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## Metro Gold Line Crossing Earns National Award for Safety-conscious Planning

By GAYLE ANDERSON

July 7 – Giving a national nod to the importance of safety, the Federal Transit Administration has bestowed its prestigious Safety Conscious Planning Award on the Metro Gold Line's Marmion Way Corridor crossing.

"The award recognizes transportation planning that demonstrates a working partnership with the community," said Countywide Planning Executive Officer Jim de la Loza, who traveled to Chicago June 28 to pick up the national award on behalf of Metro.

De la Loza credits City Councilman Ed Reyes, who worked as a planner in the early phases of the project and later headed the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority, for his contributions and support throughout the collaborative process with the Highland Park community.

The FTA award recognizes successful planning projects, innovative methods and delivery mechanisms, and collaborative efforts and partnerships that increase the effectiveness of safety conscious planning. The Marmion Way Corridor project was one of seven planning efforts selected for the honor among 250 nominations.

The Marmion Way Corridor portion of the Metro Gold Line Light Rail Transit Project is part of the City of Los Angeles' Historic Preservation Overlay Zone within residential Highland Park. The mile-long segment with its narrow, 60-foot right-of-way, required a sensitive urban design to enhance the safety and quality of life for the ethnically diverse area.

With the addition of light rail transit through northeastern Los Angeles, the Marmion Way Corridor posed safety concerns in the community. During the early planning phases, Metro implemented an urban design/community involvement process to bring the community and agency to an understanding and shared vision for the proposed transitway.



Countywide Planning Executive Officer Jim de la Loza with FTA national award for planning effort at Marmion Way Corridor.

Marmion Way Corridor in 1996

in 2003



The community opted for a street-running system during the collaborative planning process. As originally planned, six- to eight-foot walls would have enclosed the transitway.

The innovative approach provided a transitway design that responded to the human needs of the neighborhood's historical character and resulted in a street-running system that incorporates the neighborhood's historical character rather than the walled transitway previously planned.

"Today, pedestrians have sidewalks and bicyclists can ride along a safe and friendly neighborhood street," said Steve Brye, transportation planning manager. "The two-block long plaza adjacent to the historic Highland Park station is an inviting space to meet your neighbors, wait for the train, and have a farmers' market or craft fair."

Brye and transportation planner Art Cueto managed the planning and implementation efforts that bonded the agency with the community and earned national recognition.