



NEWS

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(Note to Editors: **THIS IS**
is **REVISED** from earlier release)

MTA INITIATES CONSTRUCTION OF GREENWAY ALONG METROLINK TRACKS IN NORTH SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

State and local officials will join the MTA Saturday, May 20, to celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony of the Northeast San Fernando Valley Greenway Project -- an environmental enhancement project adjacent to the tracks of the Metrolink Line to Santa Clarita.

The Greenway Project includes 27 varieties of trees, 46 varieties of wild flowers and groundcover along a 12.2-mile strip parallel to the rail right-of-way from Buena Vista Street to Balboa Boulevard.

The project will beautify segments of the communities of Sun Valley, Pacoima, Granada Hills, Sylmar, San Fernando and Burbank.

"This project will help protect the environment from air pollutants and carbon dioxide and at the same time provide an enhancement to the community," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich, MTA chairman.

The idea of greenway projects linked to transportation facilities was initially proposed and forcefully supported by MTA Board member Nick Patsaouras. He proposed the creation of the MTA Urban Greenways Master Plan to develop park areas next to transit facilities for community use and enjoyment.

The first transportation related greenway project was built in the community of Watts. It is a three block site adjacent to the Metro Blue Line, including a bicycle path, sandy areas dedicated for artwork, grassy areas and drought tolerant trees and shrubs.

The project in the North San Fernando Valley is the second in Los Angeles County. This project is a partnership between the MTA, Assemblyman Richard Katz,

(MORE)

METROLINK GREENWAY

Page 2

Caltrans, Metrolink, the City of Los Angeles, the City of Burbank, the City of San Fernando, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and Cal Poly Pomona.

"This greenway will enhance the appearance of the Metrolink right-of-way and develop community ownership of rail facilities," said City of Santa Clarita Councilwoman Jan Heidt, alternate member of the MTA Board and member of the Metrolink Board.

"Cost of the two-year project is estimated at \$433,000," said Franklin White, chief executive officer of the MTA.

Funding sources include the federal government's Transportation Enhancement Activities Program (TEA) and the state's Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program (EEMP). The EEMP was established in 1989 by the enactment of the Transportation Blueprint Legislation authored by Assemblyman Katz.

EEMP provides grants to local, state and federal agencies and to non-profit entities to mitigate the environmental impact of new or modified public transportation facilities. The program funds approximately \$10 million in projects throughout the state every year.

The second phase of the North San Fernando Valley Greenway includes the construction of a bicycle and pedestrian path.

Trees to be planted along the corridor are California natives and other drought tolerant varieties. Landscape architecture students from Cal Poly Pomona worked with the community to design the greenway.

The Los Angeles Conservation Corps will use a combination of volunteer and hired help from among the community's young people to plant the remaining trees along the 12.2-mile strip. Water for the first two years of the project will be provided by the City of Burbank from reclaimed water supplies.

(MORE)

METROLINK GREENWAY

Page 2

Other supporters of the project include Crown Disposal Company of Sun Valley, who donated the garbage containers; McDonald's of Sun Valley, who donated drinks for the tree planting volunteers; A-CO Sanitation of Sun Valley, who provided portable restrooms and Don Ricardo's of Sun Valley, who donated food.

The communities have planned three events to plant trees and shrubbery: Saturday, May 20, at 9 a.m. at Sunland Boulevard and San Fernando Road in Sun Valley; Saturday, June 10, at 9 a.m. north of the Sylmar Metrolink station; and Saturday, June 24, at 9 a.m. in Pacoima at a location to be announced.

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