

## Agency dedicates Sunset Avenue rail crossing project, street expected to reopen Friday

By Maritza Velazquez, Staff Writer  
San Gabriel Valley Tribune  
Posted: 11/05/2010 05:56:53 PM PDT



Congressional, state and local officials join members of the Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority during the Sunset Avenue Grade Separation Dedication Ceremony on Friday November 5, 2010. The Sunset Avenue grade Separation is a 1.6 mile concrete-walled railroad flyover structure with a 132-foot steel bridge over Sunset Avenue in Industry. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Keith Durlflinger)

**INDUSTRY** - After nearly three years of construction, a closed portion of Sunset Avenue is slated to reopen next Friday.

The \$96 million grade separation project is aimed at reducing traffic delays due to freight trains, improving safety, and cutting emissions produced by idling cars.

"It's been a long process, but it's going to be rewarding," said Industry Mayor Dave Perez. "It's been an inconvenience but it's part of the infrastructure process."

The Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority (ACE), which spearheaded the project, dedicated the completed grade separation Friday morning.

Under a white tent on the closed portion of the street, several elected officials spoke about the benefits of the

**Photo Gallery**

[Sunset Avenue rail crossing project completed](#)



[The Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority unveils the Sunset Avenue Grade Separation during the Dedication Ceremony on Friday November 5, 2010.](#)  
[\(SGVN/Staff Photo by Keith Durlinger\)](#)

project. Bassett High School's marching band also performed before the ceremony.

"The goal is to renovate these at-grade crossings to separate the trains from traffic," said Bimla Rhinehart, California Transportation Commission executive director.

The Sunset Avenue project is the sixth of 20 grade separation projects completed through the ACE program so far. In addition, 39 at-grade crossings have been renovated to increase safety. An additional eight projects will reach completion or begin construction next year, according to ACE officials.

Construction at the Sunset Avenue location began in January 2007.

Workers built a 1.6-mile bridge structure over Sunset and Orange avenues to accommodate Union Pacific freight trains. Orange Avenue is expected to reopen by the end of the year.

A loading track at Sunset Avenue and Valley Boulevard remains at-grade, with one train traveling the track every 24 hours, officials said.

According to ACE, about 32,000 motorists drive the intersection at Sunset Avenue and Valley Boulevard daily, while 9,200 drivers travel the Orange Avenue intersection.

"The mental health of drivers who drive on this road will vastly, vastly improve," Assemblywoman Bonnie Lowenthal, D-Long Beach, joked during the dedication ceremony.

Several residents were happy the three-year closure was coming to an end.

"I'm glad it's going to open. You had to go around to other streets. It's more convenient now because there's access to the buses on Valley," said 47-year-old La Puente resident Felecia Isabell.

The project is funded by local, state and federal money, with the majority coming from the state and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, according to Rick Richmond, ACE chief executive officer.

Rep. Grace Napolitano, D-Santa Fe Springs, expressed disappointment about Union Pacific not contributing funding for the project.

"They're the ones that benefit from this because they get their trains to deliver on time," she said, adding that trains won't have to slow down or sound horns at the updated crossings.

Calls to Union Pacific officials were not immediately returned Friday.

The company uses the line to transport goods from the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles.

Several elected representatives said the project is vital to the local, state and national economy.

"In fact, all of the ACE projects, including this one, help maintain the economic vitality of the San Gabriel Valley by protecting 630,000 existing jobs and creating 192,000 new jobs by 2020," said Rep. Judy Chu, D-El Monte.

[maritza.velazquez@sgvn.com](mailto:maritza.velazquez@sgvn.com) 626-962-8811, ext. 2718