



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

METRO BLUE LINE UNDERGOES A \$1.2 BILLION OVERHAUL

The Metro Blue Line, Los Angeles County's oldest light rail line and one of the busiest light rail lines in the United States, is undergoing a \$1.2 billion overhaul replacing power stations, overhead power lines, tracks, rail cars and improvements to station platforms in a multiyear investment to bolster reliability, comfort and safety.

Some of the work on the Blue Line, which has linked Los Angeles and Long Beach and all the communities in between for 23 years, has already begun while other upgrades and improvements will be completed over the next six years.

"Even as we move forward on new transit projects, we are committed to maintaining the world-class transportation system we've already built," said Metro Board Chair Diane DuBois. "The Metro Board commits to our customers and taxpayers a long term investment to keep the Blue Line in top form."

"In the past seven years we have spent \$260 million improving grade crossings, replacing street lights and upgrading vehicle lights to improve safety," said Metro CEO Art Leahy. "We are in the midst of painting and replacing worn parts and fixtures at Blue Line stations. Next, patrons will see brand new trains and some refurbished rail cars," Leahy said.

Nearly \$739 million is earmarked to purchase 78 new light rail vehicles plus \$130 million to repair and upgrade 52 light rail cars now in service.

"The Blue Line is an old train that's long overdue for an upgrade," said Metro Board Vice Chair and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. "This investment will make life better for the 90,000 people who ride the Blue Line every day with a safer, more convenient, and more comfortable commute."

To improve reliability and performance, \$82 million is being invested to replace all 20 traction power substations with 19 already completed. Overhead power lines (Overhead Catenary System) in downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach are being upgraded at a cost of nearly \$13 million. Another \$13 million is being spent to replace rail track in Long Beach that was degraded by moist sea air with completion expected in 2019.

The Metro Blue Line has 22 stations between downtown Long Beach and the 7th Street/Metro Center in downtown Los Angeles where it connects with the Red/Purple subway lines and the Expo Line. The Metro Blue Line services Los Angeles Trade Technical College, the famed Watts Towers and connects to the Metro Green Line at the Willowbrook station for service to Norwalk and Redondo Beach.

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Metro Blue Line to Receive Upgrades (first add)

“The Blue line is the backbone of transportation for the central part of Los Angeles County and this investment means that working families can continue to count on this system for decades to come,” said Metro Board Director and Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe.

During the six years of the Metro Blue Line overhaul project there will be periodic service interruptions. Work is planned for weekends, off-peak and overnight hours to minimize the impact on commuters, who account for most of the nearly 90,000 daily boardings. When necessary, bus shuttles will be used to bridge gaps in rail service.

“The Metro Blue Line proved to Southern California that public transit is clean, economical and convenient for everyone,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, a Metro board member. “At any time, you can step on a train and see workers in boots carrying lunch pails, students with book bags slung over their shoulders and business people in suits holding briefcases.”

The Metro Blue Line first began operation on July 14, 1990 as a partnership between the Southern California Rapid Transit District and the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission with rosy predictions of 5,000 riders per day. Within two weeks, at least 600,000 people had ridden the Blue Line.

The Metro Rail system has about 360,000 daily boardings with 88 miles of track consisting of the Blue Line, the Red/Purple Lines subway connecting downtown Los Angeles and North Hollywood, the Gold Line connecting Pasadena with East Los Angeles, the Green Line and the Expo Line traveling between Culver City and downtown.

“Without the bold experiment that was the Blue Line we would not have the growing network of light rail and subway lines that we have today,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board member Zev Yaroslavsky. “This year, construction begins on the Crenshaw/LAX light rail line and preparation work continues on the Purple Line subway that will extend all the way from downtown to UCLA. Construction continues on Phase 2 of the Expo Line completion to Santa Monica and on the Gold Line extension to Azusa.”

Commuters can stay informed on all Metro Blue Line updates by checking at metro.net/bluelineupgrades where photographs, construction notices and timeline updates will be posted.

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