



NEWS

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MTA BREAKS GROUND ON PASADENA BLUE LINE-- THIRD LIGHT RAIL SYSTEM IN METRO RAIL NETWORK

MTA officially began construction today on the Pasadena Blue Line light rail system. It will connect Union Station in Los Angeles with downtown Pasadena.

The 13.6-mile, 14-station line will be the third light rail system in the Metro network.

"This is a great day for public transportation in Los Angeles County!" said MTA Chairman and Los Angeles City Councilman Richard Alatorre. "We're moving ahead with a vital link in our regional rail network and relieving aging and congested freeways. It's an economic boost to the whole region."

The Pasadena Blue Line will serve the cities and communities of Pasadena, South Pasadena, Highland Park, Chinatown, and downtown Los Angeles.

Commencement of work on the Pasadena Blue Line was marked with the ceremonial start of demolition of the old Los Angeles River rail bridge. "This is a wise use of resources. We're taking an old rail facility and converting it to modern, productive use for the benefit of our commuting public," said Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Director Gloria Molina.

Mayor Riordan and representatives from the cities of Pasadena and South Pasadena waved a blue and white MTA banner, signalling a worker to cut through and remove the first girder of the old bridge.

The single track structure will be replaced by a segmental bridge, 1415 feet long and 27 1/2 feet wide--wide enough to operate trains in both directions.

"Once again, we are making Los Angeles better, and once again, transportation is a key. With each project we undertake, Los Angeles becomes more mobile, more efficient, and brings us cleaner air and a stronger economy," said Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Director Richard Riordan.

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The contractor for the 16 month project is Keiwit Pacific Co., builders of a similar bridge for the Metro Green Line at Aviation Avenue. The planned construction process will eliminate the need for any support work beneath the bridge. The scrap metal of the old bridge has a market value of \$90,000, and was factored into the contract price of \$12.6 million.

The Pasadena Blue Line is scheduled to open in 1998. It will carry a projected 55,000 passengers per day by the year 2000. From Sierra Madre Villa in East Pasadena, the alignment runs down the center of the Foothill Freeway to the west for three stations, then turns south and follows the Santa Fe Railroad right of way for 11 stations, terminating at Union Station. There, it will connect with the Metro Red Line and via the Metro Red Line, to the Metro Blue Line and downtown Long Beach.

"For the first time since the heyday of the Red Cars, people will be able to ride the rails from Long Beach to Pasadena," said MTA Chief Executive Officer Frank White. "We're adding almost 14 miles to an integrated transportation system that will benefit generations to come."

The track will run at street level except for an elevated segment and station in Chinatown, and a below grade configuration in Old Pasadena. The train cars will be powered by overhead wires and will use the same light rail technology as the Metro Blue Line, which opened in 1990, and the Metro Green Line, which is scheduled to open in May 1995.

The next contract scheduled to be awarded for the Pasadena Blue Line will be in July. It will involve reconstruction of the Arroyo Seco Bridge. That historic bridge will not be demolished, but dismantled and reworked to accommodate light rail traffic while retaining its original architectural style. The work on that structure has won approval by the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission.

(MORE)

The third construction project of the Pasadena Blue Line, the Chinatown aerial segment, is scheduled to be awarded in August. At 2800 feet, it will be the longest elevated segment in the three MTA light rail systems. Its seismic design will include lessons learned from the Northridge earthquake.

Local Proposition A and C funds will pay for the \$865 million project.

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