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Metro Gold Line Extension to move full speed ahead

By Lauren Gold, SGVN
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Photo gallery: Gold Line construction



Construction continues on the I-210 bridge in Arcadia on Wednesday. The \$486 million Foothill Extension from Pasadena to Azusa light rail extension has been given the go-ahead by the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority. (Walt Mancini / Staff Photographer)

The Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension is on track for its 2015 completion after the construction authority gave the contractor a full "notice to proceed."

The notice, announced Wednesday, means Foothill Transit Constructors Kiewit Parsons can move forward on schedule with its \$486 million contract to build the 11.5-mile route from Pasadena to Azusa.

Designs are already in progress and construction is set to start this fall.

"It means we're fulfilling our promise to get this project completed on our budget ... and I think that's what the public wants," said Habib Balian, Construction Authority CEO.

Monrovia Mayor Mary Ann Lutz said she is glad to see the project moving forward, something the city has been pushing for the last 20 years.

"I think it's the best news we've heard in a long time," Lutz said. "With the recession and all of the things that are happening in our state ... this is a positive that will not only move our region forward but people specifically forward."

For residents of the San Gabriel Valley looking for work, the notice to proceed also means that Kiewit Parsons

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will begin hiring construction workers and subcontractors.

Construction authority spokeswoman Lisa Levy Buch said that if construction hadn't received

the go-ahead by now, it would have hindered both the project schedule and the budget.

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"If the project went off schedule significantly it would have cost the project hundreds of millions of dollars," Buch said.

The authority had already begun construction on the I-210 Freeway bridge and had been granted an interim notice to proceed.

However, before it could move forward and receive its full \$735 million funding, the conditions outlined in its agreement with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority had to be met.

The biggest roadblock for the Construction Authority was the years-long struggle to gain control of 50 percent of the land designated for a 24-acre maintenance and operations yard in

Monrovia. Legal issues with private landowners and Monrovia's former redevelopment agency that stalled the process were finally settled last month.

"The negotiations ... have been a very complicated process that's gone on for several years," said Doug Tessitor, chairman of the Construction Authority's board, and a Glendora councilman. "And since this is a project that stands to benefit the several million people in the San Gabriel Valley, ... finally getting the notice to proceed signed and delivered is just a huge accomplishment."

With rail construction on its way, Buch said the next and final big step will be to award a \$30 million contract for the stations' parking lots along the rail.

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