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CURRENT EVENTS.....

Urban Commuter/Light Rail/Modern Streetcar News!

LOS ANGELES, CA - The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (L.A. Metro) officially opened the K Line for light-rail service on Friday, October 7.

The transit agency's newest light-rail line, the K Line marks the return of rail service on Crenshaw Boulevard, which has not had rail access since 1955,when the trolley cars were replaced with buses.

The K Line is L.A. Metro's largest single investment in South Los Angeles since the construction of the A and C lines in the late 1990s. The K Line is expected to provide access to opportunities for South Los Angeles communities, including the Crenshaw Corridor, Hyde Park, Leimert Park, Fairview Heights, Inglewood and Westchester.



1207, one of over 200 cars contained from Kinki-Sharyo beginning in 2014, on the first day of service on the K-Line!

The K Line has been an L.A. Metro ambition since its formation in 1993, said L.A. Metro Chair Ara Najarian.

"What was conceived decades ago as only lines on a map and a hopeful dream have ... been made a reality thanks to county taxpayers' investment in [L.A. Metro]," Najarian said. "The K Line is the perfect example of how [L.A. Metro] is continuing to transform public transportation for the better in Los Angeles County."

The line cost \$2.1 billion to construct and was funded in large part by the Measure R transportation sales tax, which has been in effect since 2008. Prior to the voters' passage of Measure R, plans for what would become the K Line remained on hold due to a lack of local funding, L.A. Metro officials said.

Federal grants and loans were also key to ensuring that the project stayed on schedule, officials added.

NEW YORK CITY, NY - Progressive Railroading reported on October 25th that on the previous day the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's New York City Transit (NYCT) Committee had approved an order for 640 more R211 subway cars.



Car

#4060, one of the 535 cars in the base order.

Combined with the base order of 535 cars that was placed in 2018, the authority would receive a total of 1,175 R211s if the full MTA board approves the order at its next meeting, MTA officials said in a press release. Cars from the second order would be delivered starting in 2025.

The subway cars already delivered are slated to enter service in spring 2023 on the A and C lines, as well as on the Staten Island Railway. Critical to modernization efforts, the cars feature larger door openings, security cameras, digital displays and brighter lighting and signage, MTA officials said. The wider doorways will speed up boarding and reduce the time trains spend idle at stations.

The R211 consists of a five-car married set that is 302.05 ft long with open gangways between the five cars, similar to those on most three-truck Light Rail Vehicles, as shown below:



TRACTION HISTORY:

Philadelphia's Frankford Elevated - 100 years old!

PHILADELPHIA, PA - This month marks the 100th Anniversary of the opening of the Frankford Elevated which now forms one half of the Market-Frankford Subway-Elevated. We were provided an article by Joe Boscia, local transit historian and transit official about this unique event.

100 Years of the Frankford El

By Joe Boscia

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After New York City's El's opened, there was pressure for a similar system in Philadelphia. Groups advocated for and against. When Boston opened the first North American subway on Sept. 1, 1897, advocacy for franchises to do the same in Philadelphia gained momentum. When several franchises were granted shortly after the turn of the century, Philadelphia Rapid Transit (PRT) Company was formed to buy them out, and take over the Union Traction Company as well.

Construction rapidly began, and on Dec 15, 1905, the surface car subway under west Market St. from the Schuylkill River bridge to City Hall opened. It was part of a unique four track system, with surface cars on the outer tracks fanning out west of the bridge, and El trains in the inner tracks. The El ran from 69th St above Market St to the bridge, then into the subway. It opened in sections, debuting on March 4, 1907, and reaching completion to South St over Delaware Avenue on October 4, 1908.

Its success sparked calls for more subways and Els, but PRT was unable to do it. First, it faced disastrous strikes in 1909 and 1910, and then finances were eaten up in the second decade by the Stokesbury/Mitten management push to modernize the surface system.

On July 1, 1913, The City established the Department of City Transit, under A. Merritt Taylor, with the intent to build its own High Speed Transit Lines. There was a succession of Directors in the following years. In an odd twist of fate, the Director when the Frankford El finally opened was William S. Twining, the engineer who had built PRT's Subway-El line in the century's first decade. Various proposals were put forth, and one was recommended on July 24, 1913 – an extension of the PRT line from Arch St (where it turned down to Delaware Ave.), approximately six miles northeast to Bridge St. in Frankford. This built up area had been the start of the first horsecar line on January 21, 1858, the **Frankford and Southwark Passenger Railway Company**, known as the **Fifth & Sixth Streets** line.



A Fifth & Sixth St horsecar.

Boscia collection



A crowded Frankford car - why the El was needed.

Boscia collection

By mid-1915, after approvals by Philadelphia City Councils and the Public Service Commission, the first of a series of contracts were let to the McClintic-Marshall Co. The line was to be built in sections, and not all by the same company.

The first section, over Front St, ran from Callowhill St to south of Girard Ave. Field erection began on April 17, 1916, and was completed and final payment made on October 14, 1916. Original estimate for the completion of the entire 6.39 mile line was three years. However, it actually took over seven years, due to WWI, and then protracted negotiations for an agreement with PRT for the operation and equipment of the line.

Would the City operate the new line, or would PRT? The latter rightly insisted that any agreement had to take in account the loss of revenue on its adjacent surface streetcar lines. Further complicating the issue was the question of who would run the Bustleton Surface trolley line the City was also constructing.

In March of 1921 the City had a tentative draft of an agreement for PRT to temporarily operate the two lines, thinking it acceptable to PRT. A longer term operation was pending a valuation of the PRT property in its efforts to secure a reasonable and permanent rate of fare. In April 1922, Mayor J. Hampton Moore sent a revised agreement to Councils and PRT's Thomas E. Mitten. The major sticking points had been the rental charge PRT had to pay, and better delineation of what equipment the City and PRT would provide. Further negotiations followed, with on May 12, 1922, a final agreement by all parties for a five year renewable lease.

City Meets PRT, Front and Arch Streets



City of Philadelphia photos, Boscia collection

On August 15, 1922, a four-car train made an Inspection trip from Bridge St. to Torresdale Ave. In October, special invitations and passes were sent to select citizens for the Inaugural Day rides. On Saturday, November 4, 1922, the Inaugural trains were run, and the next day, after nine years of planning, construction, and haggling, the Frankford El finally opened to the public, along with the Bustleton streetcar line. The City produced a 51 page souvenir booklet "**Giving a Brief Account of the Construction, Equipment, and Operation Agreement**" in both hard and soft covers.



The first Frankford car at the Brill plant, 9-23-1921.

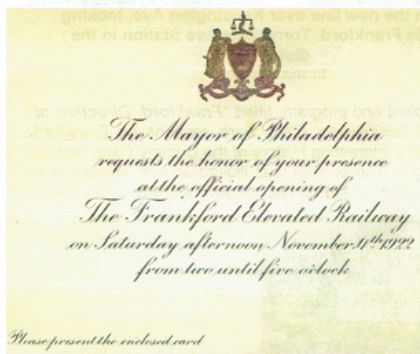
City of Philadelphia photo, Boscia collection

Opening the line occasioned a week-long celebration in Frankford, from Nov. 3-11. A special Committee, with Thomas Creighton as President, was established to organize the events. It had 13 sub-committees ranging from Finance to Historical to Publicity. While the EI opening was a cornerstone, the week was really a celebration of Frankford. It had been a separate borough until its incorporation into the City of Philadelphia stemming from the Consolidation Act of 1854.

The activities began on Friday evening the 3rd in the Frankford Library with a lecture on the History of Frankford by Mr. George H. Pattison. There was a Historic Pageant on the (Frankford) Avenue Saturday afternoon. Groups of costumed figures represented different eras in the story of Old Frankford Road. Mayor J. Hampton Moore and other dignitaries opened the ceremonies and viewed the parade.



Boscia collection



Frankford EI Opening Invitation
Boscia collection



Frankford EI Opening Ride Pass
Boscia collection

At 3:30, at Bridge and Bustleton, the ceremony transferring the Elevated Road from the City, represented by Mayor Moore, to the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company, lessee and operator, represented by Thomas E. Mitten, took place. The Mayor then pressed a button to turn on power to start the running of the trains. Lucky pass holders were given an EI Car pin souvenir, and crowded aboard for the trip to downtown. The evening ended with a costume dance.

The rest of the week was taken up with more parades, including a three hundred entry Baby Parade, lectures, street dancing, dedications, patriotic and religious events, and the crowning of the Most Popular Lady in Frankford. There was a week-long exhibit of automobiles. The Frankford Camera Club staged an exhibition of photographs in the Free Library.



Boscia collection



Train on the new line over Kensington Ave, looking towards Frankford. Torresdale Ave Station in the distance.

Boscia collection

The committee published a 104 page Souvenir Booklet and program, titled "*Frankford, Direction of a Greater Philadelphia.*" Besides ads from local businesses, there were sections on Frankford Transit and Transportation over the years, and a really interesting History of the Dummy Cars, replete with reminiscences from men involved in operating it. The booklet was illustrated with images of a dummy car, horsecar, streetcar, and the new EI car, all of which served the good citizens of this town.



Frankford Steam Dummy & Trailer.

Boscia Collection

The week was a fitting kickoff to the EI service that 100 years later, and with third generation trains and rebuilt structure and stations, still provides such an essential service.

Some interesting facts.

12 Stations. Track gauge - 5 ft. 2³/₄ in. Capacity at Bridge St. yard and shops - 119 cars
Number of cars: 100, numbered 501 - 600, built by the J. G. Brill Co., Philadelphia. Cost of cars Approx. \$3 million.
Weight of rail - 90 lbs. per yd. Total weight of running rail used - 2,044 tons.
Maximum grade - 4.6 per cent at Arch St., 3 per cent over steam railroads at Lehigh Ave. and at Tioga St.
Minimum radius of curves in running track - 200 ft. at York St.
Substations at Fairmount Ave., Cumberland St., and Arrott St., 4,000 kilowatts each.
Number of contracts executed - 100. Number of contractors - 60 Tons of steel in the elevated structure - 35,000.
Total estimated cost of line and equipment - \$15,500,000. Total City expenditures to Oct. 15, 1922 - \$13,400,000.
10-12-2022

[Trolleyville](#) | [Trolleyville Times](#) | [School](#) | [Library](#) | [Clubhouse](#)

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