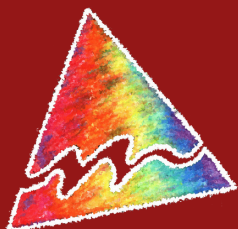


2025



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

To increase policies, plans and community design changes through Minneapolis Blue Line Extension and St. Paul Sears Redevelopment to better connect residents to everyday destination to live/work/play, and provide safe, culturally based places for increasing physical activities.



Asian Media Access



YEAR 2 EVALUATION REPORT

AMA Physical Activity Efforts

INTRODUCTION

Project SUPPORT is a cross-cultural, cross-generational, and cross-sectoral initiative, aims to improve health, prevent chronic disease, and reduce health disparities among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOCs). Supported by CDC's REACH funding, AMA leverages our extensive network of trusted community partners who provide subject matter expertise and have a history of successful engagement with the respective cultural and geographic communities.

Physical Activity is one of the primary elements addressed by Project SUPPORT. The goal of this initiative is to increase policies, plans and community designs through North Minneapolis Blue Line and St. Paul Sears Redevelopment to better connect residents with activity friendly routes to everyday destination to live/learn/work/play, and provide safe, culturally based places for increasing physical activities.

YEAR 1 LANDSCAPE REPORT

The final outcome anticipated from Physical Activity efforts is the final Sears Redevelopment Master Plan, which provides a blueprint for the Sears site redevelopment, guiding the creation of:

- Community-Driven Spaces: Flexible gathering areas, cultural plazas, and adaptable spaces to celebrate Rondo heritage and foster connection.
- Infrastructure Improvements: Sustainable transit, pedestrian pathways, and green spaces to enhance accessibility, reduce congestion, and support community health.
- Environmental Resilience: Stormwater management, environmental protection, and sustainable design principles.
- Historical and Cultural Integration: Preservation of Rondo's legacy through art installations, interactive storytelling, and public education elements.
- Mixed Development, focus on Everyday Destinations, such as: wellness center, school, gym, housing, etc.



ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 1: ENHANCED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORT

To incorporate community feedback into the redevelopment by presenting and refining Sears site design concepts that reflect survey results and CDC priorities:

- Collaborate with community members to co-design a temporary Cultural Plaza concept, featuring flexible outdoor spaces that reflect Rondo's cultural heritage while fostering health and connection (e.g., interactive AR displays, adaptable seating, and green spaces).
- Organize pilot events at the site, including weekend markets, heritage celebrations, and health-focused gatherings, to gather qualitative and quantitative feedback on design elements.
- Measure success and functionality of the Cultural Plaza by conducting user surveys at events and tracking attendance and engagement levels

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 2: INFRASTRUCTURE, TRAFFIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

To align redevelopment plans with city regulations, historical, and accessibility goals through multi stakeholder collaboration:

- Form a working group with representatives from the City of St. Paul, CAAPB, Department of Transportation, and community leaders to facilitate ongoing communication and decision-making.
- Host regular meetings to discuss traffic flow, pedestrian access, environmental considerations, and cultural integration.
- Evaluate alignment through stakeholder surveys, tracking the incorporation of each partner's priorities in the master plan's infrastructure elements.

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 3: HOST COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOPS

To define the vision, goals, and objectives collaboratively, with a special focus on transportation and personal safety:

- Collaborate with the Department of Transportation to conduct a comprehensive traffic analysis, focusing on pedestrian safety, parking, transit needs, and the division of Sears into smaller lots for diverse traffic modes.
- Complete a watershed study to guide stormwater management, sustainable drainage, and environmental protection strategies.



- Evaluate integration of findings by tracking implementation of traffic safety recommendations and environmental resilience strategies in the master plan.

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 4: CONDUCT TRAFFIC ENGINEERING ANALYSIS AND WATERSHED STUDY

To ensure transportation safety, parking solutions, and environmental resilience are embedded in the redevelopment:

- Collaborate with the Department of Transportation to conduct a comprehensive traffic analysis, focusing on pedestrian safety, parking, transit needs, and the division of Sears into smaller lots for diverse traffic modes.
- Complete a watershed study to guide stormwater management, sustainable drainage, and environmental protection strategies.
- Evaluate integration of findings by tracking implementation of traffic safety recommendations and environmental resilience strategies in the master plan

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 5: FINALIZE VISION, GOALS, AND SITE PLAN WITH INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

To unify goals across mix development, safety, sustainability, and historical preservation in the final site plan:

- Work with transportation and environmental teams to finalize goals that align with community needs, such as sustainable transit options, walkability, and reduced congestion.
- Coordinate with CAAPB to incorporate Rondo's historical legacy, ensuring cultural objectives are met in infrastructure plans. Update the vision and goals document to reflect these integrated objectives for a holistic master plan and architectural drawings.
- Review final site plan drafts with community representatives and partners, conducting a feedback survey to gauge alignment with community values and infrastructure goals

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 6: UNIFIED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE IN THE MASTER PLAN

To establish a phased approach prioritizing community-driven elements, sustainability, and safety, with room for adaptive timelines:



- Phase 1: Focus on immediate needs such as dividing smaller lot design, road design, pedestrian-friendly pathways, and foundational aspects of housing and cultural economic development.
- Phase 2: Plan long-term improvements, including transit hubs, permanent cultural installations, and green infrastructure.
- Phase 3: Develop a flexible timeline that allows for funding cycles and partner input, facilitating community and infrastructure goals' seamless integration.
- Assess progress through milestone reviews with partners, adjusting timelines based on funding and community input, and documenting outcomes for community-driven spaces, infrastructure, and environmental resilience

YEAR 2 PROGRESS UPDATE

Year 2 activities focused on Activity Recommendations 2 and 3. These activities provided a wealth of community input into how environmental changes to the Sears Parking Lot and the Blue Line Extension could impact physical activity amongst residents.

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 2: INFRASTRUCTURE, TRAFFIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

Infrastructure, Traffic, and Environmental Planning activity recommendations from Year 1 were enacted during Year 2 with successful implementation of community voices in planning initiatives.

PRIORITY WORKING GROUPS

Two priority working groups provided ongoing communication and decision-making support, directly shaping both Module 1 (Street Design/Connectivity) and Module 4 (Land Use Planning) of the ACT Framework.

- Frogtown/Rondo Black Church Alliance partnership strengthened the Activity-Friendly Routes workgroup's focus on safety and transit-oriented development
- Asian American Business Resilience Network partnership has deepened the Everyday Destinations workgroup's examination of mixed-use development opportunities



INCLUSIVE PLANNING PROCESSES

Collaboration with MnDOT, CAAPB, the City of St. Paul, BIPOC developers, and community leaders to transform the Sears site through inclusive planning processes elements including:

- Pedestrian-friendly block design that breaks up the existing parking lot
- Traffic flow modifications to enhance safety
- Mixed-use development strategies that honor the site's historical context while improving connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods

Regular meetings and listening sessions with Frogtown/Rondo residents also provided inclusive planning opportunities. These meetings were used to share findings from the Year 1 Landscape Report, gather feedback on second-year action plan, and document neighborhood stories about I-94's impacts. Together, such initiatives amplified calls for equity-centered transportation solutions.

SITE AUDITS

AMA initiated a variety of site audits to encourage community member dialog about the Sears Redevelopment site.

SEARS PARKING LOT

Two Walk Audits at the former St. Paul Sears parking lot (right) with residents and stakeholders. This led to the expansion of the REACH Connectivity Action Plan beyond the Sears parking lot to include broader connectivity to area public transportation systems. Primary feedback highlight community needs, including:

- Walking and biking accessibility to the station
- Improved bike baths and larger crosswalks to protect children
- Cleaner sidewalks, better lighting, and slower traffic
- Accessibility along the route to housing and nursing home options, everyday necessities, and hotels



Dissemination of the Walk Audit findings took place at nine neighborhood festivals and events. This approach was specifically designed to facilitate ongoing community dialogue about neighborhood accessibility and safety concerns identified through Walk Audit. Ongoing feedback will be integrated into redevelopment planning initiatives.

BLUE LINE EXTENSION AREA

AMA programming worked to inform the community about the Blue Line Extension Station and to educate community members on anti-displacement initiatives. Through these efforts, 35 small business owners along the Blue Line were provided information about the Blue Line Extension and AMA hosted 16 tabling opportunities along the BLE route, reaching thousands of community members through the direct engagement efforts. AMA also provided six public engagement sessions and three bus tours aimed at educating Pan African and Pan Asian neighbors about anti-displacement efforts.

AMA also undertook multiple activities to evaluate the needs and current landscape related to the Blue Line Extension Station and integrate community feedback. First, the Blue Line Extension Station Area Bicycle Ride Audit engaged residents in evaluating station-area connectivity and safety while cycling key segments of the corridor. Key findings highlighted how transit-oriented development can redress historical harms like those along Hwy 94.

AMA also facilitated a Youth-led community mapping exercise (right) as part of the Blue Line Extension Planning. This practice highlighted that the current blue line has high concentration of fast food and low access to green space and recreational spaces that encourage physical activity. Youth highlighted community gardens and cultural events as protective factors and facilitators of physical activity.



Finally, interviews at a Juneteenth event also revealed informal physical activity practices such as walking groups, informal sports, and creative community exercise practices that promote healthy physical activity. Barriers to these physical activities included safety concerns, weather, and



infrastructure limitations. Some infrastructure limitations were elucidated in the surveys.

278 surveys were collected amongst community members, with key findings including:

- Homeowners want to be sure they will receive financial and additional resource support in the event of displacement.
- Homeowners hope that added transit stops create more access, a great solution to growing traffic congestion.
- Renters are concerned about lack of communication from absentee/out-of-state landlords not sharing BLE information with them and hope that the BLE project could provide more communication.
- Youth appreciate the added transit options, especially those without a driver's license or car, especially in creating opportunity for connection to job opportunities and family and friends.
- Youth would like Wi-Fi access on the bus
- Elders had a range of important feedback considerations, including:
 - Accessible parking near station and ADA accessible trains
 - A place to wash hands, public restrooms at the stations
 - Close proximity to healthcare, grocery, post office, businesses, senior housing, jobs
 - Acknowledgement of addiction, and resources for homelessness and addicts on the bus
- Business owners along the corridor want to be consulted, included in decision-making process. They welcome the prospect of increased business upon completion, but want support mitigating disruption during the development
- Business owners want concrete anti-displacement resources
- Accessibility considerations included:
 - Ramps, elevators with verbal commands
 - Free/ low cost
 - Multi-language options
 - Maps with better legibility, texture, and accessible to everyone
 - Color-cues for stops

ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATION 3: HOST COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOPS

Asian Media Access leveraged HUD's Best Practices and innovative arts-based community engagement assessment approaches to amplify BIPOC



voices in transit planning through participation in the Blue Line Extension Station Planning and Engineering Design Effort. Key activities included:

- The DREAM Team project utilized creative expressions to facilitate meaningful community needs and policy discussions.
- 1st Annual Cultivate Arts Celebration demonstrated how ART serves as both a vehicle for activating public spaces and celebrating diversity while fostering genuine connections across the BLE's diverse neighborhood
- Augmented Reality (AR) Exhibition used to highlight the cultural entities along the BLE with cultural and historical information showcasing through the QR codes, while simultaneously positioning ART as a healing and unifying force that can address historical transportation inequities and build stronger community advocacy around infrastructure development.
 - Highlights community needs such as improved lighting, safe walking paths, bicycle infrastructure, and transit connection for daily mobility needs and recreational physical activity
 - Experiential learning on how transit infrastructure decisions impact food access and physical activity patterns.

CONCLUSION

Year 2 programming effectively increased community voices, needs, and perspectives into the policies, plans and community designs for North Minneapolis Blue Line and St. Paul Sears Redevelopment. After completion of the Traffic Engineering Analysis and Watershed Study (activity 4), AMA can continue integration of findings into the final vision (activity 5) and unified implementation strategy (activity 6). These initiatives will continue to prioritize community physical activity needs in the design and implementation of environmental infrastructure development at both the North Minneapolis Blue Line and St. Paul Sears Redevelopment.

Project SUPPORT

(Supporting Under-served through Produce/Park Prescription, and Opportunities to Recreation-activity & Tobacco-control)

Physical Activity



Increase policies, plans, and community designs, including implementing routes to promote more physical activity for resident through the North Minneapolis Blue Line and St. Paul Sears Redevelopment.

4 Neighborhood Locations: Focusing on former St. Paul Sears site at the Frogtown/Rondo neighborhoods and Blue Line Extension Station Planning at North Minneapolis' Camden and Near North Neighborhoods

46,178 members reached about the St. Paul Sears Redevelopment the Sears Redevelopment

5,938 members reached for Blue Line Extension's Visioning and Anti-Displacement Effort

Conclusion

We have continuously engaged with Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods, which have historically faced challenges from the Highway 94 construction and intergenerational poverty, inviting residents to help shape the Master Plan for the former St. Paul Sears site. The plan promotes diverse transportation options, encourages active living, and supports inclusive economic development opportunities.

Additionally, in the 2nd year, we have helped to organize the Blue Line Extension DREAM Team, with 10 area BIPOC CBOs to help residents to explore what matters to them, including the connectivity throughout the North Minneapolis and programs/amenities they'd like to have along the BLE station areas that supporting the neighborhoods.

Project SUPPORT is led by Asian Media Access, collaborated with Multi Cultural Community Alliance, for more information at 612-376-7715 * amamedia@amamedia.org

Successful Physical Activity Engagement

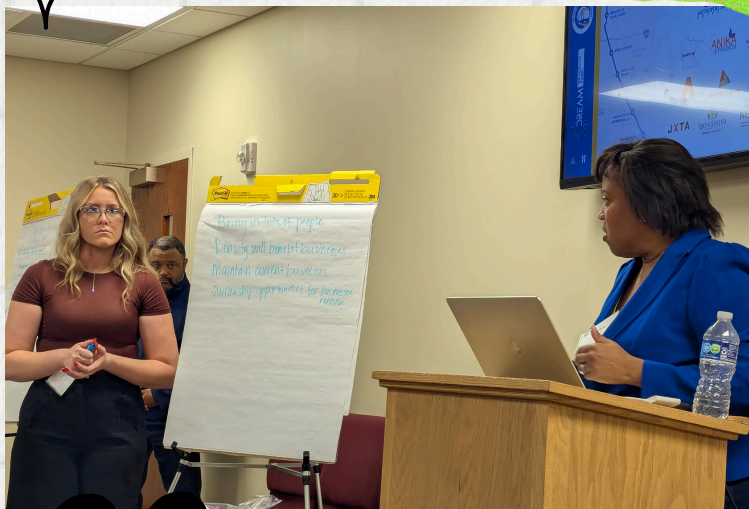
01

Hosted **Walk Audits** for area residents in the **Frogtown/Rondo neighborhoods**, captured the key findings from both walk audits, highlighting the main transportation and safety concerns as well as the desired amenities that emerged from community feedback across 29 total participants. These 2 walk audits for St. Paul Sears redevelopment (June-July 2025) revealed strong demand for safer neighborhood, safer street crossings, bike lanes, better lighting, and multi-modal access. Residents want grocery stores, restaurants, healthcare, parks, and cultural spaces in this mixed-use hub.



02

AMA has worked with the **DREAM Team** to envision a **comprehensive Blue Line Extension** development addressing diverse Northside community needs. Homeowners want displacement protections and infrastructure improvements. Elders need accessible parking, shuttles, and ADA compliance. Youth want Wi-Fi, job connections, and recreation access. Business owners desire consultation and anti-displacement resources. The vision includes mixed-use developments with village bodegas, workforce housing, arts venues, manufacturing districts, youth centers, and cultural spaces, along with multilingual station amenities.



03

Asian Media Access youth led **comprehensive community mapping** for **Minneapolis Blue Line Extension**, revealing food deserts with **concentrated fast food/liquor stores** and **limited green spaces** in **North Minneapolis**. Through Juneteenth street interviews, residents shared strategies for accessing fresh produce via community gardens, food shelves and produce prescriptions. Youth propose connecting community gardens to transit stations for improved food access and active transportation.



04

An Innovative **AR/VR projects** were proposed by **AMA youth** for the future to highlight area cultural entities, prevent displacements, and allowing Blue Line planners and neighbors to experience community challenges the firsthand while supporting anti-displacement and cultural place-keeping efforts.



Learn more at -
<https://ballequity.amamedia.org/project-support/>

