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Yvette Robles, left, and Olga Lopez of Metro's Community Relations team, shown here with an artist's rendering of the Pico/Aliso station, meet frequently with local residents and businesspeople on the Eastside.



Supporting the Community During the Eastside Construction Project

- Metro's Community Relations officers are on call for information and help 24/7

BY JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 22, 2005) With completion of the Metro Gold Line's Eastside Extension set for 2009, the communities affected by the construction have a long haul with Metro.

And it's for that reason exactly that Community Relations officers have worked so hard to keep the community involved in the project.

Assistant Community Relations Manager Yvette Robles and Community Relations Officer Olga Lopez hold weekly meetings with local residents and businesspeople.

They have office hours to solicit suggestions and complaints from those being affected by the work. They also walk the construction alignment daily and are on call 24/7.

In coordination with Planning, they provide updates at a monthly meeting with the Review Advisory Committee, which is made up of local community members, to try to keep the community near the Eastside Extension informed and as happy as possible during the lengthy construction period.

'Always available'

"We're always available to answer questions," Robles said. "Not only are we available, but we're also giving information before we start any

major activity and mitigating the impacts of construction as best we can.”

Small projects—keeping the ground wet to combat dust, ensuring trucks leave as little debris as possible as they travel, signs that say businesses are still open during construction and continually cleaning the streets around sites—keep Metro in good standing with locals.

Additionally, huge barriers enclosing construction sites to block the view and reduce the noise help keep the construction from intruding into community members’ lives.

No stranger to construction sites, Deputy Executive Officer of Project Management Eli Choueiry said that the Eastside Extension has been one of the easiest in terms of community involvement that he’s experienced.

“Yvette and Olga do a great job of keeping the community informed,” he said. “You keep the community informed and you’re halfway home. Yvette and Olga have dedicated themselves to building strong relationships in the community, which has been very important for the project.”