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For Many, Gold Line Extension Will Mean More than Transportation

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

Depending on who you ask, the Nov. 15 opening of eight new stations along the Metro Gold Line will be welcomed in a number of different ways.

Be it spectator, volunteer, Metro Board member or employee, everyone can agree: the opening will be a monumental change for East Side neighborhoods, and the way people travel from there around the city.

No one knows that better than those who have watched closely -- among them Los Angeles City Councilman and Metro Board Member Jose Huizar.

"This is extremely exciting. I grew up in Boyle Heights. I still live in Boyle Heights and the way I see it, this is going to connect not only people who want to go to work and have an easier access for transportation, but the young people who live in our community," Huizar said during an Oct. 30 media preview ride that started out at Union Station.

Huizar recalled being in law school when he first began participating in the project.

"It's going to open up a whole other world for them [young people]. I remember growing up there. Sometimes you don't get to cross this bridge over the river," he said. "And for young people, they're going to have easier access to get around Los Angeles, not to mention the benefits to the environment, and also the economic development opportunities all along the line are going to exist for some areas that haven't had the type of care and attention that they deserve."

Erica Cornejo and Erik Sarni, both reporters for the *Voice*, a Boyle Heights

Photos by Laura Kloth



Los Angeles City Councilman and Metro Board Member Jose Huizar remembers getting involved on the Extension project while a student in law school.



RAC member Armando Ybarra says he was proud to have participated in the Gold Line Extension project and wishes more people had joined in.

community newspaper, joined the throng of reporters at the media preview, and smiled as they prepared to board the shiny new Gold Line rail cars.

Sarni, a videographer, said he wanted to cover the event for his paper, and to create a video for Youtube.

"It means a lot to us because finally they put rail on East Side. So finally, we could connect, and we could transit all over downtown L.A., Long Beach, the airport, Pasadena, and Universal Studios," he said.

Cornejo, who plans to write a story about her adventure, agreed.

"It's great, it's great. I do a lot of shopping in East L.A. I'm just happy for the community to be able to have this transportation. I ride the bike a lot, and I know that we're going to be able to take the bike on the rail. We're happy about that," she said.

Armando Ybarra, a Review Advisory Committee (RAC), said he was proud to have been part of the process, and was in awe of the impact it will have on the whole basin.

Ybarra said his only regret was that more people in the community didn't get involved.

"I wish more people had given more input. This is for you, for our children, for our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren because let's be honest, we're pioneers for something for the future, and this is an investment," he said.

"I would like to see eventually for these lines to extend all the way to La Habra, La Mirada, all over the San Gabriel Valley," he added. "Hopefully, somebody will pick up the torch because it's a big project. It's time consuming, but it's ok. I look at it as the least I can do for the benefit of the masses, and the future generations."

All agreed the new extension would bring Los Angeles closer together.

"Just standing on this platform right now, you see people of all incomes and races, walking with each other talking with each other. I think all of that is good for the city," said Huizar.



Erica Cornejo Voice Reporter said the new Extension would bring more options to many commuting from L.A. and back to the Eastside.



Voice newspaper reporter and videographer Erik Sarni was excited about joining other media at the preview ride, and was happy to document the ride for YouTube.

- See *myMetro.net* report 10.26.09: [Public Grand Opening Set for Sunday Nov. 15](#)

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