

Metro Gold Line Aerial Guideway Nears Completion

(March 1, 2002) The big, S-shaped aerial guideway that snakes its way north out of Union Station is now more than 96 percent complete. Next steps: Installation of the Metro Gold Line tracks and construction of the Chinatown station.

In his report to the Executive Management Committee, last week, Joel Sandberg, Metro Construction deputy executive officer, said the remainder of the light-rail line to Pasadena officially was behind schedule in December. However, the contractor is forecasting substantial completion of the project on schedule for February 2003.

Sandberg reported that a decision is pending before the California Public Utilities Commission that potentially could jeopardize completion of the Metro Gold Line.

The PUC has ordered the prime contractor to halt work at 21 at-grade crossings until it decides whether those crossings must be built as grade-separated intersections. Neighbors had protested the construction of the at-grade crossings citing possible traffic and pedestrian hazards.

The PUC's decision is expected in May, but could extend to July. Should the PUC require grade separation at any of the crossings, Sandberg said, project completion could be substantially delayed, especially if finding the funds to build grade separations proves difficult.

Meanwhile, the Metro Gold Line construction authority is negotiating for commercial developments at the Chinatown and Fillmore stations. A joint development project already is under construction at the Del Mar station site and the authority has initiated construction of a 1,000-car parking garage and bus transfer facility at the Sierra Madre Villa station at the eastern end of the line.

Sandberg currently is on special assignment to the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority as manager of construction. He is responsible for oversight of the construction project, which includes the Chinatown aerial guideway, the Arroyo Seco contract and the construction of stations, tracks and systems.

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