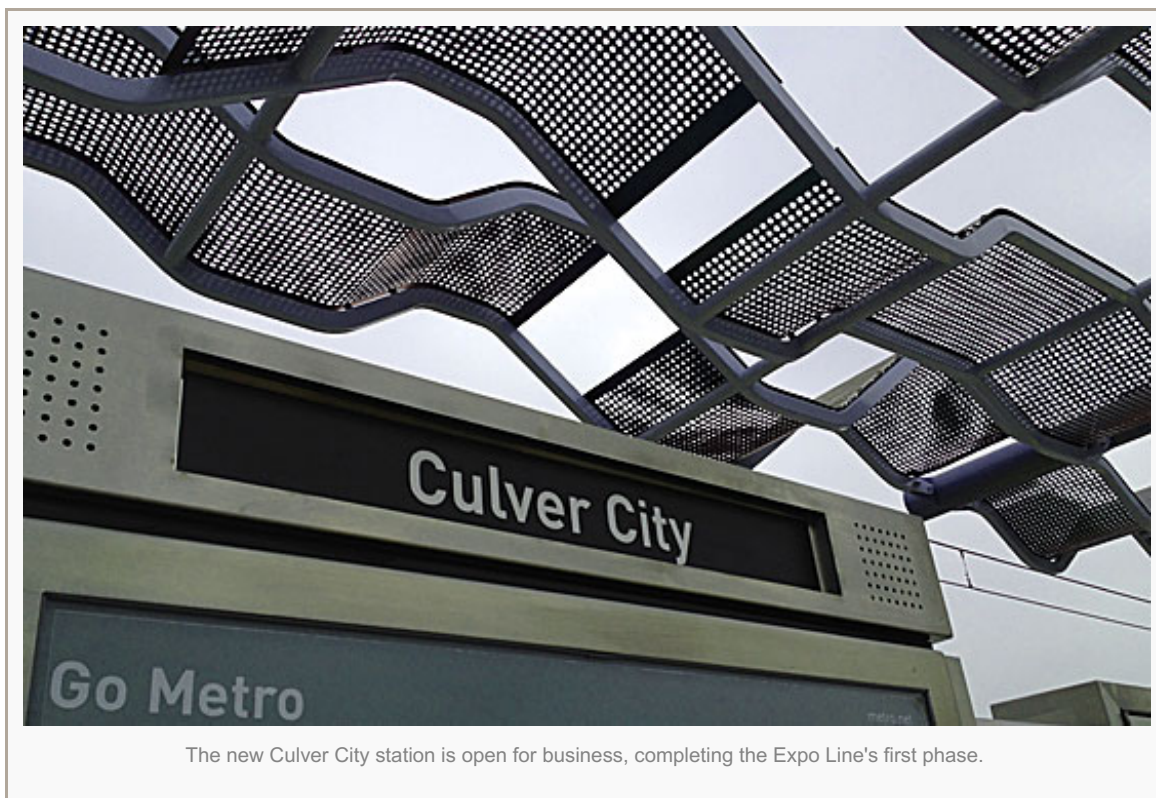


Riding high as Expo hits Culver City

 zevyaroslavsky.org/news/riding-high-as-expo-hits-culver-city

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As the Expo Line started service to Culver City this week, Metro officials announced that overall rail ridership is on a roll in the county, with more than 100 million boardings projected this fiscal year.

Metro CEO Art Leahy said those levels haven't been seen since World War II, and he credited the system's expansion—along with more frequent trains, increased night hours and better maintenance—with drawing more riders to local light rail and subway lines.

The region's rail expansion includes the [Expo Line](#), which opened in April and averaged 11,347 daily boardings in May, its first full month of operation.

That's low compared to opening month figures for other Metro light rail lines, including the Blue Line (19,600 in August, 1990) or the Gold Line (18,364 in August, 2003.) But Expo opened without two of its stations—Culver City and Farmdale, both of which rolled out the welcome mat Wednesday, completing the initial 8.6-mile stretch of the light rail line.

“With the opening of these two stations, we anticipate a substantial increase in ridership,” Metro spokesman Rick Jager said.

In Culver City, [local bus lines have been reconfigured](#) to make it easier for passengers to switch to the train at the station, which is expected to generate about 3,000 additional boardings a day.

Leahy said it takes time to build ridership on any new line. But he added that the growing reach of the rail system is making the train an increasingly desirable travel option in a car-clogged metropolis.

“You can go to Hollywood, the Valley, East L.A., Long Beach and now Culver City,” he said.

The record ridership numbers predicted for the fiscal year ending June 30 show the power of investing in the system, Leahy said, although he acknowledged that high gas prices are a factor, too.

And the system is still growing. Work on Expo's [second phase](#), to extend the light rail to Santa Monica by 2015, is now underway.

"We're seeing the cumulative effect of what's going on," Leahy said. "We're really achieving a critical mass."

Watch dignitaries including Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky inaugurate the new Culver City station in this [video](#).

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