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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MTA Statement Regarding FTA Release of Eastside Light Rail Full Funding Grant Agreement to Congress for 60-Day Review****April 2, 2004**

MTA is pleased that the Federal Transit Administration today sent the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension to Congress to begin its mandatory 60-day review. This is another important step in the development of the transportation network of Los Angeles County.

We wish to express our appreciation to our entire congressional delegation, with special acknowledgement to representatives Lucille Roybal-Allard, Xavier Becerra, Hilda Solis, David Dreier, Grace Napolitano, and Jerry Lewis, and senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, FTA Administrator Jenna Dorn, and U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta, without whose efforts this milestone would not have been reached.

"With today's developments, the MTA has overcome a major hurdle toward receiving the County's rightful share of federal transit funding," said Zev Yaroslavsky, Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board Chairman. "I'm delighted with the progress we're making toward completion of the Metro Orange Line busway project across the San Fernando Valley, and as the Eastside extension moves forward, our plans for a truly regional integrated transit network are really taking shape."

"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 Gloria Molina, Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board Director. "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."

MTA looks forward to continuing to work with members of Congress during this process to provide answers to any questions that arise during their review. While much work needs to be done in the days ahead, MTA is confident that this process will culminate in the beginning of construction of this vital transportation link.

"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 Antonio Villaraigosa, Los Angeles City Councilmember and MTA Board Director. "It also underscores the support we have from Congressman David Dreier and the entire Southern California Congressional delegation. We need their help, and more and more we're getting it."

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**EDITORS' NOTE:** The Eastside light rail project is a 6-mile extension of the Metro Gold Line that will operate from Union Station to East Los Angeles. The line will include eight stations and extend through the most densely populated areas of Los Angeles. It will serve an area heavily dependent on public transit, including the communities of Little Tokyo, Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles. The total project cost is \$898.8 million. The federal share (FFGA) is \$490.7 million. Construction of the project is expected to begin this summer.

