerns and put forward tangible policies and processes to prevent people from being pushed out of their homes, businesses and neighborhoods.

In May 2023, the working group report was released, including a wealth of recommendations previously put forward by the BLC and other advocates to ensure our families can thrive in the places they choose to live, work and create community. Learn more and read the report at yourblueline.org/anti-displacement



Members of the BLC at a May press conference calling for the adoption of the anti-displacement recommendations

Learn more about the **Blue Line Coalition** at bluelinecoalition.org
Learn more about the **Actualizing Equity event series** at thealliancetc.org/actualizing-equity