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Eastside Extension Funding Goes to Congress for Review

• Timing was critical to keep project on schedule

(April 6, 2004) The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sent a funding agreement for the Eastside Light Rail Extension to Congress, last Friday, to begin a 60-day review period – just in time to keep the \$898 million project on schedule.

Timing of the FTA's decision to release the Eastside Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) to Congress was critical because the contractor's \$586.6 million bid for construction of the project expires June 2 – only a day after the 60-day congressional review is due to end.

"It is critical to connect the Eastside to the regional transportation system, and the FTA's endorsement of the project will help us achieve our goal," said Supervisor Gloria Molina. "The good news is that all the elements of the process are coming together, which means construction of this important line is finally in sight."

"This is a major step for the Eastside light rail project because it keeps the project on track for a mid-year construction start," said Los Angeles City Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa.

Congressional briefings

MTA now will begin a series of briefings for members of the congressional committees that have jurisdiction over the FFGA review. The total federal commitment to the Eastside project is \$490.7 million. The remainder of the funding, already secured by MTA, will come from state and local sources.

In his FY 2005 budget, President Bush has requested \$80 million for construction of the Eastside project.

"I'm delighted with the progress we're making toward completion of the Metro Orange Line busway project across the San Fernando Valley," said Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky, "and as the Eastside extension moves forward, our plans for a truly regional integrated transit network are really taking shape."

The Eastside Extension will be a 5.9-mile, eight-station light-rail line that will serve the heavily transit-dependent area from Union Station eastward to a terminus at Atlantic Boulevard. The line is expected to reach 23,000 average weekday boardings in 2020.