

## **CTC Approves Pasadena Rail Funding; Burke Cautious on Operating Plans**

(November 5) The California Transportation Commission approved \$83.2 million in funding, Thursday, for construction of the Pasadena Metro Blue Line, but CEO Julian Burke was cautious in his testimony about whether the MTA would have funding needed to operate the light-rail line.

Burke presented a full-funding operational plan for the light rail line, cautioning the Commission that, while the plan is reasonable, he could not guarantee that the MTA would be able to operate the line, due to scarce operating revenues and the potential for operating cost increases.

The MTA estimates the cost of operating the line at \$33.6 million in FY 2004, including \$7 million in security costs. Fares are projected to cover \$4.7 million, with the remaining operating costs to be made up by subsidies.

Burke told CTC commissioners meeting in Sacramento that federal congestion mitigation and air quality funds and funding from sales taxes are projected to be available to operate the Pasadena line. But, he said the MTA could experience budget deficits of \$200 million or more due to additional court-ordered Consent Decree service requirements, revenue shortfalls or unanticipated costs.

"The MTA cannot be certain at this time what ultimate outcomes will emerge," he said in prepared testimony. "I believe we reasonably will be able to operate it, but I can't be certain about it."

The 13.6-mile Pasadena Metro Blue Line will have 13 stations and is expected to average 19,000 weekday riders in FY 2004 and 26,000 by FY 2010.

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