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Groundbreaking is Saturday for Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension

(July 14, 2004) Local, state and federal officials will join community and Metro leaders, Saturday, to break ground for the six-mile Eastside Extension connecting the Metro Gold Line with Little Tokyo, Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles.

The Eastside community has waited two decades to gain access to the expanding Metro Rail system and has fought hard to secure a federal funding commitment of \$490.7 million toward the \$898.8 million project. The balance will be paid with local and state funds.

The extension from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles to Pomona/Atlantic is scheduled to open in late 2009.

Invited to participate in the groundbreaking are Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, State Senator Gloria Romero, Assistant Assembly Majority Leader Ron Calderon, Supervisor Gloria Molina, Los Angeles City Council members Antonio Villaraigosa and Jan Perry, MTA Board Chairman Frank Roberts, CEO Roger Snoble and others.

The Eastside Extension is Metro's highest-priority rail construction project. The six-mile extension will include eight additional stations with stops at Little Tokyo/Arts District, Pico/Aliso, Mariachi Plaza, Soto Street, Indiana, Maravilla, East LA Civic Center and Pomona/Atlantic.

Underground segment

A 1.8-mile segment running through a densely populated area in Boyle Heights will be constructed underground and will include two underground stations. The remainder of the system will be built at street level.

The Eastside Extension is expected to reach an estimated 23,000 daily boardings by 2020. It will serve a corridor that is densely populated with many people who are transit dependent. The Metro Gold Line Eastside extension also is expected to generate 46,000 jobs.

In June, following the approval of the FFGA, Metro executed a \$600.4 million construction contract with Eastside LRT Constructors. Eastside LRT is a joint venture of Washington Group International, Obayashi Corporation and Shimmick Construction Corporation.

Saturday's groundbreaking will include a multi-faith invocation, Taiko drummers and a mariachi band, as well as a display featuring a virtual tour of the destinations and stations.

Following the groundbreaking, a community celebration is planned at Belvedere Park at the East Los Angeles Civic Center. Members of the many communities along the route – Little Tokyo/Arts District, Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles – will participate.

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