



NEWS

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MTA CERTIFIES ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE METRO RED LINE EAST SIDE EXTENSION; EAST SIDE COMMUNITY PROACTIVE IN RAIL PLANNING

The MTA certified today the Final Environmental Impact Report for the East Side Extension of the Metro Red Line which would extend 6.8 miles from Union Station to Atlantic Boulevard.

"With the completion of this final report the MTA fulfills all state and federal environmental requirements for the Metro Red Line East Side Extension and is seeking to obtain a Record of Decision from the federal government, amend the Full Funding Grant Agreement to secure additional funding and proceed with the final design for the first 3.7 miles," said Richard Alatorre, MTA Chairman and Los Angeles City Councilman.

"We are excited that this important project is moving forward," said L.A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina. "When it is ultimately built, the line will provide a major transportation link for the residents of East Los Angeles to downtown Los Angeles, the mid-city area, the San Fernando Valley and to many other communities served by MTA bus and rail systems."

The project is estimated to cost \$979.6 million. Completion of the initial 3.7 miles and four stations is scheduled for May 2002. The first four stations will be built at Little Tokyo, First Street and Boyle Avenue, Brooklyn Avenue and Soto Street, and First Street and Lorena Avenue.

(MORE)

IMPACT REPORT

Page 2

The East Side Extension is part of the Metro Red Line Segment 3 Project which has two other branches: one to mid-city Los Angeles near the intersection of Pico and San Vicente boulevards and the other to North Hollywood near the intersection of Chandler and Lankershim boulevards.

Alatorre noted that development of this line could not have been done without the cooperation of the East Side community.

"Perhaps the most unusual aspect of this planning process is the formation and active participation of the Review Advisory Committee (RAC), a community-based group organized specifically to advise MTA staff on station area planning and construction impacts related to the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Final Environmental Impact Report," said Alatorre.

The RAC, which has been meeting monthly since December 1993, is comprised of 23 business owners, residents, and civic leaders representing Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles and the Little Tokyo communities. MTA staff and consultants work regularly with the community to discuss transportation planning issues and concerns raised by the members of the RAC.

RAC's Chairperson Rene Santiago, Associate Director of the Community Health Foundation, states the importance of the RAC. "The development of the Eastern Extension rail project is a partnership between the community and the MTA. This partnership, however, carries a lot of responsibilities for its community representatives. We have to make sure that the community benefits from the construction of the rail system, and from any job and business opportunity resulting from the project."

RAC member Gloria Madrigal, Sheridan Street Elementary School representative, said: "The RAC is important because information is given to community members and the community is given an opportunity to voice their concerns and issues."

(MORE)

IMPACT REPORT

Page 3

"The Eastern Extension has received enthusiastic support from East Los Angeles residents, business owners and community leaders," said Alatorre. "While many communities debate on whether to construct a rail system in their neighborhoods, the Eastside community has welcomed the rail system, acknowledging the transit and economic benefits it can bring to the community." This open enthusiasm has resulted in the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative and commitment from the federal government to fund the project.

"Compared to other public works projects such as the Long Beach, Hollywood and Golden State freeways, the support for this project is unique," said RAC member Lisa Sugino, a project manager with the Little Tokyo Service Center Housing Program. "This is the first time the residents of East Los Angeles have been given the opportunity to provide input from the project's conception."

The MTA has conducted community meetings with public schools, senior citizen centers and local business organizations to educate and provide the community with input into the planning of the rail system.

This active public participation approach has resulted in the Eastside community being one of the most informed rail project communities well in advance of construction. "The relationships that the community has established with the MTA will in effect provide access for residents to address problems while the Eastern Extension is under construction," Alatorre said.

The RAC meets monthly at Stevenson Junior High School in East Los Angeles. MTA staff and consultants review the status of the FEIS/FEIR, and answer all questions related to the project. MTA also conducts follow-up meetings with RAC members and public officials to address specific issues as necessary.

All meetings are open to the public; the community can obtain additional information by calling Lawrence N. Garcia, MTA Central Area Team, Government and Public Affairs Manager, at 213/244-6244.

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