



NEWS RELEASE

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City Officials and Residents Celebrate Opening of New El Sereno Bridge that will Divert Traffic from Train Crossing

Councilmember José Huizar and Department of Public Works President Cynthia Ruiz join community members to commemorate the opening of eastbound lanes on new bridge

LOS ANGELES (Jan. 27, 2009) – Councilmember José Huizar and Department of Public Works President Cynthia Ruiz joined today with police and fire officials, community members and commissioned artists for the Grand Opening of the eastbound lanes of a new multimillion dollar bridge in El Sereno.

The bridge, located on Valley Boulevard between Eastern and Marianna Avenues, was first proposed by City planners in 1975. Today's celebration will mark the end of decades of frustration over long train waits for residents, commuters and police and fire officials.

"Today we're taking something that was a source of frustration for this community, and we're turning it into a source of pride," said Councilmember José Huizar. "Many people worked to make this happen. I am proud that I was able to help."

In 2006, Huizar was instrumental in getting the project back on track by convincing Metro to reconsider an earlier decision to put the project on hold. Metro eventually included \$9 million of supplemental funding for the bridge, which the City matched.

"We are one step closer to alleviating traffic congestion in this area and completing a very important project that has been in the works for many years," said Cynthia M. Ruiz, Board of Public Works President, another key player in the project's completion.

(more)

Opening of Valley Bridge in El Sereno

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The bridge includes a significant beautification element, including tile, limestone and glass mosaic artwork that incorporates the history of El Sereno and its residents, as well as pays homage to icons, such as musicians Eddie Cano and Lalo Guerrero.

Artists Jose Antonio Aguirre and Roberto Delgado were commissioned to do the public art. Part of their work included collecting 400 photographs from archive sources and community members, some of which will be used in the art pieces displayed on the bridge.

Other planned improvements include realignment of Valley Boulevard, construction of curbs, gutters and sidewalks, drainage and sanitary sewer facilities, landscaping, retaining walls, street lighting and traffic signals.

The westbound portion of the bridge is set to open in Phase Five of construction in approximately one year. Construction is expected to be completed by summer 2010.

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