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Los Angeles City Councilman and Metro Board Member José Huizar addresses safety issues at news conference Monday as Metro Gold Line train makes a grand entrance at the Indiana Station. *Photos by Juan Ocampo.*

## Metro campaign to boost safety: Metro urges pedestrians, motorists to observe safety laws as officers begin issuing tickets along new Eastside rail line

By JOSÉ UBALDO  
*Media Relations*

(June 18, 2009) City of Los Angeles Councilman and Metro Board member José Huizar announced at a news conference on Monday that three Los Angeles area law enforcement agencies have started issuing warnings and fines to motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians that ignore safety rules around the new six-mile light rail extension of the Metro Gold Line to East Los Angeles.

Trains are being tested on the alignment in advance of passenger service. An opening date has not yet been determined.

Media Relations produced a video report of the news conference where officials urged safety awareness around the new rail line to East Los Angeles. Narrated by Rick Jager, Communications Manager.

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD), California Highway Patrol (CHP) and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) are patrolling the new

alignment that runs along Alameda, First, Indiana, Third streets and Pomona Boulevard since there have been changes in traffic signage, traffic configuration and street parking.

"Finally, the Eastside community gets a Metro Rail line after years of waiting," Huizar said. "It's not just a transportation system, it's a link to jobs, schools, medical facilities, shopping, culture and entertainment throughout the region. But with this new service comes the responsibility of safety, which is shared by everyone.

"Metro is working hard to educate residents about safe behavior around the trains and tracks. But engineering and education aren't enough. Heightened law enforcement around the train line will help remind pedestrians and motorists to pay close attention as this new and exciting transportation mode comes into our community," he said.



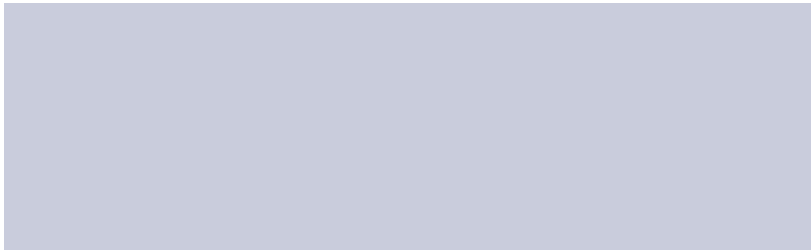
CEO Art Leahy said Metro will be adding more dividers along the right-of-way to keep people from jaywalking across the tracks. "The Gold Line is well designed. It's a really great service. It's safe, but we're going to make it safer," he added.

"Metro has worked closely with the state Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and local traffic and law enforcement agencies to build a safe rail line," said Metro CEO Art Leahy. "And during the test phase, we're making adjustments to make it even safer. But we truly need the public's help in observing the warning signs and signals and just exercising common sense around the trains and the tracks. Pay attention. Look and listen."

The eight new stations of the Metro Gold Line to East Los Angeles include Little Tokyo/Arts District, Pico/Aliso, Mariachi Plaza (underground), Soto (underground), Indiana, Maravilla, ELA Civic Center and Atlantic.

The last time residents saw a train gliding down the streets of the Eastside community was almost 50 years ago.

As part of the safety campaign, Sheriff's deputies are visiting schools in the surrounding area, motorcycle officers are patrolling the alignment, and Metro is installing photo enforcement cameras at 14 strategic intersections to deter left turn violators. Those tickets come in the mail. Also jaywalkers and trespassers will be fined if they don't respect the safety rules.



Rail Station Assistants Michael Barnes, Ronnie Scott, Ron Autry, Gilbert Maese, and Lorne Currie are among 12 safety



ambassadors working to educate pedestrians, motorists and bicyclists on how to practice safety around the new Gold Line Extension.

*Photo by Laura Kloth*

Metro also has deployed 12 safety ambassadors at several Eastside intersections to help motorists and bicyclists become familiar with the new light rail train crossings and to educate pedestrians on how to be safe around trains during the testing period and also how to enter and exit the Metro Rail stations.

The ambassadors are at Alameda/Temple, First/Alameda, First/Mission, First/Lorena, First/Indiana, Indiana/Third and Third/Mednik from 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday to Friday and during the weekends from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Since last year Metro staff has been canvassing the Eastside promoting the agency's safety campaign message with delivery of 135,000 flyers to residences and businesses, visits to all schools from Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, community and religious centers, hospitals and libraries in the service area.

Metro began construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension in July 2004. The light rail construction project is within budget, on time and the contractor has logged more than 4 million working hours without a day lost for any accident or injuries.