



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SIX-MILE LINE CHOSEN AS LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
MTA BOARD GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO EASTSIDE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT
PROJECT**

The MTA Board of Directors today adopted a 6-mile light rail project outlined in a draft environmental report released earlier this year as the locally preferred transit alternative for L.A.'s eastside. The Eastside Light Rail Transit Project would serve one of the most densely populated and heavily transit dependent areas in Los Angeles County.

The Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) designation is the federal government's term for the transit improvement preferred over other potential alternatives and is required before federal funding can be made available for construction.

The light rail project would serve as an extension of the Pasadena Blue Line. If it receives final environmental approval later this year, construction could begin in mid-2003 and the extension could begin operations in mid-2007. The extension would be linked at Union Station with the 13.7-mile Pasadena Blue Line, which is expected to begin operations in mid-2003.

The recommended rail alignment would begin at Union Station, head south on Alameda Street to 1st Street, then bear east to Indiana Street. After a short southerly jog, it would continue east on 3rd Street and end at Beverly and Atlantic boulevards.

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In addition to improving access to downtown Los Angeles and communities stretching from downtown to Pasadena, the extension would provide eastside residents with easier access to the San Fernando Valley, mid-Wilshire, South Bay, South Los Angeles, Long Beach and southeast Los Angeles County, via the existing 59.4-mile Metro Rail System, which includes the Metro Red Line subway, and two light rail lines, the Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line.

The MTA released the project draft environmental impact statement/environmental impact report (Draft EIS/EIR) on March 1, 2001. Release of the Draft EIS/EIR was followed by a comment period during which the MTA held three public hearings to receive community input on the study's findings.

Preliminary engineering on the project got underway April 9, 2001. When completed, it will incorporate mitigation measures, design features and safety features identified during the environmental phase and received during the comment period.

The extension would include nine stations and operate at street level with the exception of a 1.7-mile tunnel segment through Boyle Heights. The tunnel segment 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 transit dependent. Over 19 percent of workers use the bus system to get to work as compared to 6.8 percent for Los Angeles County as a whole. As many as 50 percent of the commuter trips in some eastside neighborhoods occur on public transit.

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In addition to Union Station, stations would be located at 1st St./Alameda St.(Little Tokyo), 1st St./Utah St., 1st St./Boyle Ave., 1st St./Soto St., 1st St./Lorena St., 3rd St./Rowan Ave., 3rd St./Mednick Ave., and Beverly Blvd./Atlantic Blvd.

In January, 1998, the MTA suspended work on the 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 Transit alternative 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 MTA has been meeting with residents and other community stakeholders since June, 1999, to solicit input on the Eastside project. Following Board certification and approval by the Federal Transit Administration, the project would be ready for final design and construction.

The Metro Rail System currently spans 59.4 miles and is comprised of the Metro Red Line subway (17.4 miles) and two light rail lines, the Metro Blue Line (22 miles) and the Metro Green Line (20 miles). Average weekday boardings on the Metro Rail System for April, 2001, were 216,400.

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