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► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

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► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Board Paves Way for 2006 Start of Construction on Expo Line

- Certifies environmental impact documents

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 16, 2005) The Board voted, Thursday, to certify the Exposition Line's environmental impact documents, a significant step that paves the way for the start of construction in 2006.

"Today's approval by the Board signals the start of a much-needed transportation project that will serve thousands of Westside residents," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

In certifying the Mid-City/Exposition Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR), the Board also adopted a modified Locally Preferred Alternative with a rail route from 7th and Metro, via a connection along Flower Street in downtown LA, to Venice/Robertson in Culver City.

The modified plan incorporates these design options:

- An undercrossing between Jefferson Boulevard and Trousdale Parkway on the USC campus;
- La Brea aerial station and grade separation;
- La Cienega station 500-space parking facility on the southeast corner of Jefferson and La Cienega on the city-owned east central interceptor sewer construction staging site;
- Jefferson Boulevard northside widening at La Cienega Boulevard;
- Jefferson Boulevard grade separation near Ballona Creek; and
- Venice/Robertson at-grade interim station located east of National Boulevard within the Metro-owned Exposition Line right-of-way.



A display about the Exposition Line construction project was mounted in the Metro Headquarters lobby during Thursday's Board meeting. Senior Quality Engineer Jim Stubblefield pauses to read about the proposed USC/Exposition Park station.

- Thursday's Board action also included environment clearance for three construction design options should additional funding become available:
- USC/Exposition Park optional at-grade station near Kinsey Drive on the USC campus;
- USC/Exposition Park extended undercrossing option (precludes optional at-grade station near Kinsey Drive); and a Venice/Robertson aerial station.

The Board also eliminated from further consideration a Venice/Robertson at-grade station (at-grade rail crossings of Washington and National Boulevards).

Built with local funding

The Exposition Light Rail Transit Project will be built with local funding instead of federal New Starts funding, thereby keeping the project on an accelerated schedule for a June 2010 completion. Cost of the project is \$640 million.

The Exposition Line will be approximately 9 miles in length and will share common track and two station (7th St./Metro Center and Pico/Chick Hearn) with the Metro Blue Line as it leaves downtown Los Angeles. Just south of downtown, the line will proceed west on the Metro-owned right-of-way on Exposition Boulevard.

Approximately eight new stations will be constructed between downtown Los Angeles and Culver City. A future second phase would extend the Exposition line to the City of Santa Monica.

The next step for the project is the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) by the Federal Transit Administration. FTA environmental clearance is needed before the Exposition Construction Authority can award a contract for design and construction.