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Senator Barbara Boxer and other public officials spoke at the construction site of the Gold Line Eastside Extension, Feb. 20, after inspecting the \$898.8 million light rail project. Boxer complimented the schedule, budget and future traffic congestion relief the project will bring.



Photos: Jimmy Stroup

### Senator Boxer Visits the Eastside Extension, Speaks on the Necessity of Future Funding into Public Transportation

By JIMMY STROUP

(Feb. 21, 2008) California Senator Barbara Boxer inspected the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, Feb. 20, to see how the agency was faring in completing the nearly \$900 million project that adds six miles and eight stations to the Metro System.

"I'm here to view some of the progress and happy to be part of the process of getting the Eastside Extension built," she said. "The people of Los Angeles know gridlock, traffic congestion and poor air quality all too well."



Metro CEO Roger Snoble, sporting one of the newly redesigned reflective safety vests, points out a potentially hazardous footing obstacle to the press and the dignitaries who came to the Eastside Extension construction site, Feb. 20.

Boxer was joined by U.S. Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Metro Board members Gloria Molina, Yvonne Braithwaite Burke and Zev Yaroslavsky, and Metro CEO Roger Snoble.

Roybal-Allard said the Eastside Extension was an example of “sound federal investment into the city,” and cited the historic irony of using rail lines in Los Angeles – which was once criss-crossed with commuter rail lines in the early to mid 20th century – to clear the City’s clogged transportation arteries.

“This long-awaited light rail line will connect East Los Angeles to the rest of the county’s light rail system,” Supervisor Gloria Molina said. “What’s more, it will relieve traffic congestion considerably by getting thousands of people out of their cars and into Metro’s mass transit network.”



A Metro construction worker smooths newly poured concrete between the rails of what will eventually be the westbound track of the Gold Line Eastside Extension. Senator Barbara Boxer noted that 30 percent of workers employed on the project live within five miles of the project.

Boxer also noted the project's positive environment effects, saying the \$460 million in federal funding was well spent on a project that promised to ease the burden of fossil fuel dependence and lower the contribution of Los Angeles pollution to global warming.

"I want to commend Metro for taking so many steps to make sure its system is as green as it can be," Boxer said. "Every step we take makes a huge difference."

The Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension is expected to be completed in July 2009. The project is presently building over the Los Angeles River at the 1st Street Bridge heading east toward the I-10 freeway.

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