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## Metro Pursuing Disruptive Centinela Grade Separation on Nearly Complete Crenshaw Line

By Joe Linton | May 20, 2020 | 22 COMMENTS



Rendering of possible Crenshaw Line grade separation at Centinela Avenue - via Metro

**M**etro's Crenshaw/LAX light rail line can't catch a break.

The Crenshaw/LAX rail is a \$2 billion, 8.5-mile light rail line extending from the Expo Line's Exposition/Crenshaw station to the Green Line's Aviation Station. The line primarily follows Crenshaw Boulevard up through the heart of Los Angeles' Black communities. Portions of the line are elevated and underground, though much of it will run at-grade.





Map of Metro's nearly completed Crenshaw/LAX line

When Crenshaw/LAX line construction got underway in early 2014, the line was anticipated to open in fall 2019. In late 2018, the expected opening date was pushed back to June 2020. Last month, a Metro letter and committee discussions pointed to an opening date around mid-2021.

The L.A. Times reported on numerous Crenshaw construction issues leading to the delays. For his part, Metro CEO Phil Washington has been alluding to a likely "liquidated damages" lawsuit.

Tomorrow, the Metro board Construction Committee will consider approving \$120 million in



Crenshaw cost overruns. That would include \$90 million for the current contractor and \$30 million for later close-out costs. That item was scheduled to be approved last month, but proved too contentious.

In December, the Metro board approved an initial Crenshaw rail operations plan that favors wealthier, whiter South Bay commuters over South L.A. residents who live along the line and who actually ride transit.

Today, the board's Planning and Programming Committee approved an item to move forward with adding a new grade separation at Centinela Avenue in Inglewood. The Centinela grade separation is championed by James Butts, the Mayor of Inglewood and current Metro Board Chair.

Sure, the grade separation will slightly improve the light rail line's speed and reliability. But the impetus behind the the grade separation is getting more drivers from L.A.'s Westside to Inglewood's under-construction football stadium.

The new grade separation is not a mega-project. It would be statutorily exempt from lengthy environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Metro's rough estimated cost is \$185-241 million – up from an early estimate of \$100-150 million. The project currently has no funding. Metro CEO Phil Washington stated that the agency is working with Inglewood and the South Bay Council of Governments to determine how to pay for the project. Washington anticipated returning to the board with funding plans this Summer.

Construction is anticipated to begin about a year from now – roughly the same time as the Crenshaw Line is expected to open.

If this grade separation project moves forward, which appears likely, it will adversely impact transit riders.

There are a few alternatives currently under consideration. These are outlined in Metro's screening analysis study.

For an estimated \$200 million, transit riders would have to endure a roughly two-year long partial closure, taking a bus bridge between Crenshaw's Fairview Heights and Downtown Inglewood stations.

For an estimated \$241 million, the project could include shoo-fly tracks that would minimize disruption to transit riders. The tracks would occupy several lanes of Florence Avenue and construction would take longer. Some bus bridging would still be needed when the rail line switches to and from the shoo-fly.

Potentially further complicating Crenshaw operations will be two upcoming automated people mover projects.

The city of Inglewood is planning to build a 1.6-mile three-station automated people mover connecting the Crenshaw Line's Downtown Inglewood Station to the new stadium. That project recently received a state transit infrastructure grant.

The Crenshaw Line will also connect to the LAX's under-construction people mover. That



connection is expected in 2023.

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Filed Under: Crenshaw Corridor, Metro

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Hector • 8 days ago

Can we make an underpass instead?

Some crude renderings (aka bad photo editing on my part) to illustrate what this intersection looks like now and how it'll look w/ a metro overpass.



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Doogie • a month ago

Wow great to see this coming along hope it helps communities not hurt it .And I bet you this is the line that's gonna get packed in full service due to people traveling in and out of LAX.

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Campbell Sadeghy • a month ago

I'm happy to see more grade separation but Jesus... almost a decade to construct a 9 mile light rail line!? This is insanity.

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Joe Linton Mod → Campbell Sadeghy • a month ago

Crenshaw was expected to take five years - and mismanagement means it will take just under 7 years... Not sure where you're getting a decade.

^ | v • Reply • Share >



michaelchany → Joe Linton • 22 days ago

I think he's saying that 7 years + 23 months (at least) for this grade separation project would essentially mean a fully running, complete line would have been ten years in the making (2014 to 2023). A comment on Urbanize bemoaned that this disruption would really harm ridership and enthusiasm for the line.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share >



Campbell Sadeghy → michaelchany • 20 days ago

Yeah basically it comes close to a decade. Just the shock of how close it came



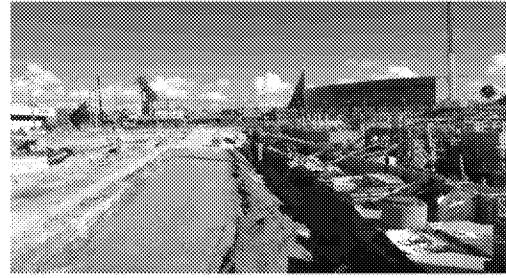
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**Crenshaw Light Rail Construction Hovers At 93 Percent Complete, Opening Could Be Delayed**

By Joe Linton | Oct 25, 2019

In 2018 the Crenshaw Line opening was expected by June 2020. Now it looks like October 2020 is more likely.

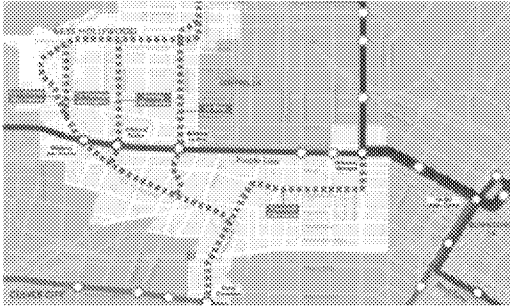


Blvd restoration and new Expo/Crenshaw Station entrance construction near Expo St

**Metro Announces Crenshaw Line Will Open Mid-2020; Crenshaw/Green Operations Plan Debated**

By Joe Linton | Nov 16, 2018

Metro CEO announced that the new Crenshaw light rail line will open in mid-2020. Metro is still determining how Crenshaw will operate, and how it will interact with the Green Line.



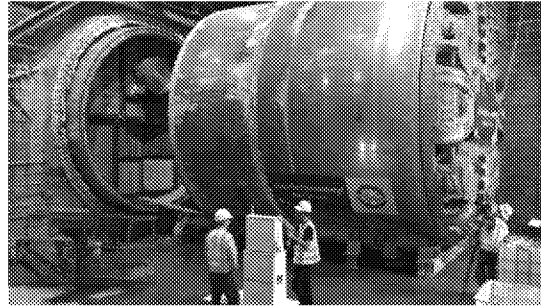
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**Metro Releases Five Alternatives for Crenshaw Northern Extension**

By Joe Linton | Jul 23, 2018

The Crenshaw North project is mostly funded in Metro's Measure M plan, but scheduled to open in 2047.



**Her Work Done on Crenshaw's Underground Railroad, Harriet the Tunnel Boring Machine Retires**

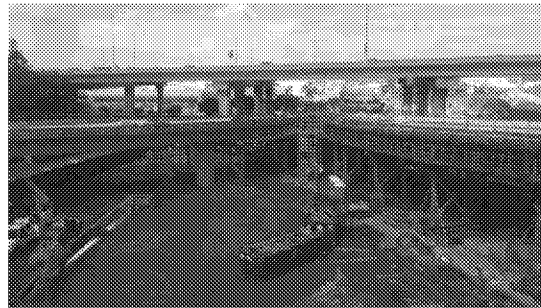
By Joe Linton | Apr 21, 2017

Metro celebrated the retirement of Harriet the Tunnel Boring Machine, which built two mile-long tunnels below Crenshaw Boulevard. Metro's Crenshaw/LAX light rail line is expected to open in Fall 2019.

**FTA Chooses Crenshaw Line for Federal Fast Track, Will It Lead to Faster Start Date?**

By Damien Newton | Oct 12, 2011

Yesterday, the White House announced that the Crenshaw Light Rail Line is one of fourteen projects nationwide selected to be part of an expedited federal review so that construction could proceed more quickly. This announcement was met with praise from Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Senator Barbara Boxer and County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. Ridley-Thomas even went so [...]



**Eyes on the Street: Crenshaw Construction Near LAX**

By Joe Linton | Jan 6, 2017

See the Metro Crenshaw/LAX light rail line under



construction from the Metro Green Line. Crenshaw opens in 2019.

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