



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro News

June 17, 2019

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

L.A. Metro Celebrates Unveiling and Naming of Tunnel Boring Machines for Purple Line Extension Project Section 2 Between Beverly Hills and Century City



The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) joined elected officials and community members today in Century City for a ceremonial naming and unveiling of its second set of tunnel boring machines that will dig twin subway tunnels between Beverly Hills and Century City. Subway tunneling is expected to begin in early 2020.

Metro Board Director and City of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti appointee Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker awarded TAP Cards and other prizes to students who won contests to name the TBMs and create illustrations for the TBM tail shields. More than 2,500 votes were cast for the contests. The names “Harriet” and “Ruth” were selected from a winning entry submitted by 6th grade Turning Point School student Ruby Santamaria. Harriet and Ruth were named after Harriet Tubman, known for her role in the Underground Railroad, and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who fights for gender equality and social justice.

Hans Smallwood, a 3rd grade student from Good Shepherd Catholic School in Beverly Hills won the art contest. His winning illustration showed the Purple Line Extension subway running under Rodeo Drive.

“Harriet and Ruth will soon usher in an exciting new phase of construction work for this critically important transit project,” said L.A. County Supervisor and Metro Board Chair Sheila Kuehl. “We are glad to see such enthusiastic community involvement in naming these new TBMs.”

Metro will issue the commemorative TAP cards to the public featuring Han's winning artwork and Ruby's tunnel boring machine names this winter. The commemorative TAP cards will be available at ticket vending machines at existing stations along the Purple Line subway later this year.

“We are making great progress building the Purple Line Extension and are excited to have a reliable and sustainable connection for people traveling between Downtown Los Angeles and the Westside,” said Metro Board Second Vice Chair and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti.

Metro has received the cutterhead and shield for its tunnel boring machines, which are now staged at Metro's Century City Station construction yard. TBMs will be assembled at the station site and will dig eastward to Wilshire/La Cienega in Beverly Hills. Metro's Section Two contractor, Tutor Perini O&G, is building this portion of the project.

“With the arrival of these two new TBMs, we are another step closer to bringing the Purple Line Extension to reality,” said Metro CEO Phillip A. Washington. “When it's completed, the subway will reduce travel times between the Westside and Downtown L.A. to just 25 minutes and give Angelenos a new high-speed, high-capacity transit alternative they've been waiting many decades to ride.”

The TBMs are manufactured in Germany by Herrenknecht AG. They weigh approximately 1,000 tons, are 400 feet long and are 21.75 feet in diameter. They will advance about 60 feet per day once digging begins. The depths of tunnels will vary throughout the underground alignment, ranging from 50 to 120 feet. TBMs will tunnel five days per week, 20 hours per day and take approximately two years to complete their work.

TBM naming is a mining tradition that dates to the 14th century. Saint Barbara, the patron saint for military engineers and miners, has been revered by underground workers as a symbol of protection and good luck for centuries. This homage evolved into the tradition of giving tunneling machines a female name before digging begins.

The second section of the Purple Line Extension Project spans 2.59 miles and includes two new stations at Wilshire/Rodeo in Beverly Hills and Century City/Constellation in Century City. The extension is expected to open in 2025.

Overall, the Purple Line Extension Project consists of three construction phases. When complete, the project will extend Purple Line service nine miles farther west and include seven new stations: Wilshire/La Brea, Wilshire/Fairfax, Wilshire/La Cienega, Wilshire/Rodeo, Century

City/Constellation, Westwood/UCLA and Westwood/VA Hospital. When the entire project is completed in 2027, the subway extension is expected to serve 59,000 riders daily – including 17,000 new riders. The project is funded by Measure R, federal grants and accelerated by Measure M, the two most recent sales tax measures approved by Los Angeles County voters for transportation improvements.

For more information on the Metro Purple Line Extension Project, visit

www.metro.net/purplelineext.

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is unique among the nation's transportation agencies. Created in 1993, Metro is a multimodal transportation agency that transports about 1.3 million passengers daily on a fleet of 2,200 clean air buses and six rail lines. The agency also oversees bus, rail, highway and other mobility-related building projects and leads transportation planning and programming for Los Angeles County.

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