

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/
Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

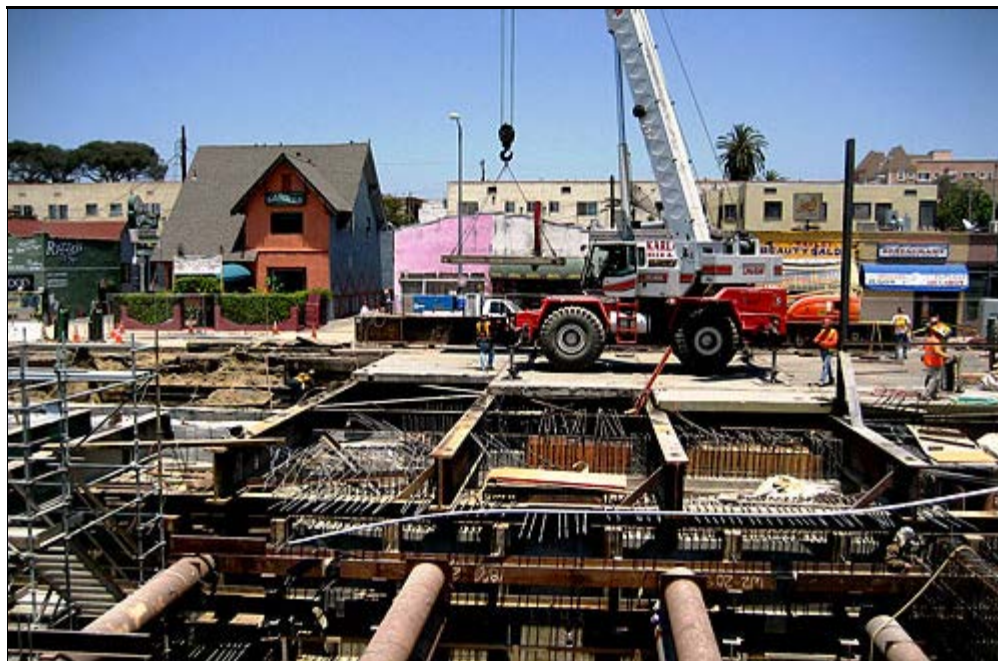
► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Looking northeast, this view shows the removal of temporary concrete deck pieces and their steel supports from 1st Street. The complex structure in the foreground is the Soto station entrance and the underground station's supports. The temporary deck pieces allowed drivers to continue using 1st Street, while station construction continued below them. *Photo by Alex Mismas*

Street Reconstruction at 1st and Soto Streets Another Eastside Milestone

- Light rail project passes 80 percent completion mark

(June 10, 2008) In another milestone for Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension construction, workers are renovating First and Soto streets in Boyle Heights above one of the light rail project's underground stations.

The full street closure on First Street, between Breed and Matthews streets, is needed to build the roof of the underground station and finish improvements such as street restoration, sidewalk reconstruction and street lighting.

The six-mile-long project is scheduled to open in mid-2009. It is more than 80 percent complete.

In addition, other milestones have been reached, including the unprecedented construction safety record of more than 3 million work-hours without an accident that requires a single day away from work. The project also is on budget and scheduled to open on time in mid-2009.

The work at First and Soto streets began June 6 and will continue for four weeks. Crews will work on a 24-hour basis to complete the 1st and Soto renovation as soon as possible.

A high level of construction activity is occurring along the entire alignment, both at street level and underground. Building of the eight new stations -- Little Tokyo/Arts District, Pico Aliso, Mariachi Plaza, Soto, Indiana, Maravilla, East Los Angeles Civic Center and Atlantic/Pomona -- includes station platform construction and canopy installation.

Metro project contractor, Eastside LRT Constructors, is laying track over the entire alignment and installing the overhead catenary wire to feed power to trains. New curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, traffic lights, crosswalks and street restoration improvements also are in progress along First and Third streets.

The Metro Gold Line Eastside extension will connect East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights and Little Tokyo/Arts District with the entire 73 miles of the Metro Rail system.

The Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, which will feature eight stations (two underground), will span six miles from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles via the Arts District/Little Tokyo and Boyle Heights to Atlantic/Pomona Boulevards in East Los Angeles.

--From Jose Ubaldo