METRO Blue Line Extension
Meeting of the Corridor Management Committee (CMC)

Date & Time	September 24, 2026 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM
Location	F.T. Heywood Chambers, 560 N 6th Ave, Minneapolis
CMC Members	Robin Hutcheson, Reva Chamblis, Amanda Xiong, Therese Kiser, Nick Thompson, Yassin Osman, Kristian Evans, Irene Fernando, Elie Farhot, Molly McCartney, Julie Deshler, Anndrea Young
Presenters	Karla Arredondo, Ricardo Perez, Alicia Vap, Nick Thompson and Ryan Kronzer

1. **Call to Order and Welcome**
   Chair Robin Hutcheson, Metropolitan Council Chair, called the METRO Blue Line Extension (BLE) Meeting of the Corridor Management Committee (CMC) meeting to order at 1:35 pm. Chair Hutcheson welcomed members to the meeting and asked for members to introduce themselves.

   Chair Hutcheson noted today's meeting materials can be found on the BLE project's website at bluelineext.org, and mentioned members of the public are welcome to submit any comments regarding today's meeting to Nkongo Cigolo, Metropolitan Council, by Friday, October 2, 2026. Comments will be posted on project website as part of meeting summary. Packets for CMC members included written comments from members of public, and notes from the Community Business Working Group (CBWG) September 17 meeting.

   Chair Hutcheson acknowledged the retirement of Khani Sahebjam, Metro District Engineer, MnDOT and asked Molly McCartney, MnDOT Metro District, to pass on a thank you to Mr. Sahebjam for his regular attendance at the CMC and his leadership of transportation in the Twin Cities.

   Chair Hutcheson noted that today's meeting includes a report from the Anti-Displacement Community Program Prosperity (ACPP)Board, a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) scope reduction and budget update, status of third-party agreements, and real estate update.

2. **Approval of August 6, 2026, BLE CMC Meeting Minutes**
   Chair Hutcheson called for a motion to approve the August 6, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Irene Fernando, Hennepin County, moved a motion to approve the minutes, and seconded by Council Member (CM) Reva Chamblis, Metropolitan Council Member. The minutes were officially approved and will be posted on project website.

3. **Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program (ACPP) Board Update**
   Karla Arrendondo, Chair of the ACPP Board, provided updates as $2M of grants has been awarded to help with housing support, business and community development; about $740,000 has been dispersed from $2M October 2025 to present. Ms. Arrendondo shared examples of the organizations that received funding in the community.

   Ms. Arrendondo and Ricardo Perez, former chair of ACPP Board, shared frustrations with the administrative structure to disburse and receive grant funds, and that has been communicated to Hennepin County.

   Chair Hutcheson thanked Ms. Arrendondo for sharing successes and highlighting some of the challenges.

   Julie Deshler, Crystal Mayor, asked if ACPP funds are part of Project scope and total cost or separate. Mr. Perez responded that ACPP funds do not come from Project funds but were appropriated by the Minnesota Legislature to deliver actions reported from the Anti-Displacement Working Group Report. Mayor Deshler asked how properties on the alignment are being identified to be eligible for displacement funds. Anndrea Young, Executive Director of the Heritage Park Neighborhood, and Mr. Perez responded eligible properties are about a mile away from the alignment. Ms. Young also added ACPP funds don't add to overall cost of Project.

   Chair Hutcheson paused to allow introduction of Amanda Xiong, Council Member of Brooklyn Park.

4. **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Scope Reduction and Budget Update**
   Alicia Vap, Blue Line Extension Project Director**,** provided project updates, including current project budget of $3.58 billion, committed funding of $2.52 billion, anticipated FTA funding of $752 million, and anticipated reduced funding gap of $224 million.

   Ms. Vap shared FTA approved 3 of the 4 scope reductions recommended and anticipates more information on the final item in the next couple of weeks. If all the items are approved, this would be an anticipated gap of $224M.

   Nick Thompson, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager of Capital Programs, discussed limitations on the Metropolitan Council's ability to participate in the capital funding of the project. In addition, the Council is responsible for 100% of the operating and long-term maintenance costs of the project once the project is open.

Mr. Thompson shared the FTA would look at region and want to ensure any new project doesn't negatively impact existing transit service.

He further shared after submission to FTA, there's a financial analysis of funding, and a stress test performed on the funding sources. It is not uncommon that when FTA reviews an application, they request an additional financial commitment for costs beyond the anticipated budget of 10% of the project costs. FTA has not asked for this commitment.

The proposal to Hennepin County was to take a portion of the 10% additional funding commitment previously made and use to close the funding gap. This would allow the project to apply for federal funding. It hasn't changed Hennepin County's financial commitment, but changes when that commitment is made in the eyes of the FTA. It allows the schedule to be maintained to apply for the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) this fall. Any delay increases the project cost by roughly $75M each year. The state has committed $30M to the project, contingent on the receipt of the FFGA by June 30, 2027. This proposal maintains the $30M in state funding, minimizing the risk of inflation, and applying for federal funds.

Chair Hutcheson paused the presentation for questions.

Commissioner Fernando asked what the Metropolitan Council's plan would be if the FTA comes back and asks for this 10% funding commitment. Mr. Thompson noted it's a risk, and we will not know if we don't apply for the FFGA.

Commissioner Fernando asked if the 10% funding commitment is needed to receive funds from FTA. Chair Hutcheson stated the Council is committed to working together and getting the application in as soon as possible.

Commissioner Fernando stated the County has offered the maximum amount. She further noted that following discussion about the Minnesota State Statute at the last CMC meeting, Minnesota House research staff have provided an opinion that the Statute doesn't prevent Metropolitan Council from contributing funds. Commissioner Fernando would like to know how that analysis may have shifted the Council's position.

There was additional discussion about the application of Council Transit Funding Allocation Policy, and if Council sees this as a new project. Mr. Thompson stated Metropolitan Council hasn't discussed what defines a new project. Council's understanding is Council cannot use the funds.

Commissioner Fernando questioned this as it sounds like a new rule.

Mr. Thompson shared the FTA terms and conditions, and FTA requires the project to include capital costs of vehicles in the budget for an FFGA.

Mr. Thompson also noted that the Metropolitan Council receives federal funding Section 5307 formula funds that can be used for capital. If the Council were to contribute Section 5307 funds to fill the funding gap, this would equate to $37M per year over six years. A loss of $37M a year would cut transit service throughout the Twin Cities region. The existing operating capital budget cannot maintain the existing service plan with that large of a budget cut on an annual basis.

Commissioner Fernando questioned the framing of the argument of having to shrink another public good to build another, and she rejects the idea that this would impact other services throughout the Twin Cities. She noted this part of the presentation had not been seen except at a Metropolitan Council meeting. Mr. Thompson shared that the information was presented on July 8 and September Committee of the Whole meeting. The reason it wasn't brought to CMC was because at no point until the summer was the Council asked to contribute to capital side of project.

Chair Hutcheson shared a thank you for the feedback and commented the information presented is a reflection that there is a tradeoff. Due to additional questions being heard, more information will be brought to a future CMC.

Mayor Deshler asked for additional clarification. Chair Hutcheson stated for the record we have not stated that Metropolitan Council can fill the capital gap.

Mr. Thompson stated that the question is can Metropolitan Council fill the capital funding gap of $224M. FTA will ask where did the money come from, and the Council would need to demonstrate no impact on existing regional service.

CM Chamblis shared thanks for the comments and would like to see coming to an agreement and focus on the ideas to close the gap to be ready for the application of FFGA.

CM Xiong asked about the difference between capital and operating costs, and Mr. Thompson provided an explanation. CM Xiong followed up if the operating funds can be allocated for capital funding. Mr. Thompson stated that the Council's interpretation is that it isn't allowed.

Therese Kiser, Council Member City of Crystal, expressed support for the project, many of the households in the corridor don't have cars.

5. **Third Party Agreement Status**

Ms. Vap shared that FTA identified agreements that need to be executed before applying for the FFGA, a standard process for all projects. Hennepin County and Metropolitan Council attorneys and project staff have worked on the agreements for months.

Xcel Master Utility Agreement – A master utility agreement needs to be executed for relocation of utilities. The Council is currently waiting for Minnesota Public Utility Commission to complete approval of the agreement.

BNSF Railroad Agreement – A construction and maintenance agreement is required for temporary construction easement access. A draft agreement from BNSF is under review, after which FTA legal will review.

CPKP Agreement – A construction and maintenance agreement is required for construction of the existing County Road 81 bridges and new light rail transit bridge. The project team is currently awaiting comments from CPKP. This agreement will also require review by FTA legal counsel.

If either of the Agreements are exceeding monetary thresholds then approvals would need to come from the Projects Decisions Board (PDB). Ms. Vap stated these Agreements must be completed, signed and executed before applying for the FFGA.

6. **Real Estate Update**

Ryan Kronzer, Assistant Director of Design and Engineering, Blue Line Extension, shared a real estate update. Metropolitan Council authorization is needed to begin the Right of Way (ROW) acquisition. The action will be requested when FFGA is submitted to FTA. The PDB will also need to approve project funds for ROW acquisition.

Design team and ROW teams are partnering to minimize ROW impacts throughout the corridor as the 100% design documents are finishing. ROW is working on title research, advancing title opinions, and parcel sketches. Outreach is in the community talking with property owners.

Mayor Deshler asked if there is a drop-dead date for applying for the FFGA. Ms. Vap shared there isn't one for applying.

Commissioner Fernando shared closing comments and encouraged continuing conversations in public for transparency.

Council Member Yassin Osman, Metropolitan Council, shared a thank you to staff for their work.

Chair Hutcheson stated we will look at dates for the next CMC and thanked everyone for their candid conversations.

7. **Next Meeting: November 12, 2026**

8. **Adjourn**
   Chair Hutcheson thanked everyone for their time and adjourned the meeting at 2:55 pm.

Meeting Materials Provided:
Meeting Agenda, September 24, 2026
CMC Presentation
August 6, 2026, CMC Minutes
Written Comments submitted by community members

Respectfully submitted, Luana Steele, Blue Line Ext. Administrative Lead