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PRESS RELEASE

Largest, Single Public Art/Transit Infrastructure Project in California Nears Completion

Award-winning public artist Andrew Leicester and innovative design-builder, Skanska USA create a landmark light rail bridge

(Note to Editors: a press kit with project details and interviews with the principals is available for downloading from: <http://www.foothillextension.org/news/media-resources/> The site will be updated as new images become available.)

MONROVIA, Calif.— The Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority (Construction Authority) is on schedule to complete the first ever artist-designed transit bridge in California—a 584 linear-foot sculpture that has re-imagined the construction process for transit infrastructure projects in the state.

Hundreds of thousands of motorists traveling on the I-210 Freeway through Arcadia will experience the ‘Gold Line Bridge’ when it’s finished in mid-December. As the most visible element of the 11.5-mile Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension light rail project from Pasadena to Azusa, the dual track bridge will serve as a gateway to the San Gabriel Valley and provide connection between the existing Sierra Madre Villa station in East Pasadena and the future Arcadia station.

The on-budget, \$18.6 million project was designed by award-winning public artist Andrew Leicester and overseen by the Construction Authority, an independent agency that worked closely with the community in selecting the artist to develop the design concept for the bridge.

“This was a truly collaborative process,” said Habib F. Balian, CEO of the Construction Authority. “It included the community who selected the artist; staff from multiple agencies that shared the vision of the sculptural design and allowed Andrew, the artist, to think outside the box girder; our board of directors who supported that vision; and the design-build team that made it happen.”

The bridge is the first and largest California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) infrastructure project of its kind. The Construction Authority brought in the artist early to lead the design process before the design-build team was selected. In 2009, the agency put out a national call, and a committee of community stakeholders selected the Minnesota-based Leicester from a group of 15 highly qualified public artists.

“Our approach was very different in that the art inspired the engineering and not vice versa,” Balian said. “We wanted an artist to create the sculptural form for the bridge from the start, not have the art be an afterthought.”

As the design concept adviser, Leicester has continued with the project beyond the concept stage. He worked alongside the design-builder, Skanska USA, and its Los Angeles-based design consultant, AECOM, to ensure the final design and construction were true to the overall vision. This groundbreaking collaboration resulted in the

creation of a sculptural light rail bridge, built for the same cost originally estimated for a typical light rail structure.

“The Gold Line Bridge revives an important American tradition of including artists in design of major infrastructure,” said former publisher and editor-in-chief of Arts and Architecture magazine Barbara Goldstein, an international authority on public art practice and policy. “The bridge evokes the great infrastructure designs of the 1930s Works Progress Administration and it signals a new era of artist involvement in the major public initiatives of our time—transportation systems for the 21st Century. Andrew Leicester has created a poetic expression for the Gold Line Bridge that captures the time, place and history of its region.”

The project also marks the first time such intricate design, structural and architectural elements were incorporated into transit infrastructure. The bridge is anchored by two 25 foot ‘baskets’ that pay tribute to the indigenous peoples of the San Gabriel Valley and the oversize iconic roadside traditions of nearby Route 66. The serpentine main underbelly of the bridge features casted grooves and hatch-marks that simulate the patterns found on the Western Diamondback snake, metaphorically referencing the spine of the transit system.

“It was an extraordinarily unique opportunity,” Leicester said. “Being involved from the beginning really allowed me to impact the overall gestalt. I am deeply grateful to the Construction Authority for their leadership and commitment to quality, which ensured the bridge adhered to the original concept. The average person does not ordinarily encounter art in their everyday environment. I want people to be intrigued by the mystery of it.”

Leicester’s early bridge concept sketches are in the “Pages” exhibition at the Art Center College of Design’s Williamson Gallery in Pasadena through Jan. 13, 2013. The gallery is located at 1700 Lida St. Hours are noon to 5 p.m., Tue-Sun, and noon to 9 p.m. on Fri.

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About the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority

The Construction Authority is an independent transportation planning and construction agency created in 1999 by the California State Legislature. Its purpose is to extend the Metro Gold Line light rail line from Union Station to Montclair, along the foothills of the San Gabriel Valley. The Construction Authority built the initial segment from Union Station to Pasadena and is underway on the Gold Line Foothill Extension. The Foothill Extension is a nearly \$1.6 billion extension that will connect Pasadena to Montclair in two construction segments. The first segment, Pasadena to Azusa, is funded by Los Angeles County’s Measure R and currently underway. Three design-build contracts totaling more than \$500 million will be overseen by the Construction Authority to complete the Pasadena to Azusa segment, including the \$18.6 million Gold Line Bridge. The Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation estimates that nearly 7,000 jobs and \$1 billion in economic output will be generated by construction of the Pasadena to Azusa project. For more information: www.foothillextension.org.