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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Breaks Ground on L.A.'s Newest Light Rail Project to Serve Westside Commuters

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Board was joined by other local elected officials today to officially break ground on the 8.5-mile Exposition light rail line. Once completed in 2010, the Expo Line will link downtown to Culver City and will provide an alternative to the heavily congested I-10 Santa Monica freeway. "Today marks the beginning of construction on this vital transportation project that will bring relief to the thousands of daily commuters that travel between downtown Los Angeles and the Westside," said LA County Supervisor and Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. "This is truly an historic day as we embark on building a light rail system that will serve this heavily traveled corridor."



The Expo Line, beginning in downtown Los Angeles will have a total of 10 stations, sharing two stations (7th Street/Metro Center and Pico/Chick Hearn) with the existing Metro Blue Line. The line will travel along Flower Street to just south of downtown near USC where it will proceed west on the Metro-owned right-of-way along Exposition Boulevard with an interim terminus near Washington/National in Culver City.

"Today's groundbreaking on this crucial link to the regional transportation system marks a major milestone in bringing rail access to the Westside," said LA County Supervisor and Chair of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board of Directors Gloria Molina. "It's been over 50 years since Pacific Electric's Santa Monica Air Line provided passenger service along this right-of-way and in less than five years we will once again have a rail system in place to ease congestion and speed travel times for Westside residents."

Earlier this year, the construction authority's Board awarded a design/build contract to the joint venture construction and design group of FCI/Fluor/Parsons to build the project. Once completed, the project will be turned over to Metro which will operate the system. A future second phase of the project would extend the Exposition Line to the City of Santa Monica.

"Today is a milestone for the construction authority and a time to celebrate as we begin to construct this important transportation project for the region," said Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority CEO Rick Thorpe.

The Exposition Line will offer faster and more convenient access to many destinations. Whether traveling to work in downtown Los Angeles, exploring the museums in Exposition Park or dining and shopping in Culver City, the Exposition Light Rail Line will get people where they need to go quickly and efficiently.

The total project cost is estimated at \$640 million and includes eight new stations and a bike path that will run along the alignment. The new stations planned for the project will be built at 23rd Street/Flower, Jefferson/Flower, Vermont/Exposition, Western/Exposition, Crenshaw/Exposition, La Brea/Exposition, La Cienega/Exposition and Washington/National. The stations will include state-of-the-art amenities including ticket vending machines, telephones, security cameras, real-time train arrival signs, bike racks, canopy-covered seating and public art.

Park and Ride lots will also be constructed along the alignment with approximately 1,500 parking spaces provided among three stations at Crenshaw, La Cienega and Washington/National.

Estimated ridership on the Exposition Light Rail Line is projected at 43,600 daily riders by the year 2020. The hours of operation will coincide with Metro's other rail lines (approximately 4 a.m. to 2 a.m., seven days a week).

Landscaping will be a particularly important element in creating the Exposition Light Rail Line as a transit parkway. When it opens, the Exposition Light Rail Line will feature thousands of trees, shrubs and vines.

"Modeled after the successful Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley, the Expo Line will have similar landscaping, creating a park-like atmosphere along the corridor," said Thorpe.

Additional information on the Exposition Light Rail Project is available on the Internet at www.buildexpo.org.

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***Photo by Juan Ocampo**

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