



TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

# LA Metro's K Line — The Long Awaited Crenshaw/LAX Extension — Is Opening. Here's What Riders Can Expect

By [Ryan Fonseca](#)

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A K Line train passes Edward Vincent Jr. Park in Inglewood during the testing phase. The long-awaited rail line, with stations in South L.A., Inglewood and the edge of LAX, is set to open to residents on Friday, Oct. 7.

(Courtesy L.A. Metro)

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It took more than half a century of studying, planning and constructing (and delays), but the vision for a high-

capacity rail line through South Los Angeles and Inglewood that links to one of the busiest airports in the world is finally arriving (mostly).

The L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's K Line, or Crenshaw/LAX Line, is slated to open this Friday, Oct. 7. The agency is hosting a [K Line Fest](#) from noon to 6 p.m. that day at Leimert Park Plaza to celebrate, with food, live entertainment and giveaways planned.

[Follow updates from Friday's opening here.](#)

**LA Metro**  

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The K Line opens Friday at noon! Enjoy free rides on our entire system Friday through Sunday and join us at The K Line Fest at Leimert Park Plaza noon to 6 pm Friday. Here's a lil' video appetizer.

Watch on Twitter

3:54 PM · Oct 4, 2022 

[Read the full conversation on Twitter](#)

One important note: it's called the Crenshaw/LAX Line, but riders won't be able to connect directly to LAX by rail for at least

a couple more years ([more on that below](#)).

## Where Does The Line Run?

The K Line creates new transit connections for residents in a corridor that includes the L.A. city neighborhoods of West Adams, Crenshaw, Leimert Park, Baldwin Hills, Hyde Park and Westchester, along with the city of Inglewood.

The 8.5-mile light rail line starts to the north at Exposition and Crenshaw boulevards and runs along on Crenshaw before turning southwest and running along Florence Avenue near the Inglewood border. The route continues southwest through Inglewood, crosses over the 405 Freeway, then runs along (or under) Aviation Boulevard to Imperial Highway, on the southern edge of LAX.

Since this is easier to show than tell, here's a map.



This map shows the route of the Crenshaw/LAX Line, or K Line, (noted in pink) between the Expo Line (in blue) to the north and the C Line (in green) to the south. Underground portions are noted as dashed line segments.

(Courtesy L.A. Metro)

Eventually, the K Line will have nine station stops, but on Friday, seven stations will be open. Those are:

- [Expo/Crenshaw Station](#) - connecting the E (Expo) Line to the K Line
- [Martin Luther King Jr. Station](#)

- [Leimert Park Station](#)
- [Hyde Park Station](#)
- [Fairview Heights Station](#) in Inglewood
- [Downtown Inglewood Station](#)
- [Westchester/Veterans Station](#) in Inglewood

The rail line runs as a mix of street-level and underground segments, with a few elevated crossings over some roads and freeways.

## Why The Complete K Line Is TBD

The two other K Line stations — Aviation/Century and LAX/Metro Transit Center — are still in the works.

The LAX/Metro Transit Center will — in the words of transit officials — “eventually” create a direct rail link to the major airport, allowing passengers to get on LAX’s [Automated People Mover](#) — currently under construction — and ride it [directly to terminals](#). That’s currently projected to open in late 2024, according to Metro officials.

The K Line will also “eventually” connect to the C (Green) Line at that rail line’s Aviation/LAX Station. Metro officials say they expect that to happen in 2024.

"The train cannot connect with the C Line until the LAX/Transit Center is complete, which is expected in 2024," Chandler explained.

In the meantime, Metro will run a “bus bridge,” he said, ferrying riders between the K Line’s [Westchester/Veterans Station](#) and the C Line’s Aviation/LAX Station.

Metro has stated that the K Line's Aviation/Century Station is expected to open in 2023. We asked Metro if trains would actually run from the station — given that 2024 connection target. They told us that the station "will be finished but not accessible via train until the LAX/Transit Center is complete. Therefore, the station will not be open.”

Basically, while construction should be complete in 2023, the station won't open then.

Metro officials also said they’re “in the early planning stages” of a plan to extend the K Line north to the D ([Purple](#)) and B ([Red](#)) lines.

## Other Options For Getting To LAX

There are a few other [transit options](#) to get to LAX and other regional airports. You can take Metro’s [FlyAway Bus](#). And there’s a shuttle bus that runs to and from LAX from the C (Green) Line’s Aviation/LAX Station.

## Station Amenities And Opportunities



A look at the Fairview Heights Station at the soon-to-open K Line, or Crenshaw/LAX Line.

(Courtesy L.A. Metro)

Many of the K Line stations feature bike lockers and bike racks, plus unique murals and other artwork in tribute to the communities they serve. The stations will also link to Metro bus lines and other municipal bus routes.

The new line provides connections to parks, cultural centers, restaurants, shopping districts and entertainment hubs, including Inglewood's SoFi Stadium.

Patrick Chandler, a Metro spokesperson, also noted the opportunities transit service will bring to veterans living in transitional housing near the Westchester/Veterans Station on Florence Avenue. He said:

“If they're trying to get to medical appointments, as well as education or training, they're not having to worry about parking, they don't have to worry about traffic in these



areas. They now have a quick and efficient option to get around L.A. that wasn't there before.”

## Free Rides All Weekend

To mark the opening of the long-awaited rail route, L.A. Metro's entire system — rail, bus, bike share and [Metro Micro](#) (within its eight service zones) — will be free to use from the time the K Line opens Friday (supposedly around noon) until the end of service Sunday (technically 2 a.m. Monday, Oct. 10).

“We expect really high numbers this weekend across the system,” Chandler said. “You have [CicLAvia](#), I see that there's a number of protests coming up in downtown [L.A.] as well, so the system could get pretty heavily used or inundated this weekend.”

## The Backstory On This Line



A K Line train crosses over the 405 Freeway on a new bridge. The light rail line features a mix of street-level and underground segments, with elevated crossings at a few specific locations.

(Courtesy L.A. Metro)

According to [Metro archivists](#), a rail line was first considered for the area back in the 1960s by the Southern California Rapid Transit District, which was the transit agency that existed before Metro formed in 1993.

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In a 1967 report, transit planners envisioned an “[Airport-Southwest Corridor](#)” that would start in downtown L.A., then run along Exposition, Leimert and Crenshaw boulevards on its route to LAX.

But that plan never came to fruition. Fast-forward to the early 2000s, when L.A. Metro began to study possibilities for transit in the Crenshaw corridor. But those plans too were initially out of reach. According to Jim de la Loza, Metro’s chief planning officer, it was a money issue.

“It wasn't until the passage of [Measure R](#) that provided the resources to build a higher capacity rail line,” he told LAist.

Voters approved that measure — which provided a half-cent sales tax to fund regional transit projects — in 2008, at which point Metro moved forward with an environmental impact report. The project broke ground in 2014.

## What Took So Long?

On top of the years-long process of studying, planning, community engagement and approval by Metro's board, the project also faced a slew of construction challenges that put it years behind schedule and [millions over budget](#). Metro's current cost estimate for the project is \$2.1 billion, according to Chandler.

Metro initially planned to open the K Line in 2019, but flaws in the construction process [pushed that to 2020](#), then [2021](#), and finally 2022.



A Metro train operator behind the controls on a street-running section of the K Line on Crenshaw Boulevard.

(Courtesy L.A. Metro)

There were also concerns from local businesses and community members about impacts of construction. That led Metro to reevaluate parts of the route. One change: In Leimert Park, the rail line was redesigned to run underground. De la Loza said this was to “help reduce the impact on the adjacent communities, so we wouldn't have construction at the surface.”

In addition, he said Metro provided about \$20 million to assist hundreds of local businesses that faced accessibility issues (like parking) during construction.

At the same time, Metro took parcels of land for stations and maintenance facilities along the route. Officials did not provide LAist with a full accounting of how much property was acquired for the project. But de la Loza said the agency works with cities and property owners to “identify the least amount of parcels that are needed and then to work as best we can to make it a friendly [acquisition](#).”

Metro's Chandler also added:

“In addition to a few Metro properties near stations that will be used for transit parking (and of course the maintenance facility), a few small surplus properties along Crenshaw Blvd are in the process of being transferred to the city of L.A. for [Destination Crenshaw](#).”

## Everything Old Is New Again

The new rail line is also a bit of a transit déjà vu. Much of it runs on the same routes [where L.A.'s streetcars once ruled the road](#).

In the early-to-mid 1900s, “L.A. had one of the most extensive trolley systems in the world,” de le Loza said, noting that Angelenos overwhelmingly chose the streetcars over personal cars.



This photo taken in 1955 shows a streetcar on Crenshaw Boulevard at 54th Street — on the same route that the new Crenshaw/LAX Line now uses.

(Alan Weeks / Courtesy L.A. Metro archives)

Then came the post-war surge in automobile use, which “started the [dismantling of the system](#),” he said. Streetcars were replaced with buses or phased out entirely, leading to the car-filled roads we know and loathe today.


“All the major streets handled at-grade light rail lines,” de le Loza said. “When we're going back and reconstructing, we're finding that the old track is still in place in a number of these corridors.”

And here in the present day, we're seeing historic reinvestment in public transit in an effort to incentivize people to once again

opt for rail and bus over driving their cars.

“It will happen,” de la Loza said. “Post-COVID, as in most cities, we will see an increase in gas price and an increase in parking in major centers. And this is an option that will be in place and have the capacity to absorb that shift in mode.”

## What questions do you have about getting around L.A.?

Ryan Fonseca explores the challenges communities face getting from point a to point b and the potential solutions down the road, sidewalk, track and bike path. 

ASK A QUESTION 

**UPDATED OCTOBER 6, 2022 AT 4:55 PM PDT**

*This story updated with Metro's answer on the timeline for the Aviation/Century Station to open for commuter use.*

**UPDATED OCTOBER 6, 2022 AT 12:32 PM PDT**

*This story was updated with more clarity from Metro about projected timeframes for the K Line to connect with the C Line.*

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