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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](#)

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► [30/10 Initiative](#)

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Mayor of Los Angeles Antonio Villaraigosa conducts last meeting of his term as Board Chairman June 22.



Photos by Deniz Durmus

Mayor Villaraigosa Passes Board's Gavel to Supervisor Molina

- He praises Metro staff and cites year's accomplishments

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 23, 2006) "It's been fun," Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa told fellow Board members, Thursday, as he presided over his final meeting as chairman of the 13-member panel.



Mayor Villaraigosa praises Metro staff and cites year's accomplishments during the session.

"I have a great affection for this agency and the people who work in it," he said. "I recognize that they often work under trying circumstances; they really do a good job."

CEO Roger Snoble thanked Villaraigosa on behalf of the staff "for your leadership and for all the hard work that you've put into the agency...your attention to the MTA has been very much appreciated."

In July, Supervisor Gloria Molina will begin a one-year term as Board chair. Director Pam O'Connor will be 1st vice chair and Villaraigosa will move into place as 2nd vice chair.

In his remarks, the mayor enumerated more than a dozen Metro accomplishments during his term as Board chairman. They included improved

transit security measures, new Metro Rapid service, the opening of the Metro Orange Line, the start of tunneling on the Eastside Extension and the beginning of the Exposition Line project.

He also noted that an independent panel of experts has concluded that a Wilshire extension of the subway could be built and operated safely. A separate analysis showed that a downtown connector would improve rail system ridership and link rail lines that don't currently connect, he said.



County Supervisor Gloria Molina, center right, begins a one-year term as Board chair in July. (Gayle Anderson photo)

"I look forward to continuing to work with the Board and the staff to focus on transportation and to address the need for more public transit," Villaraigosa said. "(We need)...to keep a first-class bus system, which I agree has to be a priority, but also to have a multi-modal system."