



**MEMORANDUM**  
**Physical Development Department**  
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**Executive Summary For Action**  
**Golden Valley City Council Meeting**  
**August 3, 2016**

**Agenda Item**

METRO Blue Line Extension Update

**Prepared By**

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**Summary**

Since the last Blue Line Extension update in May there have been two significant advancements in the planning of the light rail line.

First, the Corridor Management Committee (CMC) approved the final scope and cost estimate for the project which rose to roughly \$1.55 billion. This includes a handful of new elements that were added to the scope over the past few months (pedestrian improvements at road crossings, modifications to the Operations and Maintenance Facility, railroad crossings and gates, etc.). Project partners, such as MnDOT and Hennepin County, are slated to cover a portion of the increased cost.

Second, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in July. This document addresses environmental impacts from the proposed line and includes required mitigation measures.

There are three areas in which more significant changes were made from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to the FEIS:

1. Wetlands and Floodplains are better defined in the FEIS and show mitigation areas along the route.
2. Wildlife Habitat areas are more clearly defined in the FEIS in terms of disturbances from construction as well as from the operation of the line and stations. Proposed mitigation is included.
3. Agreements regarding Sochacki Park, including the mitigation plan approved by the Joint Powers Agreement Partnership, are now recorded in the FEIS.

Additionally, more specific mitigation measures—such as the inclusion of sound walls to reduce the impact of the line on homes along Kewanee Way—are outlined in the FEIS to address impacts first raised in the DEIS. Details of these measures will continue to be refined as the design advances.

The FEIS also contains information related to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which governs how impacts to historic properties along the line are handled. In Golden Valley, mitigation is required to deal with impacts to the Theodore Wirth Segment of the Grand Rounds Historic District and the Osseo Branch Line of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad / Great Northern Railway.

All comments submitted to the Project Office as part of the DEIS hearings, including those made by the Golden Valley City Council in its letter to Hennepin County from May 20, 2014, are itemized and included in Appendix G. The Project Office has responded to each comment, though some similar comments have been grouped and responded to generally.

The Metropolitan Council is expected to vote on the FEIS and the final scope and cost estimate in September. Once they are approved and the Record of Decision (ROD) has been issued by the FTA, the application to enter the Engineering phase of work can be submitted. This phase is expected to last for two years and will provide for the remaining 70% of the project design and include preparations for construction.

**Recommended Action**

Motion to receive and file METRO Blue Line Extension Update.