Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement Project
City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering
August 2017

Three Questions for Councilmember José Huizar

Why is this project important to you?
I grew up in Boyle Heights and still live there today with my family. Boyle Heights is one of the oldest communities in Los Angeles, and only became accessible once bridges were built across the LA River. When I heard the old Sixth Street bridge had to be removed, I was not happy. It was such an iconic landmark. If it had to be replaced, I wanted to make sure that whatever we replaced it with would be transcendent and serve multiple purposes, including the adjacent communities of Boyle Heights and the Arts District. The new viaduct will not only get commuters from Point A to Point B, it will be a Point C, a destination in and of itself. The new viaduct will be an iconic piece of Los Angeles’ landscape for decades to come.

What is your favorite part of the project?
The park below it. When HNTB and Michael Maltzan won the design competition they presented a bridge with a beautiful park underneath it. While that’s great in concept, making it happen takes hard work and funds. My office has worked diligently with all our partners to turn that concept into a reality. So far, we’ve secured more than $29 million to construct a new 12-acre park in the heart of Downtown LA and Boyle Heights. The new park will provide crucial open space for the community and complement our new iconic bridge.

What’s been your favorite moment on the project?
There’s been a number of them – from announcing the international design competition, to seeing the incredible and inspiring design by HNTB and Michael Maltzan. But the Sixth Street Bridge Farewell Festival was an amazing experience. While saying goodbye to the old Sixth Street Bridge was bittersweet, I heard from a lot of constituents that they wanted to give the old bridge a proper sendoff. So my office hosted a community festival on the bridge for one last goodbye. Seeing WAR and Aloe Blacc perform under the arches with Boyle Heights, Downtown Los Angeles and the LA River as the backdrop was truly special. For any of the estimated 10,000 people who attended, it was a night we will never forget. Seeing Angelenos of all walks of life, representing a cross section of this great city, all coming together to honor our collective history, was a one-of-a-kind Los Angeles experience.

Sixth Street Viaduct is Coming Out of the Ground! True or False(work)?

It’s true. Thanks to falsework.
The next exciting phase of construction on the Sixth Street Viaduct has begun! The Bureau of Engineering and their contractor SSW have begun the falsework phase of the project.

What is Falsework?
Think: scaffolding. Falsework is comprised of the temporary metal support structures that will hold up the forms that will be filled with concrete to create the viaduct’s structures.

The falsework that is being put in place this month will support the Y-Bent forms. The Y-bents are the structures that create the Y-shape at the base of the bridge’s arches. Some metal Y bent forms, made of bright blue painted metal, are already on site. We are starting on what is known as "Bent 11", which is the columns just west of Clarence Street.

The Y bent forms are specialized structures that have to be trucked in all the way from Indiana and Toronto. This is due to the shape of the Y-bents; they have gentler curves as opposed to right angles.

In total, there will be 18 Y bents. Each will come out of its own column, which may extend up to 150 feet underground. Not every column will have a Y bent coming out of it, though. There will be 23 columns in all, 12 of which have already been constructed.

This is the beginning of the viaduct’s visible above-ground construction! The new Sixth Street Viaduct is coming to life.
The Sixth Street Viaduct Replacement Project is a new, 3,500-foot long viaduct connecting Boyle Heights and the Arts District across the Los Angeles River. The original viaduct was built in 1932, but had significantly deteriorated due to "concrete cancer"; it was demolished in 2016. The new viaduct will have ten pairs of steel arches, bike lanes and wider sidewalks, along with stairway access and bike ramps connecting to 12 acres of recreational and open space under the bridge. The $482 million dollar project is the largest bridge project in the history of the city. The bridge is funded primarily through the Federal Highway Administration, with additional City support. The viaduct is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

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And check out our website at www.sixthstreetviaduct.org

The Bureau of Engineering is the City's lead agency for the planning, design and construction management of the City's public buildings and its public infrastructure. Engineering is also responsible for managing permitting for all construction that takes place in the public right-of-way, as well as managing the City's state-of-the-art online mapping system, NavigateLA. Engineering is committed to designing and building environmentally-sustainable projects that include extensive community input. Engineering projects and services support the City's goals of creating a prosperous, livable and safe city for all residents and businesses.