



*Elvis (not really) makes an appearance at the opening of the Red Line, January 1993*

## Relive the Wacky Opening of the Metro Red Line 25 Years Later

The city's first subway opened with fanfare (and an Elvis impersonator) in 1993

By **Neal Broverman** - January 30, 2018



It's hard to believe, but Los Angeles has now had a real-life subway system for a quarter of a century. January 29 marked the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Red Line, which initially connected Union Station to Westlake/MacArthur Park. Later additions extended the subway

through Hollywood and the Valley, and created a spur to Koreatown that would later be rebranded as the Purple Line.

Mayor Garcetti and other officials held an event at Union Station on Monday to celebrate the anniversary. These images from the 1993 opening—held 10 days after Bill Clinton was inaugurated—feature an Elvis impersonator, a subterranean marching band, and even a replica of the old [Red Car trolleys](#). Then-mayor Tom Bradley and former governor Pete Wilson [emceed the festivities](#), and the promotional fare for riders was a whopping 25 cents.

A generation later, the Red Line is the backbone of a 105-mile urban rail network. It's also the busiest Metro line—including the Purple Line spur, the Red Line [carries about 140,000 riders](#) every workday.

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