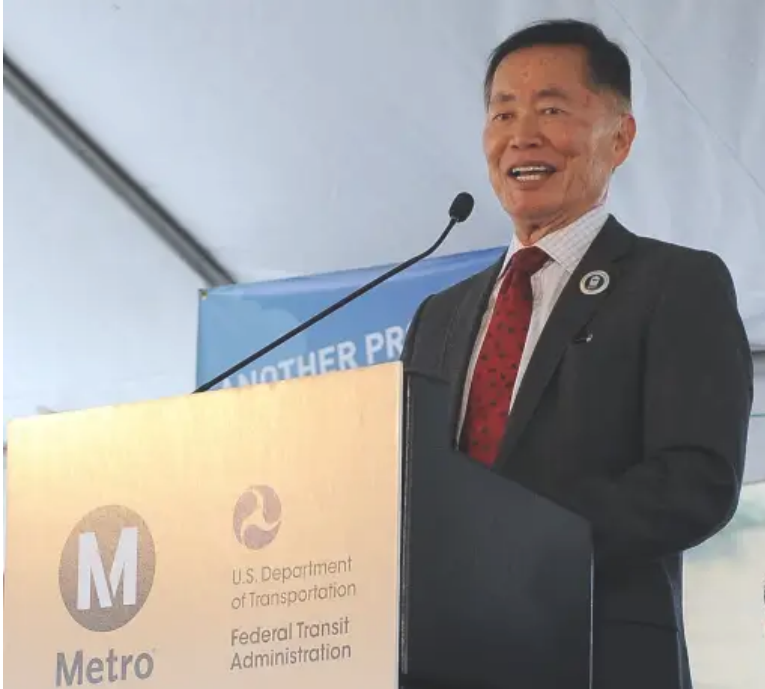
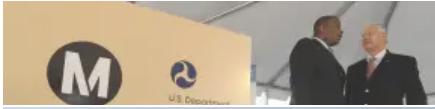
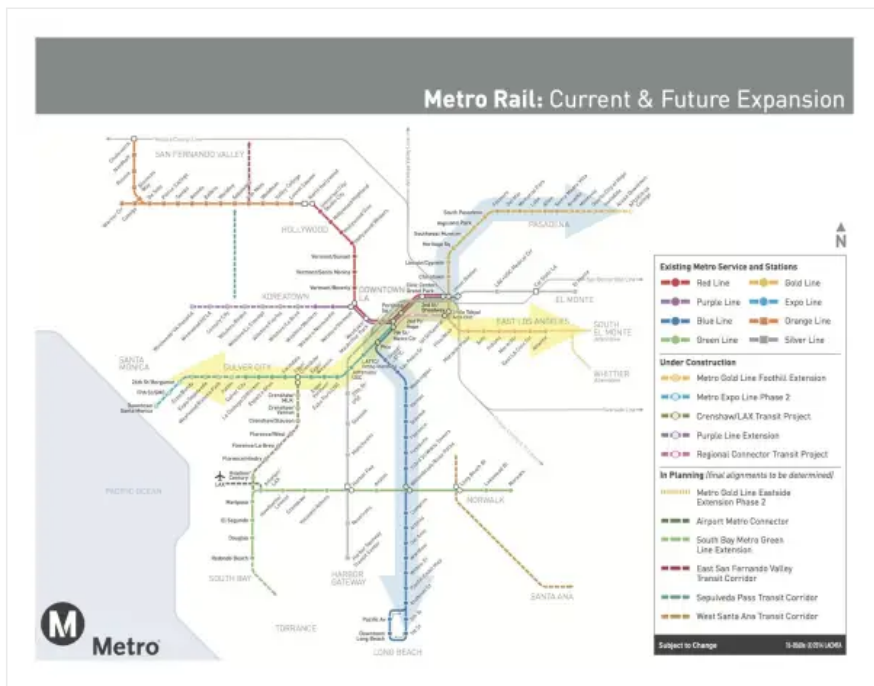
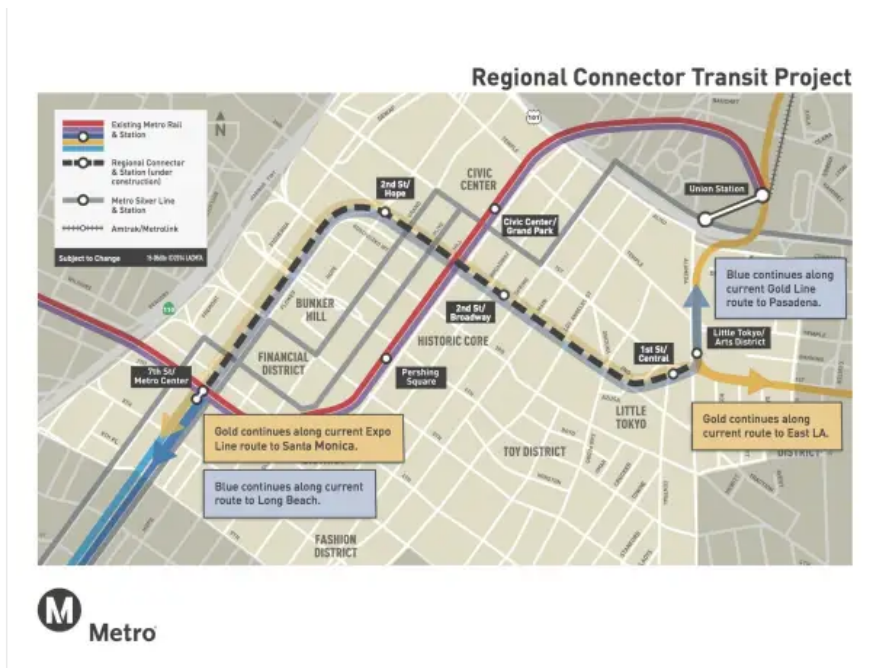


Ground is broken for Regional Connector project to link Blue, Expo and Gold Lines

BY STEVE HYMON , SEPTEMBER 30, 2014







The official groundbreaking for the \$1.42-billion [Regional Connector](http://www.metro.net/projects/connector/) project is being held this morning in Little Tokyo. The 1.9-mile underground light rail line will link the Blue, Expo and Gold Lines, allowing for faster and more frequent service on Metro’s light rail lines to and through downtown Los Angeles.

The project will also eliminate the need to transfer for many light rail riders. Riders on the Expo and Blue Line will be able to continue north on light rail from 7th/Metro Center to other downtown neighborhoods such as the Financial District, Civic Center and Little Tokyo. Likewise, Gold Line riders will no longer have to transfer to the Red/Purple Line subway at Union Station to reach the heart of downtown.

The project is currently forecast to be completed in 2020. When done, Metro plans to run trains between Long Beach and Azusa on a north-south light rail line and east-west between

Santa Monica and East Los Angeles. Metro continues to work on potential naming and color schemes for its light rail lines to be used in the future.

Three other Metro Rail projects are already under construction: the 8.5-mile Crenshaw/LAX Line, the six-mile second phase of the Expo Line to downtown Santa Monica and the 11.5-mile Gold Line Foothill Extension to the Azusa/Glendora border. The 3.9-mile first phase of the Purple Line Extension subway is in pre-construction with utility relocations underway.

The Regional Connector, like those other projects, is receiving funding from Measure R, the half-cent sales tax increase approved by nearly 68 percent of Los Angeles County voters in November 2008.

Below are a pair of the station renderings. We'll add more pics to The Source from today's media event later and will be posting photos to our [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/metrolosangeles) and [Instagram](http://www.instagram.com/metrolosangeles) streams during the event. Media, bloggers, anyone: feel free to use/share any photos or renderings that we post.



And here is video from this morning's event:

Below is the news release from Metro:

Federal, State & Local Elected Officials Join in Groundbreaking Ceremony

Metro Breaks Ground on New Regional Connector Light Rail Project in Downtown Los Angeles

Metro joined U.S Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx along with state and local elected officials today to officially break ground on the \$1.420 billion Regional Connector Light Rail Project in downtown Los Angeles that will better connect the Metro Blue, Gold and Expo lines with the rest of the region.

“This project will mean people can take a one-seat ride through Pasadena, Long Beach, Santa Monica, the Eastside and points in-between,” said Los Angeles Mayor and Metro Board Chair Eric Garcetti. “Bringing our rail lines together and making transfers simpler will make it easier for people to use rail and will help take more cars off the road.”

The Regional Connector Project completes a 1.9-mile segment between the Metro Blue and Expo Lines and the Metro Gold Line by providing a direct connection with three new stations planned for 1st Street/Central Avenue, 2nd Street/Broadway and 2nd Place/Hope Street in downtown Los Angeles.

“The Regional Connector will dramatically improve passengers’ daily commutes,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Gloria Molina. “It will provide them with better connections to the rest of the Metro Rail system without requiring them to transfer from one line to another. The Regional Connector is a major step forward in transforming Los Angeles County’s mass transit network into a truly world-class system.”

The Regional Connector Project is an important rail connection project overwhelmingly approved by the voters and funded by the Measure R half-cent sales tax ordinance for LA County transportation improvements. In addition to Measure R funding, a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) with the federal government secures \$670 million for the project. In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation has granted Metro a loan of \$160 million for the Regional Connector project from a Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan (TIFIA) to complete the project.

“Los Angeles is a world-class city and deserves a world-class transit system. Today’s groundbreaking for the Regional Connector represents the coming together of federal and local efforts to invest in our rail system and put Angelenos to work building our city. These new improvements will provide significant economic and environmental benefits for Angelenos not just in downtown L.A., but throughout Los Angeles County,” said Congressman Xavier Becerra.

“The Regional Connector is an example of our commitment to develop transportation projects that serve the entire County,” said Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chairman Don Knabe. “This project will make it easy and seamless for commuters to get to their destination, which has a huge impact on their quality-of-life. Linking lines that cover nearly every corner of the County will vastly improve Metro’s network and the experience of our riders. This is exactly the type of project voters asked for when they approved Measure R – expanding transit to serve all residents.”

The Regional Connector Project, expected to be completed in 2020, will attract nearly 17,000 new daily riders and provide access to more than 88,000 passengers saving commuters up to 20 minutes off their daily commutes. It will provide a one-seat, one fare ride for commuters from Azusa to Long Beach and from East Los Angeles to Santa Monica without the need to transfer between rail lines for major east/west and north/south trips.

“The groundbreaking for the Regional Connector is another welcomed step in increasing the efficiency of our Metro system,” said Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard. “When the Regional Connector is completed, many of my constituents commuting through Downtown will have a chance to reduce their commuting time by 20 minutes. I hope that Metro Rail’s expansion plans will continue to bring rail service to new parts of L.A. County. Many of the communities I represent, including the Southeast cities, would benefit greatly from further Metro expansion.”

The new Metro Rail extension will offer an alternative transportation option to congested roadways, provide significant environmental benefits and spur economic development throughout the County. Through improved connectivity, riders will be better able to use the entire Metro Rail system, municipal bus lines and other regional transportation services.

“While its execution will be grand in scale, the Regional Connector’s true aim is simply to make the lives of those who depend on public transit better,” said Los Angeles Councilmember and former Metro Board Member José Huizar. “From helping parents get home sooner to be with their children, to taking the stress out of being stuck in traffic, to

reducing pollution so the air we breathe is cleaner – these quality of life attributes will be the true legacy of this great project and I am proud to help bring the Regional Connector to Downtown L.A.”

In April, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board of Directors approved a \$927.2 million contract to Regional Connector Constructors, a joint venture between Skanska USA Civil West California District, Inc. and Traylor Brothers Inc. to design and build the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Project.

In awarding the contract, it was noted that Skanska/Traylor had the overall highest ranking including the highest technical score and the highest evaluated score for pricing, based on the criteria in the request for proposals. In recommending the award of the contract, staff noted that Skanska/Traylor indicated that they plan to finish construction 115 days early and will absorb the cost of any delays caused by Metro or subcontractors.

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 2,000 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, literally, 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. These include five new rail lines, the I-5 widening and other major projects.

For more information about the Regional Connector project, visit metro.net/projects/connector (metro.net/projects/connector).

Stay informed by following Metro on The Source and El Pasajero at [metro.net](http://www.metro.net) (<http://www.metro.net>), [facebook.com/losangelesmetro](https://www.facebook.com/losangelesmetro) ([facebook.com/losangelesmetro](https://www.facebook.com/losangelesmetro)), twitter.com/metrolosangeles (twitter.com/metrolosangeles) and twitter.com/metroLAalerts (twitter.com/metroLAalerts) and [instagram.com/metrolosangeles](https://www.instagram.com/metrolosangeles) ([http://www.instagram.com/metrolosangeles](https://www.instagram.com/metrolosangeles)).

And here is the news release from the U.S. Department of Transportation:

U.S. Department of Transportation Celebrates Groundbreaking of Los Angeles Regional Connector, Improving Transit Efficiency

LA also awarded \$1.6 million Ladders of Opportunity grant to enhance bus facilities

LOS ANGELES – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today participated in the groundbreaking of the Los Angeles Regional Connector, a key light rail transit segment connecting three existing transit lines in the heart of downtown Los Angeles.

The two-mile rail segment will offer thousands of area residents more efficient and convenient access to jobs, education, and other ladders of opportunity. Secretary Foxx was joined at the event by Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and other state and local officials.

“Transportation is about more than getting from one point to another—it’s about getting from where you are to a better life,” said Secretary Foxx. “Today’s milestone is one to celebrate, but we need to do more to deliver these projects more quickly and efficiently, and the one thousand combined federal, state and local permits to get the light rail from ground breaking to ribbon cutting is simply too much. The GROW AMERICA Act would help reduce that burden by streamlining portions of that process.”

The Administration’s GROW AMERICA Act is a \$302 billion, four year transportation plan that is fully paid for without adding to the deficit. The GROW AMERICA Act also would cut red tape and speed project delivery.

According to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA), in order to build and run the Regional Connector, the project sponsor and contractors will have to apply for approximately one thousand permits—federal, state, and local combined. Complex projects like the Regional Connector often require multiple agencies to review them.

GROW AMERICA would simplify and speed up this process by ensuring that federal agencies work together sooner, coordinate their reviews, and cut red tape. And it would make permitting more transparent so that federal agencies are held accountable for their progress. The bill also would help state transportation agencies use federal funds to hire dedicated staff to help speed environmental reviews.

The LACMTA has begun work on the underground connection between the existing Metro Gold line in Little Tokyo and the Exposition and Blue light rail lines, which currently terminate at Flower and 7th Streets. The project also includes four new light rail vehicles to augment the existing fleet. The project will reconfigure Metro’s three existing LRT lines into two lines, one primarily running north to south, and one east to west. The project reconfiguration will eliminate the need for riders to make cumbersome transfers from light rail to the Metro Red or Purple Line subway system, and then back onto light rail, to reach their destinations.

“With just two miles of added light rail in downtown Los Angeles, it will become possible to offer a one-seat ride across the county, and the new stations will make transit easier to get to for people living in the surrounding neighborhoods,” said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan. “The President’s GROW AMERICA Act would enable us to invest in more good projects like this one—putting jobs, education, and healthcare within reach of more Americans.”

LACMTA estimates the Regional Connector will open in 2020 and initially handle roughly 60,000 trips or more each weekday. The \$1.4 billion project received a \$670 million full funding grant agreement through FTA’s Capital Investment Grant (New Starts) Program, as well as a loan of up to \$160 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan program, and \$64

million in other DOT funds. The remainder of project will be funded with state and local resources.

Secretary Foxx also announced today that LACMTA is receiving a \$1.7 million grant from FTA's Ladders of Opportunity Initiative. The grant will allow the agency to improve four bus stops on Cesar Chavez Avenue next to Los Angeles Union Station, repair broken sidewalks that provide access to them, and install new bike parking and bike share stations. More than 80 percent of the people who frequently use those stops lack access to a car, and 90 percent of them either walk or bike to the bus stops, according to LACMTA. The improved transit access will also help construction workers building the Regional Connector who take transit to reach their worksite.

LACMTA is one of 24 recipients competitively selected through this initiative to help public transportation systems modernize and expand transit bus service specifically for the purpose of connecting disadvantaged and low-income individuals, veterans, seniors, youths and others with jobs, employment centers, local workforce training, health care and other services.

LACMTA also was awarded two TIGER (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) grants totaling \$22.05 million to modernize the busy Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station on the Blue Line and improve bicycle and pedestrian access in Little Tokyo. The GROW AMERICA Act would authorize \$5 billion over four years for much-needed additional TIGER funding to help meet the overwhelming demand for significant infrastructure investments around the country and provide the certainty that states and local governments need to properly plan for investment.

FTA is advancing two other major transit expansion projects in the Los Angeles metropolitan area: the Crenshaw/LAX light rail transit corridor project and Section I of the Westside Purple Line Extension. The \$2 billion Crenshaw project, which broke ground in January, is funded in part with a \$545.9 million TIFIA loan and approximately \$130 million in other FTA and DOT funds. DOT has approved a TIFIA loan of up to \$856 million for the Westside project, which is also received funding through FTA's Capital Investment Grant Program in May of 2014.

📁 CATEGORIES: [Projects \(https://thesource.metro.net/category/projects/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/category/projects/)

🔖 TAGGED AS: [Anthony Foxx \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/anthony-foxx/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/anthony-foxx/), [Blue Line \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/blue-line/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/blue-line/), [downtown Los Angeles \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/downtown-los-angeles/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/downtown-los-angeles/), [Expo Line \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/expo-line/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/expo-line/), [Gold Line \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/gold-line/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/gold-line/), [groundbreaking \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/groundbreaking/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/groundbreaking/), [light rail \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/light-rail/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/light-rail/), [Measure R \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/measure-r/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/measure-r/), [projects \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/projects-2/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/projects-2/), [Regional Connector \(https://thesource.metro.net/tag/regional-connector/\)](https://thesource.metro.net/tag/regional-connector/)

 **24 replies** >

The Downtown Connector Project is, of course, a great idea, except MILLIONS of dollars could have been saved by just taking a set of tracks down Alameda Street to Washington Blvd., turning west on Washington, and connecting with the present Blue Line right there at the intersection of Long Beach Avenue (thus partially eliminating a very horribly-designed and built reverse curve), branching off of the Blue Line at a location once known as Amoco Junction (construct a “wye” at this location for trains coming up from Long Beach), and utilizing a presently-existing empty right-of-way for a connection to the Expo Line. The present 7th/Metro Center station could then be the starting point for a line to Glendale, Burbank, and the San Fernando Valley. Kudos to Tom LaBonge for coming up with this idea! (well, we both thought of it simultaneously).

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[...] Los Angeles may be known for its cars and freeways, but recent infrastructure investments are changing the transit landscape. On September 30, Los Angeles civic and political officials – and even Star Trek’s George Takei – joined our joint venture team to officially break ground on the Regional Connector. This 1.9-mile underground light-rail link will connect the Blue, Expo and Gold lines and improve the city’s public transit, re-establishing downtown L.A. as the city and region’s center. Perhaps Los Angeles Councilmember and former Metro Board Member José Huizar said it best on the Metro’s blog: [...]

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[...] Angeles civic and political officials – and even Star Trek’s George Takei – joined our joint venture team on September 30 to officially break ground on the Regional [...]

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[...] plenty more regional connector groundbreaking coverage, see the L.A. Times, The Source, L.A. Downtown News, Curbed, and KPCC. Renderings, fact sheets, maps, and more at Metro project [...]

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[...] Metro Breaks Ground for Regional Connector Subway Construction (LAT, The Source) [...]

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I think that the planners made the best tradeoffs.

- Sticking to a north-south or east-west grid should improve the bus transfer possibilities
- There will be five stations where one can transfer between the lines. This should level out congestion at downtown stations.

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Hey Mike;

Good points. Like many plans, this one could hypothetically change. If not, I think it's perfectly workable. The one thing everyone should understand: Metro says that the Connector will allow much more frequent light rail service — in part because trains won't have to turn around any more at 7th/Metro, which is a time muncher. That could mean trains every few minutes at the DTLA stations at peak hours, which in turn means that someone transferring from the north-south line to the east-west line may have a very short wait for their transfer to pull into the station. And no having to walk — matter of getting off one train and waiting for the one you need at the same platform.

Steve Hyman
Editor, The Source

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Not only is the need for how many people actually go from Long Beach to Pasadena, the best part of it is that one do that entire trip for only \$1.75. All the while, it costs the same price to go from East LA to Downtown LA for \$1.75 as well.

Simply put, poor Latinos in East LA will be paying more per mile to cover a shorter trip when the very few people who does Long Beach to Pasadena gets the better deal per mile.

Makes perfect logic, right? (sarcasm)

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Hi Theo;

Flat fares are common across the U.S. and in many metro areas, Los Angeles included, people of many different ethnicities pay the same amount no matter how far they travel. The Connector doesn't change that, nor do I think distance based fares would lower the fare from East L.A. into downtown L.A., a distance of six-plus miles.

Steve Hymon
Editor, The Source

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I find it interesting that Metro continues to ignore the fact that people who currently ride the Gold Line between the two largest concentrations of Latino population, Northeast Los Angeles (Highland Park, etc.) and East Los Angeles, will now have to make a transfer at the Little Tokyo station. That ridership is far greater than the highly trumpeted Long Beach to Pasadena run (really, how many people will ride from Long Beach to Pasadena?). I realize that from a train-turnaround point of view, the two alignments made the most sense but the Latinos lose out, although the transfer appears to be an easy one.

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We're not ignoring it. To transfer between the Gold Line involves stepping off the platform at 2nd/Central Station and walking across platform and hopping on the next train in the other direction. Not as convenient as now, obviously — but not exactly a tough transfer either. And I think you're ignoring something else: people of all ethnicities, including Latinos, riding in from East L.A. have had to transfer at Union Station to reach downtown L.A. on the Gold Line, either from East L.A. or the Pasadena leg. On balance, I do think the new arrangement serves the needs of the many riders on the Blue, Expo and Gold Lines.

Steve Hymon
Editor, The Source

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How many people will ride Pasadena to Long Beach? Probably not that many but that's not really the point. Lots of people ride from Pasadena to DTLA and vice versa and this makes it considerably easier to do so. Focus less on the terminal stops and more on the fact that our light rail system has a glaring disjunction in the middle that is being eliminated.

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I don't understand how this equates to "Latinos losing out" when the two branches of the Gold Line will, after this project is complete, traverse THRU downtown LA rather than merely skirting the area in Little Tokyo/Union Station. Right now, anyone on the Gold Line that wants to go downtown has to transfer at Union Station. In the future, they'll have a single seat ride through the heart of downtown and will be able to easily continue their journey further west to Santa Monica (or south to Long Beach). It's unfortunate that people have to always search for the negative in desperately needed projects like this, even after 50 years of debate and planning. Let's focus on the positives, not come up with some baseless argument that Latinos are suddenly going to lose out because of more rail lines to more parts of LA.

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How many people will ride from Long Beach to Pasadena? Every year for the big UCLA/CSULB football game! Oh, yeah, CSULB dropped football. Well, I'm excited about it anyway.

Loading...

Why don't they just keep the ground floor of these sites for the station and build mixed use buildings with offices, retail and parking upstairs which can be leased out to offset the costs? It's crazy that they think we need a little park with a little 1-story building at each station. Except for the homeless, everyone is busy and just breezes through on the way to work!

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Feel free to borrow that tunnel boring machine that the Crenshaw Line is getting from Rotterdam.

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Why no video of Mister Sulu?

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“Metro continues to work on potential naming and color schemes for its light rail lines to be used in the future.”

Hint: you can scratch off ideas like Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa Station, Mark-Ridley Thomas Station, President and Governor Ronald Wilson Reagan Line and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger Line.

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Do you have an update on the 555 Flower Associates NEPA litigation? Is there a risk the project will get enjoined?

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It's insane that there won't be a Bunker Hill station. Most subway systems are entirely designed around destinations like that.

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There will be a Bunker Hill Station. At 2nd and Hope, with an elevator and bridge connecting it to the new plaza at the Broad Museum on Grand Avenue. That's pretty much the very center of Bunker Hill. Maybe you meant there won't be a “Financial District” station (at 5th Street)? I think this was cut due to the cost, and the fact that it's only 3 very short blocks (less than 4 minute walk) from Flower/5th Street to the 7th Street/Metro Center station, which is already in the heart of the financial district.

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There is a Bunker Hill station – 2nd/Hope.

It's the financial district (5th/Flower) that won't be getting a station, at least for now.

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There's already a Bunker Hill station. Use Pershing Square's north entrance, and then wait for the Angel's Flight...

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Angel's Flight is shut down and will likely remain so forever.

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