

Agencies to split pillar costs

To support electric train line, highway

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The Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA) and the Thailand Future Fund (TFF) will split the cost of the construction of concrete pillars along overlapping sections of the Brown Line electric train and the third-stage expressway, according to the MRTA.

MRTA governor Pakapong Sirikantaramas said yesterday the overlapping sections of the Brown Line linking Karai and Bueng Kum and the third-stage expressway from the eastern ring road to Kasetsart University intersection, will use the same pillars.

The bill for building the pillars will be split between the MRTA and the TFF. The MRTA will invest 700 million baht in constructing the pillars that will support the electric train line while the TFF will pay for the particular sections of the pillars supporting the expressway.

Mr Pakapong said the MRTA will use its budget from the next fiscal year, which begins in October.

Originally, a loan was planned to be sourced from the Expressway Authority of Thailand (Exat) to pay for both projects' pillar construction. Exat then said it would obtain the loan from the Thailand Future Fund (TFF) instead,

which comes with strict spending conditions.

One of the conditions stipulates that the loan disbursed by the TFF can only be used for construction of the expressways, not the electric train routes. If the TFF loan had been approved and used, it would be in violation of the law, according to Mr Pakapong.

This is the reason it was decided that the cost of building the pillars should be shared by the two agencies, according to the MRTA.

Before the entire Brown Line and the third-stage expressway projects can go ahead, approval needs to be obtained from the Land Traffic Management Commission, said the MRTA.

A source at the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning said the two projects are pending approval by the MRTA. At the same time, a plan is afoot to conduct the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Brown Line.

Mr Pakapong, meanwhile, said public hearings will be held to gauge opinions for the 80-billion-baht light rail project in central Chiang Mai and enable related agencies to get an accurate estimate of the budget to be spent on the land expropriation.

Three light rail lines are in store for Chiang Mai; the 12-km Red Line from Nakhon Ping Hospital to Mae Hia intersection; the 12-km Blue Line from Chiang Mai Zoo to Sri Bua Ngern Patana intersection and the 11-km Green Line from Ruam Choke intersection to Chiang Mai international airport.