



NEWS

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CONSTRUCTION ON 6-MILE EXTENSION COULD BEGIN MID-2003

MTA ISSUES FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT ON EASTSIDE LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

MTA has made available to the public the final environmental report on a planned 6-mile light rail extension of the Metro Gold Line through East Los Angeles. The extension would serve one of the most densely populated areas of Los Angeles County.

The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Final SEIS/SEIR) for the Los Angeles Eastside Corridor includes responses to the public comments received following last year's release of the Draft EIS/EIR, and a refined analysis. It also includes a detailed mitigation plan, which addresses community concerns regarding impacts during construction and operation of the light rail project.

If the MTA Board at its February 28, 2002, meeting votes to certify the Final EIS/EIR, the proposed project then would be presented to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for its approval. Upon FTA approval, MTA would initiate final design of the project and proceed to negotiate a federal Full Funding Grant Agreement to fund the project.

Construction of the 1.7-mile tunnel portion of the project could begin in mid-2003, construction of the at-grade portion in late 2004/early 2005. The extension could begin operations in mid-2008.

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"The people of the Eastside have waited patiently for several years for this project which will connect them to the growing Metro Rail system and greatly improve their access to jobs, medical facilities and places of recreation," said John Fasana, MTA Board Chair. "We could not have reached this milestone without their substantial support."

The Eastside light rail project would serve as an extension of the Metro Gold Line, which is now under construction between Union Station and Pasadena and is expected to begin operations in mid-2003. The extension would operate from Union Station to Atlantic Boulevard along 1st Street, then transition to 3rd Street via Indiana Street and proceed east along 3rd Street to Atlantic Boulevard.

The extension would include nine stations and operate at street level with the exception of the tunnel segment through Boyle Heights which was necessitated by the narrowness of streets along this portion of the alignment.

Several features make the Eastside an excellent candidate for such a project. The 40-square-mile Eastside is a densely populated area with a current population of 403,000. That figure is expected to grow 25 percent by the year 2020 and, during the same period, the number of jobs is expected to climb by 30 percent.

In addition, many Eastside residents are frequent users of transit. More than 19 percent of the area's workers use the bus system to get to work as compared to 6.8 percent for Los Angeles County as a whole. In fact, as many as 50 percent of the commuter trips made by residents of some Eastside neighborhoods are made on public transit.

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"Buses will remain an important part of the transit system, but given the eastside's population and transit use, the area is a prime candidate for this extension of the Metro Rail system," said Gloria Molina, Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board Member. "The extension will provide the people of East Los Angeles with a seamless connection to a large portion of the county, which will prove even more valuable as traffic congestion on our streets and highways grows."

In January 1998, the MTA suspended work on an Eastside extension of the Metro Red Line subway prior to groundbreaking. The suspended project would have consisted of four stations east of Union Station. Following a study of potential transit alternatives for the corridor, the MTA Board of Directors in June 2000 selected the light rail extension as the preferred mode of choice for the Eastside community.

The Federal Government had committed to fund \$495 million, or approximately 50 percent, of the cost of the subway extension. The MTA studied the light rail alternative with the intent of improving transit mobility while retaining federal funding eligibility.

Following the recommendation of Governor Davis, the state legislature earmarked state surplus funds to fully fund the Eastside alternative. The projected cost of the Eastside Light Rail Transit Project is approximately \$760 million.

The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Final EIS/EIR) is available for public review at:

MTA Headquarters
One Gateway Plaza
15th Floor, MTA Library
Los Angeles 90012

Los Angeles Central Library
630 W. 5th St.
Los Angeles 90071

More...

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University Library
5151 State University Dr.
Los Angeles 90032

Little Tokyo Library
244 S. Alameda St.
Los Angeles 90012

East Los Angeles College Library
1301 Avenida Cesar Chavez
Monterey Park 91753

Anthony Quinn Library
3965 Cesar E. Chavez Ave.
Los Angeles 90063

Little Tokyo Service Center
231 E. 3rd St., Suite G106
Los Angeles 90013

Benjamin Franklin Library
2200 E. 1st St.
Los Angeles 90033

East Los Angeles Public Library
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East Los Angeles 90022

City Terrace Public Library
4025 E. City Terrace Dr.
Los Angeles 90032

El Camino Real Library
4264 E. Whittier Blvd.
Los Angeles 90023

Commerce Public Library
5655 Jillson St.
Commerce 90040

Persons seeking information regarding the availability of copies of the Final EIS/EIR should contact Henry Gonzalez at MTA at (213)922-3023, or visit the MTA web site at www.mta.net

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