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A Metro Orange Line paving crew pours concrete at Chandler and Laurel Canyon boulevards.



Metro Orange Line

Picking Up the Pace of Construction to Meet Completion Date

By BILL HEARD, Editor

Metro Orange Line Special Report

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(May 18, 2004) A paving crew was busily pouring concrete, one recent morning, at the intersection of Chandler and Laurel Canyon boulevards in North Hollywood.

A mile west, construction workers were building plywood forms in preparation for surfacing a new bridge over the Tujunga Wash at Coldwater Canyon Avenue.

In a two-year project to design and build the Metro Orange Line, these were minor milestones. But, contractor Shimmick/Obayashi and Metro could chalk them up as progress toward the projected August 2005 opening of the San Fernando Valley transitway.

And progress is appreciated.

Each day the contractor has five crews working at intersections, three grading crews and two paving crews on the job at various locations. Almost 90 percent of the project has been designed and 25 percent of construction has been completed.

A construction crew prepares the surface of the Tujunga Wash bridge at Coldwater Canyon Avenue for paving.

Construction activity

"We're now being driven by how fast we can construct, rather than how fast we can design," says Project Manager Roger Dames. "We have construction activities of some type going on now over approximately 70 percent of the 14-mile right-of-way."



Still, the \$330 million project is about four months behind schedule.

The delay is due in some measure to the need to remove soils contaminated during years when the Southern Pacific railroad used the right-of-way. But, there also have been design changes and some contractor delays, Dames says.

Metro Construction and Shimmick/Obayashi are now working together to get the project back on track. Fifty Metro Construction employees, augmented by about a dozen consultants, are assigned to the project.

"We're running a bit late," says Dames, who previously was the Metro Red Line Segment 3 project manager, "but we think we can recover that schedule."



The Metro Orange Line is a 14-mile landscaped transitway connecting Warner Center and the North Hollywood Metro Rail Station.

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Project milestones

Major project milestones have included completion of the Los Angeles River bridge last December. In February, workers poured the first concrete at an intersection and placed the first asphalt on the roadway.

The first station platform and parking lots will be constructed sometime this summer and, in the fall, landscaping will begin in some areas.

As he drove along a street paralleling the right-of-way, recently, Construction Manager Mark Van Gessel talked about the good things the Metro Orange Line is doing – and will do – for the community.

Close to 700 workers – laborers, carpenters, ironworkers, landscapers and other trades – will be employed during construction, he says. Several thousand other suppliers and sub-contractors also will profit.

Their work will result in a first-in-California Bus Rapid Transit system that will carry patrons across the Valley much quicker than a motorist could cover the distance. And do it in an attractive setting of strikingly

designed stations, landscaped pedestrian paths and bikeways.

But, beyond the passenger amenities, says Van Gessel, "I believe the residential areas adjacent to the busway will enjoy substantially better conditions than what they had previously."

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