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Board Chair Gloria Molina applauds the impromptu efforts of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa as he documents the dusty debut of tunneling machine "Lola," which broke through the final segment of the Eastside Extension tunnel on Tuesday.



Photos by Gary Leonard

## Officials Mark Latest Milestone in Eastside Rail Construction

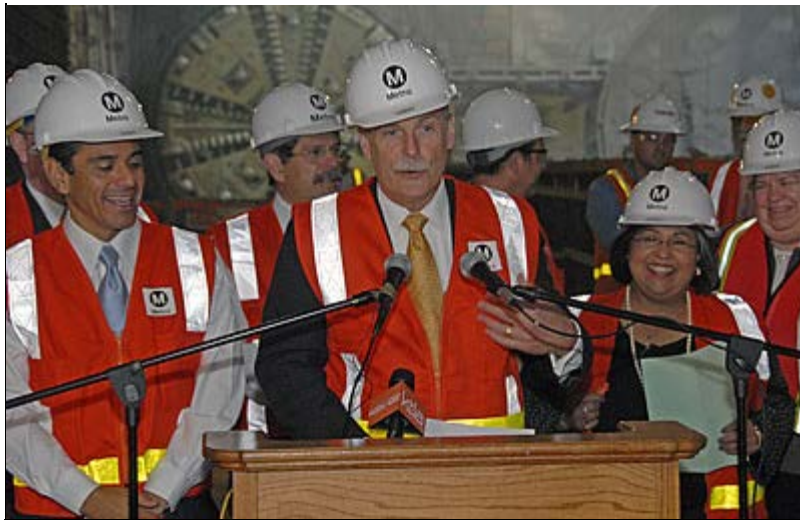
By JOSE UBALDO

(Nov. 16, 2006) Metro officials gathered at a media event in Boyle Heights, today, to mark the latest milestone in the construction of the Eastside Light Rail construction project.

"Lola" – the massive tunnel boring machine – finished burrowing a 1.7-mile eastbound tunnel of the underground segment for the Metro Gold Line to East LA. The TBM reached the underground box of the East Portal at First and Lorena streets on Tuesday, Nov. 14.

Her twin sister, "Vicki," is a few weeks behind in the westbound tunnel. Tunneling began last February.

CEO Roger  
Snoble  
announces  
the tunneling  
breakthrough



at  
underground  
media event

The breakthrough "marks a watershed moment in the history of this project," said Board Chair Gloria Molina. "I know that my mentor, the late Rep. Ed Roybal, would be so proud of our progress. The Eastside Extension was his dream – and today we are that much closer to connecting the Eastside to Metro's mass transit network."

"This is truly an historic day for eastside residents with the completion of the first of two tunnels being constructed for this eastside extension of the Metro Gold Line," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "Once completed, this project will go a long way in easing traffic congestion and will provide a usable transportation option for this densely populated area."

#### **6-mile rail extension**

The tunnels are part of the six-mile extension of the Metro Gold Line that will link Union Station in downtown Los Angeles with Little Tokyo/Arts District, Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles by late 2009.

"I'm excited about this crucial project being built for eastside residents and can't wait for this important passenger service to begin," said Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard. "Today's breakthrough puts us just that much closer to the opening of this light rail line that will provide real transportation alternatives and new opportunities for the residents of the eastside communities."

Eastside construction workers have logged nearly 1.3 million hours with no lost-time injuries, setting a record that has astonished long-time construction safety executives since starting work on the project in July 2004.

"This is an incredible accomplishment and speaks volumes to our commitment in making safety priority number one," said Metro CEO Roger Snoble.