

May 20, 2016

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RELEASE

The Train to the Beach is Now in Service L.A. Metro Celebrates the Grand Opening of the Expo Line to Santa Monica

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today officially dedicated the Metro Expo Line Extension to Santa Monica at a special ceremony at the new Downtown Santa Monica Station.

To kick off the grand opening, an Expo Line train carrying local, state and federal elected officials and executives from the Metro Exposition Construction Authority broke through a giant banner at Colorado Avenue and 5th Street near the Downtown Santa Monica Station as a large crowd cheered on the train's arrival.

"While we're celebrating this significant new transportation improvement, let's also note that this investment of tax dollars has kept thousands of local people employed," said Metro Board Chair and L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. "It's great for them, for us and for our economy and we should all be proud."

After the ceremony, Metro will provide free rides on the entire Expo Line beginning at noon Friday and continuing until the end of service. On Saturday, the free rides on the Expo Line will be offered the entire service day and there will be community parties from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at these stations: Downtown Santa Monica, 17th St/SMC, 26th/Bergamot, Expo/Bundy, Palms and Culver City.

“In every part of L.A. County, commuters are demanding options to help them avoid freeways where traffic crawls along day after day,” said Metro Board First Vice Chair and City of Duarte Council Member John Fasana. “With the Expo Line we are making good on our promise to deliver mobility projects to improve the lives of voters.”

The \$1.5-billion extension is the second rail project funded by Measure R to open this year — the Gold Line extension to Azusa debuted in March. Almost 68 percent of Los Angeles County voters in 2008 approved the Measure R half-cent sales tax increase to fund new transportation projects and programs.

“With today’s Expo Line opening, coupled with the opening in March of the Gold Line to Azusa, more modern, economical, convenient and efficient transportation options are available to thousands more Angelinos than ever before,” said Metro Board Second Vice Chair and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. “Thanks to Measure R, which was approved by L.A. County voters in 2008, we are moving forward with our promise to improve quality of life for our residents today and tomorrow.”

The 6.6-mile Expo extension runs from Culver City to Santa Monica and includes seven stations: Palms, Westwood/Rancho Park, Expo/Sepulveda, Expo/Bundy, 27th St/Bergamot, 17th St/Santa Monica College and Downtown Santa Monica.

“This is truly a joyful day for me, in part because I’ve been a longtime supporter of this project and carried the legislation to create the Exposition Construction Authority,” said Expo Authority Board Vice Chair, Metro Board Member and L.A. County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. “But the real winners today are the residents of Los Angeles County who can now bypass traffic in yet another segment of our region, as they look forward to the many other transit projects we are preparing to deliver.”

The Expo Line now stretches for 15.2 miles between downtown Los Angeles and downtown Santa Monica with 19 stations. In downtown L.A., the Expo Line offers easy transfers to the Blue Line, Purple Line and Red Line at the 7th/Metro Center Station. The Metro Rail system, which began with the Blue Line in 1990, now includes 105 miles spanning six lines.

“Starting today, Westside residents have an alternative to the traffic trap they have been living in,” said Expo Authority Board Chair, Metro Board Member and L.A. City Council Member, Mike Bonin. “The Expo Line is not only a game changer for the Westside but it’s also a gift to residents of the entire region, as part of Metro’s growing mobility network that is bringing our neighborhoods – and our people – together.”

Ridership on the new portion of the Expo Line is projected to total 18,000 to 20,000 weekday boardings after the first year of service. The travel time from downtown L.A. to the Downtown Santa Monica Station is 47 minutes. Expo service begins each day at about 4:45 a.m. and continues until

about 2 a.m. on weekdays and 3 a.m. on weekends. Trains will run every 12 minutes until about 11:45 p.m., after which service will be every 20 minutes.

“What we have accomplished in this region since the passage of Measure R is impressive,” said Metro Board Member and City of Inglewood Mayor James T. Butts. “What can and will be accomplished over the next 30 years will be astounding. We are changing the transportation landscape of L.A. County and providing a transit system for generations to come.”

The Expo Line extension includes a paved bike path that runs adjacent to the tracks for most of the route between Culver City and the 17th Street/SMC Station. The bikeway includes lighting and landscaping. Each station has secure bike racks and lockers.

“The opening of the Expo Line extension today is a great reminder that we have come a long way in a short time,” said Metro CEO Phil Washington. “But we still have more to do with easing every day congestion. We will continue to strive to deliver our investments on time and on budget for the transportation network that Los Angeles County deserves.”

The rail extension provides easy access to many jobs and destinations on the Westside. Among them: the Palms farmers market, Century City (via a bus connection), the Westside Pavilion, the Bergamot Station Arts Complex, the Water Garden office complex, Santa Monica College, Santa Monica Pier, Will Rogers State Beach, Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica Place, Palisades Park, Tongva Park and the Santa Monica Civic Center.

There will be parking available at three stations: Expo/Sepulveda (260 spaces), Expo/Bundy (217 spaces) and 17th Street/SMC (67 spaces). As part of a test parking fee program, the daily parking rate is \$2 and the monthly fee is \$39. Each station has a drop-off area and is served by buses from Metro, Big Blue Bus or Culver CityBus.

A regular Metro fare is \$1.75 and includes two hours of free transfers for those using a TAP card. A daily pass that is good for unlimited rides on Metro is \$7 and monthly passes are \$100. There are discounts available for seniors, the disabled, Medicare recipients and students. Please see taptogo.net for more information on how to apply for discounted fares.

The Expo Line to Santa Monica was built by the Exposition Construction Authority and the project was completed on time and on budget. The project broke ground in 2011 with heavy construction beginning in 2012. In February, the project was turned over to Metro, which will operate the line. Extensive system testing and employee training has been conducted on the line over the past year.

The project includes a \$103.5-million light rail vehicle maintenance yard in Santa Monica with many environmentally-friendly features. The 14-acre facility can house up to 48 train cars and is staffed around-the-clock by nearly 200 Metro employees.

Other Measure R projects under construction include: the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Project that will run between the Expo Line and Green Line and provide connections to LAX terminals; the Regional Connector project that is trying together the Blue, Expo and Gold Lines for faster rides to and through downtown Los Angeles, and the first section of the Purple Line Extension that will extend the subway to Beverly Hills.

Metro will use new Kinkisharyo rail vehicles — also funded by Measure R — on the Expo Line. The Kinkisharyo P3010 is a highly advanced stainless steel vehicle specifically designed to support Metro's light-rail expansion.

About Metro

Metro is a multimodal transportation agency that is really three companies in one: a major operator that transports about 1.5 million boarding passengers on an average weekday on a fleet of 2,200 clean air buses and six rail lines, a major construction agency that oversees many bus, rail, highway and other mobility related building projects, and it is the lead transportation planning and programming agency for Los Angeles County. Overseeing one of the largest public works programs in America, Metro is changing the urban landscape of the Los Angeles region. Dozens of transit, highway and other mobility projects largely funded by Measure R are under construction or in the planning stages.

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Metro-XXX Expo2 Grand Opening 5/20/2016