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CEO Roger Snoble and Eastside Extension Sr. Construction Engineer Fred Smith greet tunneling machine Lola as she breaks through the final segment of the 1.7 mile tunnel beneath East Los Angeles on Tuesday.



Photos by Gary Leonard

Lola's Big Break

DATELINE: 11:20 a.m., Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2006> Lola, the tunnel boring machine, broke through the 1.7 tunnel she and partner Vicky have been digging beneath East Los Angeles at First St. and Lorena St.

The breakthrough took place at the 1st and Lorena station site in Boyle Heights, about 1.7 miles east of where tunneling began on the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension last Feb. 23.

The second tunneling machine, Vicky, is not far behind Lola in digging a parallel tunnel.

With Vicky close behind, Lola broke through the first segment at 1st and Soto on July 21. The two machines continued on to complete the excavation of the 1.7-mile tunnel through to Lorena Street where the above-ground portion of the rail line resumes en

Move your mouse over image to see "Lola" break through the Eastside Extension tunnel underneath Mariachi Plaza at First and Lorena streets.



route to its terminus at 3rd and Atlantic.

Throughout the tunneling operation, the 344-foot machines maintained a depth of 50 to 60 feet below the surface, carving out 21-foot, 4-inch-diameter tunnels and installing pre-cast concrete tunnel liners.

The 5.9-mile Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension is expected to open in late 2009.

So noted: Metro Board Chair Gloria Molina and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, CEO Roger Snoble, Metro executives, elected officials and community leaders will celebrate the arrival of “Lola”, the massive Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) for the Light Rail Eastside Extension, at a media event this Thursday at 10:30 a.m. onsite at First and Lorena streets in Boyle Heights.



It took a Herculean effort of construction crew and tunneling machines to do the job.

