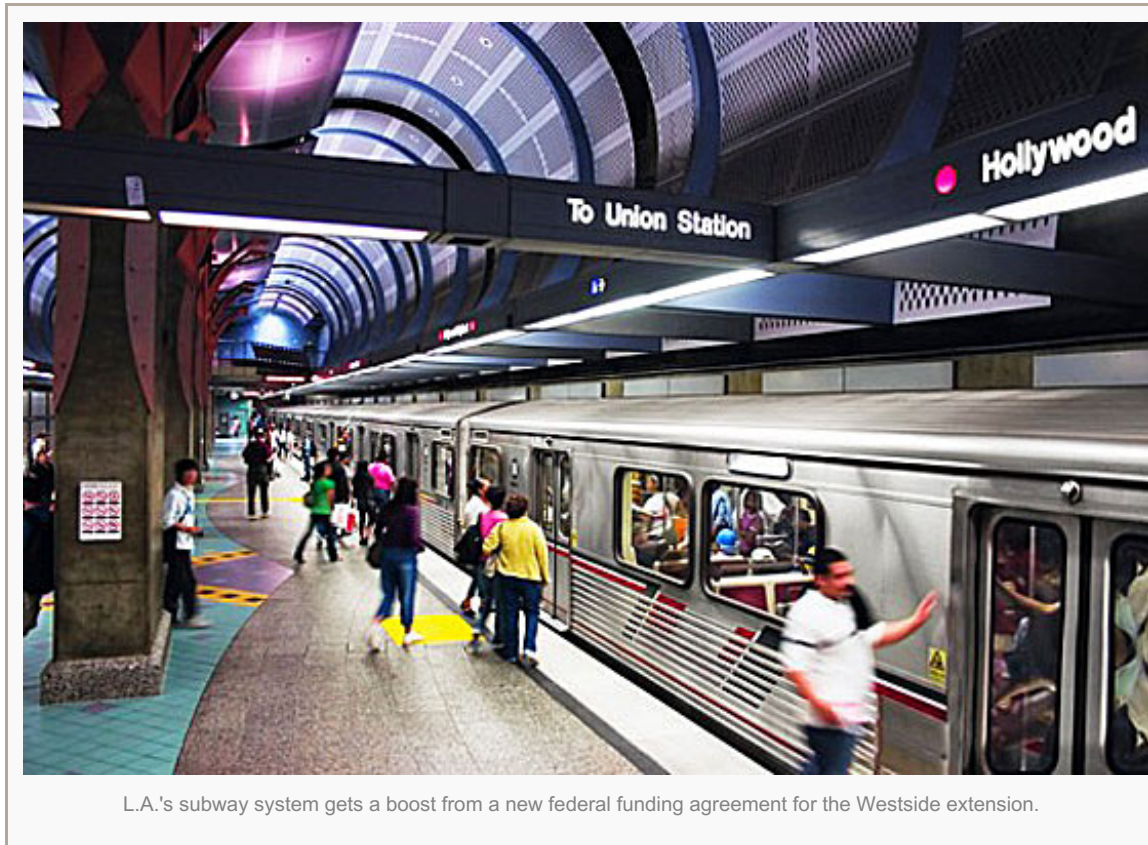


It's official: Feds fund subway

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[Home](#) > [Featured](#) > It's official: Feds fund subway

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As public transit milestones go, they don't get much bigger than this: The federal government has formally agreed to fund the long-awaited extension of the Purple Line subway into Los Angeles' traffic-choked Westside.

The \$2 billion commitment, announced at a ceremony today in Washington D.C., is truly an historic moment for our region.

As I stood in the Dirksen Senate Office Building this morning, it felt like a pivotal turning point had at last arrived for a project that I have passionately championed and which I firmly believe will bring all of us Angelenos a desperately-needed alternative to sitting in gridlock day after day. It's been important to me for so many reasons: helping people get to jobs, helping visitors access our amazing cultural institutions, and above all allowing folks to reclaim precious time in their days to spend with their families and in their communities.

Starting now, we have the federal government's financial backing in bringing relief to one of our most traffic-challenged areas. Today's "full funding grant agreement" sets in motion a growing subway line that eventually will push past the 405 Freeway.

The federal funding—a \$1.25 billion grant and an \$856 million low-interest loan—combines with local funding from Measure R to enable us to build the first leg of the subway extension, running from Western Avenue to La Cienega Boulevard. This segment, heading toward completion in 2023, will open up the culturally and jobs-rich Wilshire Corridor to people throughout the county, who will be able to get to renowned attractions like the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the La Brea Tar Pits without an automobile. It also will blaze the trail for the next two segments,

one culminating in Century City and the other at the V.A. in West Los Angeles.

I don't have to tell anyone reading this blog that traffic congestion in these areas and others has seeped into every facet of daily life in Los Angeles. It affects where we can work, where we play, where we go to lunch and where we attend school, It robs us—and our economy—of untold hours of productive time.

Like you, I've fumed behind the wheel as it takes an hour to move two miles, and groaned inwardly that I could jog there in half the time—without breaking a sweat.

That's not just frustrating—it's wrong, and something has to change.

Now it will.

The first installment of the agreed-upon federal funding is included in President Obama's proposed budget for this year. While there are no sure bets in Washington's current atmosphere, I have every confidence that Congress will move this funding forward annually until the first leg of the project is complete.

As I joined in today's announcement with U. S. Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, Metro executives and my fellow elected officials from Los Angeles, I felt gratitude and a surge of pride in the federal-local partnership that has brought us to this point. It is a vote of confidence in Los Angeles County, and in the increasingly vibrant mass transit system we are building here.

And it is a vote of confidence in you, the people of L.A. County. By a two-thirds margin, you went to the polls in 2008 and—despite the Great Recession—approved Measure R's ½-cent sales tax for transportation projects, including this one.

Today's action is a vital step in delivering on Measure R's promise. Together, we're putting to rest the old myths about our car-crazy metropolis and writing a new chapter about freedom and mobility in the City of Angels.



Yaroslavsky, left, joins Waxman, Boxer and L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti at signing ceremony. Photo/KPCC

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