

FINDING PEACE

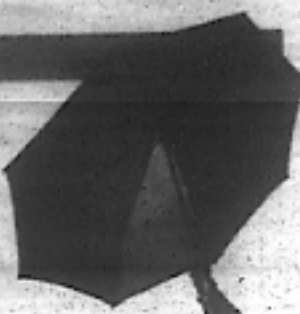
A humbled Jelani Gardner makes his mark at Pepperdine



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PASADENA STAR-NEWS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1998

25¢ PLUS TAX

A.M.

Blue Line could go on its own

Duarte councilman wants light-rail project taken away from MTA

By David Zahniser
STAFF WRITER

MTA board member John Fasana called Monday for the Pasadena Blue Line to be yanked away from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, saying the agency is no longer capable of completing the project any time soon.

The request from Fasana, a

Duarte councilman, came as the MTA board is set to vote Wednesday on a "demobilization plan" for shutting down the \$804 million light-rail line indefinitely.

"It's time to take it away," said Fasana. "It would be absolutely criminal not to finish it, given the investment that's been made along the corridor."

State Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Burbank, met with Pasadena City Manager Phil Hawkey on Friday

to discuss legislation for creating a Blue Line financing or construction authority.

"I hope it won't be necessary, but I intend to be fully prepared if it is," Schiff said.

For years, supporters of the 13.6-mile line between Pasadena and Los Angeles have held behind-the-scenes discussions about whether to find or create another agency to finish the project. But until Monday, no one

had officially called for such a move.

Fasana wants to go further than the Blue Line, co-authoring a proposal with MTA board member Jenny Oropeza to hand the agency's bus operations over to regional bus providers such as the El Monte-based Foothill Transit. The board will vote on that proposal Wednesday.

MTA Deputy CEO Allan Lipsky did not respond to requests

for interviews on Monday.

Under the current MTA plan, design work on the Blue Line would stop at Old Pasadena, or roughly two-thirds of the way up the corridor, with no design completed on the line's 13 stations. Construction would be halted entirely on the project, which is 10 percent finished.

The MTA plan would focus the

Please turn to TRANSIT / A7

ADVISORY

GOOD MORNING: Mostly cloudy in the morning with a slight chance of scattered showers. Clearing to partly cloudy skies. 86

62 Today's High

44 Tonight's Low

LOCAL
LA CANADA
FLINTRIDGE: Dozens of



Staff photo by WALT MANCINI

SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES investigate the aftermath of Monday's triple shooting in which one teen was killed.

SHOOTING

Teen killed, two others wounded

Continued from A1

Street and Madre Street as the crowd swelled to about 250 onlookers.

Until detectives arrived at the scene, the inside of the green van, parked between the painted lines, was visible from the Colorado Boulevard sidewalk and hardware store parking lot.

The fatally wounded man sat motionless in the front passenger seat, his seat belt still secure. Nearby, the asphalt

parking lot was littered with the bloodied clothes of the wounded.

Among those watching the scene was Pedro Rafael of Pasadena, who had earlier seen the victims near the Department of Motor Vehicles office on South Rosemead Boulevard.

"They were having fun, you know," he said in Spanish through an interpreter. "Laughing talking."

Several youths sporting gang tattoos appeared at the crime scene and were upset by the death of a friend.

"He was my homeboy," one said as he broke down weeping. "I just seen him a little while ago."

TRANSIT

Blue Line may go private

Continued from A1

agency's funds on the Metro Red Line subway to North Hollywood and suspend work on extensions to East Los Angeles and Mid-City. But Pasadena Assistant City Manager Cynthia Kurtz said the Pasadena line will be hit the hardest because it is the furthest along in terms of design and construction.

"We have offered to help. Our state legislators have offered to help. We have offered to bring private financing in and we have been told no," she said. "It seems they are bound and determined not to give the San Gabriel Valley anything."

Whether any other agency is available to take the Blue Line is still an open question. Kurtz said it might be handled by an oversight authority similar to the one that supervises construction of the Alameda Corridor, a 20-mile freight line linking Los Angeles rail yards with its ports.

Fasana said the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments or the cities along the Blue Line could form an oversight authority or turn the construction over to a single private company that would design and build the remaining components.

But MTA board member Don

Knabe, a county supervisor, said a private company would probably be the only entity that could handle the project. Even if local cities took the project over, they still would face the same financial problems as the MTA, he said.

"You'd be scrambling for the same pot of money locally, so I don't know that it would change anything," he said.

Pasadena officials have secured a \$7.2 million grant to build a transportation center south of Old Pasadena and spent more than \$1.1 million on street improvements, traffic and parking studies.

Talk of taking the Blue Line away from the MTA reached a fever pitch two years ago, Kurtz said, until MTA officials reassured Pasadena officials that the line is a "no-brainer" and would be finished. Kurtz said the city would have been willing to accept a specific time delay of six or twelve months, if design work were completed.

"I want to see someone get ahold of it who wants to build it," she said. "The city of Pasadena will work with anyone."

Knabe said he wants to give a chance to the current MTA proposal, which is designed to give the agency a breather and focus only on the subway to North Hollywood. Knabe said he would prefer that the suspension last no longer than 12 to 18 months.

"If we get our act together, who knows how quickly we could turn these projects back up, particularly the Blue Line," he said.

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