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## L.A. Metro Officially Opens the K Line, Marking a New Transit Milestone for Los Angeles County

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Photos: <https://lametro.smugmug.com/> (<https://lametro.smugmug.com/>)

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**Los Angeles, Calif.** — Early Friday morning, transportation officials from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) — riding in the front of a sparkling new Metro light rail car — burst through a banner at the intersection of Crenshaw Boulevard and 48<sup>th</sup> Street in South Los Angeles to commemorate the grand opening of the K Line, Los Angeles' newest light rail line.

The opening of the K Line — previously known as the Crenshaw/LAX Line — marks the official return of rail service on Crenshaw Boulevard since the last Los Angeles Railway Line 5 yellow street cars trundled down the street in 1955 — nearly 70 years ago.

To mark its historic milestone, Metro will provide free rides on the K Line and all other Metro bus and rail lines and Bike Share services all weekend starting Friday at noon until the end of service Sunday night, Oct. 9. Metro encourages Angelenos to explore new communities now accessible via the K Line as well as to access area entertainment venues, sporting events, dining and shopping areas.

The new line represents Metro's single largest transportation investment in the South Los Angeles region since the construction of the Metro A Line (Blue) and C Line (Green) more than 20 years ago. It is anticipated to open new access to opportunity for numerous South L.A. communities, including the Crenshaw Corridor, Hyde Park, Leimert Park, Fairview Heights, Inglewood and Westchester, by connecting these communities with new local destinations as well as the rest of Los Angeles County's expanding Metro Rail system.

"What was conceived decades ago as only lines on a map and a hopeful dream have today been made a reality thanks to county taxpayers' investment in Metro," said Glendale City Council Member and Metro Board Chair and Ara J. Najarian. "We now have a train that Angelenos can take to reach destinations they never could before via Metro Rail. The K Line is the perfect example of how Metro is continuing to transform public transportation for the better in Los Angeles County."

The rail line through this South Los Angeles corridor was the ambition of city leaders since the formation of Metro in 1993. Previous officials supporting the line's construction included Mayor Tom Bradley, Rep. Julian Dixon, Ambassador Diane Watson and Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke, among others.

"Today, we're fulfilling a dream that started with Mayor Tom Bradley and was carried on for decades by countless community leaders and elected officials: world-class public transportation in South Los Angeles," said Mayor Eric Garcetti. "Angelenos generations from now will recognize the opening of this line as a new chapter in Los Angeles' transportation history – as a moment where we opened doors of opportunity to communities that had been ignored for too long and put our commitment to making Los Angeles a more inclusive, accessible, and sustainable city on the fast track."

"With seven new stations and two more to come, the new Metro K Line will bring improved public transit to many underserved neighborhoods that have gone too long without easy access to public transit," said Senator Alex Padilla. "I'm proud to have helped pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which makes the single largest investment in transit ever to continue connecting our communities. I'll keep working in Congress to build on these investments in modernizing our outdated, crumbling infrastructure."

The \$2.1 billion K Line was largely funded by local tax dollars. Metro's Measure R transportation sales tax measure was approved by voters back in 2008. The line also included key federal funding grants and loans that helped ensure the timely start of construction. Prior to Measure R's 2008 passage, however, earlier plans for a train service along the Crenshaw Corridor languished due to the lack of local funding.

"Residents and businesses along the route of the new K Line have been looking forward to the expanded access this rail line will provide to work, school, shopping, entertainment, and LAX," said Congressmember Maxine Waters. "I worked very hard to ensure federal support for this corridor, which resulted in \$233 million in grants and a \$546 million loan, and I am proud to see it finally coming to fruition."

"I've long supported federal funding for Southern California to build out the region's public transportation options, which is why I'm so pleased that the new K Line is opening," Senator Feinstein said. "Once stations at LAX are complete, L.A. residents will be able to travel to the airport without having to leave the Metro system. This project will increase connectivity and mobility for the city, reduce car traffic and provide a vital service to visitors as the city prepares to host the 2028 Summer Olympic Games."

The K Line is a part of Metro's ambitious rail expansion plan in Los Angeles County. With Metro's other Measure M voter-approved transportation tax measure in 2016, the agency now has the biggest rail expansion program in the United States. Metro is now simultaneously building the Regional Connector Transit Project in downtown L.A. and the Purple (D Line) Extension Project in three separate segments that will connect downtown Los Angeles with West Los Angeles. Metro's construction authority partner, the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority, is also building an extension of the L (Gold) Line further east in the San Gabriel Valley. Numerous other Metro Rail and Bus projects are now in various stages of development today.

Now that the K Line is open, Angelenos can visit key cultural events and venues in the historic Crenshaw Corridor, public parks and major venues in Inglewood, and have easier access to medical facilities and job and commerce centers throughout Los Angeles without the hassles of traffic and parking.

"The K Line fulfills a long-awaited promise to the community and ushers in a new era of equitable transportation investment that connects the Crenshaw Corridor and Inglewood residents to convenient, fast, reliable and low-cost rail transit," said Metro Board First Vice Chair Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker. "What's more, it will provide a new gateway to jobs, education and healthcare for our communities that need it the most."

"South Los Angeles fought hard for decades for the Crenshaw Line and today they reap the rewards of their patience," said L.A. County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Holly J. Mitchell. "We are not only opening the K Line but also welcoming riders to the future of Metro from new alternatives to public safety programs like Transit Ambassadors to acknowledging disproportionate cost burden through the LIFE program and intentional investment in the community."

Metro anticipates the line will carry more than 32,000 daily boardings by the year 2035. During this time, ridership is expected to continue to grow once Metro's new Regional Connector line opens to the public early next year, the K Line's two remaining stations open in the next couple of years and all bus lines and bus stations that serve the line are fully integrated.

"With the K Line opening, Inglewood will now have three light rail stations in the City of Champions that will link residents and patrons to The Kia Forum, Sofi Stadium and soon, Intuit Dome, the future home of the Los Angeles Clippers," said Mayor of Inglewood and Metro Board Member James T. Butts. "Little by little, we are becoming the world's center of sports and entertainment, thanks in part to the K Line coming to our city."

By 2024, Metro will complete a new station to connect the K Line with Los Angeles International Airport via its People Mover to airport terminals, finally providing a direct transit connection to one of the world's busiest airports for the first time. Connecting Metro Rail directly with LAX will be critical for both domestic and international travelers attending the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles.

"When we make the all-important connection to LAX, the K Line will be the fastest, most convenient transportation choice for residents, travelers, visitors, and airport employees alike," said L.A. City Councilmember and Metro Board Member Mike Bonin. "This line will simply be the best choice for travelers and will finally give them a viable transit alternative to driving to the airport."

The K Line was designed and built with the help of community input and local voices. This transit project ushered in model programs that are now used on all of Metro's major construction projects. For example, this was the first project to employ Metro's Board-approved small business mitigation programs: the Business Interruption Fund, Business Solution Center and Eat, Shop, Play. These programs helped to support small businesses in this corridor during construction.

"After decades of going without rail transit, I'm proud to lead Metro as it delivers the K Line to Crenshaw, Inglewood, and all the other south Los Angeles communities," said Stephanie Wiggins, CEO of Metro. "We're eternally grateful to the area's residents and businesses for hosting us in the community during a long and technically complex construction period. I know the K Line will be well used and well loved by these communities and the rest of Los Angeles County for decades to come."

Grammy award-winning music icon Dr. Jody Watley officiated Metro's opening ceremony today with members of the community and officials.

"I was thrilled to be part of this historic opening of Metro's K-Line," Watley said. "The day was very special for me. I am a local to this area. I attended and graduated from Dorsey High School, which is just minutes from the new station."

Metro now plans to expand the K Line north. The agency is now developing a draft environmental impact report that will explore alternatives for extending the K Line to reach Hollywood. Metro plans to release its draft report for public review and comments in 2023.

Riders can purchase a commemorative K Line TAP card to prepare for regular fares on Monday, Oct. 10. These TAP cards will be available at all Metro ticket vending machines.

For additional information about the K Line, please visit <https://kline.metro.net/> (<https://kline.metro.net/>).

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