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## Gold Line going to Montclair

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MONTCLAIR - In about 10 years, Inland Empire residents, business owners and commuters will have a direct new transportation access into Azusa, Pasadena and Los Angeles.

Although there is a slight delay in the construction and federal funding process, supporters of the Gold Line light rail expanding into Montclair are optimistic about the revitalized transportation system.

"Montclair is already a transportation hub in the area," said City Engineer Mike Hudson. "The Gold Line would bring more in alternative ways to getting to (Los Angeles)."

A few years ago, Hudson said, the first phase of the light rail was completed from Union Station in Los Angeles to Pasadena, ending near the Arcadia border.

Now the proposed idea is to design a route for the Gold Line to continue to Arcadia, Monrovia, Irwindale, Azusa, Glendora, San Dimas, La Verne, Pomona, Claremont and Montclair.

Based on current plans, there are two segments of the extension process known as Phase II. Segment 1 will run 11.4 miles from Pasadena to Azusa. Segment 2 will run 12.5 miles from Azusa to the Montclair station.

"We have a 1,600-parking-space lot - that's the largest along the Metrolink corridor," Hudson said. "The Gold Line will be able to share the common lot with Metrolink parking."

The light rail differs from the existing Metrolink because its trains rely on electrical contact. It has lighter steel and a lighter train.

According to the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Web site, [www.metrogoldline.org](http://www.metrogoldline.org), the train will offer shorter commuting trips, increased energy savings and reduced levels of pollution.

Construction has been slightly delayed because of the Federal Transit Authority's request for recalibration of a computer model that helps project ridership and travel benefits, said Susan Hodor, public affairs director for the Metro Gold Line Foothill Expansion Construction Authority.

Upon completion and acceptance of the new model, authorities will move closer to a decision and the potential for a full-funding grant agreement from the FTA.

"We are looking to have the Gold Line extended to Azusa in the years 2011 or 2012 and to Montclair about four years later," Hodor said.

The cost of construction for the first segment of Phase II is \$402 million. The second segment, about \$760 million, will cost more based on maintenance and facility.

Money for the project will need to come from federal grants as well as local matching funds.

Despite the perceived need for alternative transportation, construction for the extended Gold Line has been delayed.

The best-case scenario, Hodor said, is that the agency will be able to break ground for the first segment in Azusa in late 2008.

"It's really exciting for the region to see everyone committed to making a new type of transportation," she said.

Based on the increasing congestion that has developed on the Interstate 210 extension and the demand for more businesses and housing developments in the Inland Empire, Hodor said there is a definite need for the Gold Line in Montclair.

"We are building as people are planning to grow and expand their cities," she said.