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Aerial photo of bridge crossing the 101 Freeway captures a milestone in the construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, now halfway complete. The light rail line will feature eight new stations (two underground) and will go from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles via the Little Tokyo/Arts District and Boyle Heights to Atlantic/Pomona boulevards in East Los Angeles. The cost of the project is \$898 million and is set to open in 2009.



May 11, 2007: Aerial photo by Gary Leonard

Eastside Extension Construction Reaches Halfway Milestone

- Project is on-time, on-budget with an impressive safety record

By NED RACINE

(May 17, 2007) The \$899-million Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension project is halfway completed.

Proceeding toward its opening in the latter part of 2009, the project remains on time and under budget. Its construction workers have gone more than 1,000 days without a lost-time incident. Construction began July 1, 2004.

The six-mile light rail line will feature eight new stations (two underground) and will run from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles via the Little Tokyo/Arts District and Boyle Heights to Atlantic/Pomona boulevards in East Los Angeles.

Photo by Juan Ocampo



Platform rises at the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station at Alameda and First streets.

Dennis Mori, executive officer of project management, became the Eastside Extension's project director in 2002. He is particularly proud of the project's safety record, which translates to more than 1.8 million work hours.

"This is an incredible feat because there are very few construction projects that reach this milestone," Mori says. "It is more impressive because of the complexity and size of this six-mile long project."

Next milestone

Mori says the project's next milestone is to finish concreting the two underground stations.

While construction of the street-level stations at Atlantic and Little Tokyo/Arts District continues, rail tracks and overhead catenary system power lines are being installed. Installation of the overhead power system and track on the bridge over the 101 Freeway begins soon.

Construction site at Lorena and First streets in Boyle Heights at the east entrance of the 1.7 mile tunnel beneath Boyle Heights. Below, 101 Freeway crosses First Street at the west entrance to the 1.7 mile tunnel of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension beneath Boyle Heights.

- Photos by Juan Ocampo



Fresh from a tour of the Eastside Extension with CEO Roger Snoble and [Federal Transit Administration](#) Deputy Administrator Sherry E. Little, Mori explained that in some ways the Eastside Extension is a more complex construction project than the Metro Red Line.

"This project, in six miles, has a bridge (over the 101 Freeway), 1.7 miles of tunnel, and at-grade construction. So we have three types of guideway structures that are very different," he says. "Normally you stay either at grade or you go underground, but not both; so with that it brings a lot of challenges [partnering with] the City and Caltrans and some of the other third-party agencies."



End of the Line: The Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension ends just east of the Atlantic Station at 3rd Street and Atlantic Boulevard in East Los Angeles. Photo by Juan Ocampo.

Mori served as project manager for construction of the \$1.3-billion Metro Red Line North Hollywood segment. He points to that project as one reason for the Eastside Extension project team's success.

"I think the reason that we're doing so well is because, number one, many of the people who are working on the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension worked on the...North Hollywood project, so they all have been on a successful project," he says. "The teamwork was already established by the previous project. We came off a project that was on time and within budget."

"We know how to manage large federal projects," Mori adds. "So, I think, it's really the experience factor that has largely contributed to our success."