



April 2006

Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension: Excavation Q & A

1. When were the Chinese grave markers (bricks) found on the Crematorium driveway?

A During the archaeological excavation in the area acquired from the County along the north side of 1st Street, Chinese grave markers (bricks) were first identified by the Project Archaeologist in July 2005 while sifting through the sediments excavated on June 23 and June 24. Additional grave markers were identified outside of the construction zone along the County Crematorium driveway and brought to the attention of the Chinese Historical Society. The Ad-Hoc Subcommittee was notified of these discoveries during the March 23, 2006 meeting.

2. How many bricks were found?

A There were a total of 9 Chinese grave markers and 14 burial bricks that were identified as part of the archaeological excavation. Around 30 additional Chinese grave markers were separately identified along the County Crematorium driveway outside of the construction zone. The Department of Health Services has been directed by the County Board of Supervisors to 1) investigate why and when the grave markers were removed from their original locations and 2) to remove the grave markers lining the Crematorium driveway after the markers have been properly cataloged and documented prior to removal as overseen by a professional

archaeologist and 3) work with Metro's RAC Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee and the appropriate Chinese historical and cultural organizations to ensure that the markers are relocated to a more dignified and appropriate location.

3. The Crematorium and Metro should return all the bricks to Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) so they can preserve them. What happened with ALL the headstones? There should be over goo.

A The artifacts, which include Chinese grave markers discovered as part of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension construction will be handled as per the wishes of the community. These grave markers have been photographed and catalogued by Cogstone. The Ad-Hoc Subcommittee will make a recommendation to the project through the Review Advisory Committee about how they would like these handled. The County, on the other hand, has requested that the Department of Health Services investigate those grave markers encountered at the Crematorium and work with the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee and appropriate Chinese historical and cultural organizations to ensure that those markers are placed in an appropriate location.

4. Metro maintains that it just learned about the Chinese remains a few weeks ago. In the LA Weekly article you stated that you found information on the Cemetery in the LA City archives in one-half hour. On January 25, 2005, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern CA got a letter indicating that at no time was there evidence that Metro would find bones during the construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension. Things don't add up. How did Metro not know there was a cemetery?



Metro

A During the planning of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, Metro met with, did research about and made site visits to the Crematorium; all of which provided no information that would lead Metro to be concerned about the prior use of the site. The research completed by Metro's environmental consultants indicated that there was no evidence that graves were present in the vicinity of the proposed work at the site.

5. The September 30 article in the LA Weekly already mentioned a report of Chinese artifacts. What happened between September 30 and January 10 (when the CHSSC got a letter)? Why wasn't the (CHSSC) contacted September 30?

A All construction work was halted on June 24, 2005 when Metro's Contractor first discovered what looked like human skeletal remains. From June 24 to August 29 an archaeological treatment plan was developed and provided for public review and comment at the Review Advisory Committee meeting. During this 60-day period there was no construction work permitted. However, as part of the standard archaeological process, from July 11 to August 5, the excavated soils were hand sorted by the archaeologists who began the lengthy process of measuring, identifying and cataloguing the items discovered at the site. Metro reported the results of bone recovery for the stockpiled soil to the public at the August meeting of the Review Advisory Committee. From August 22-25, ground penetrating radar and high-resolution metal detection were performed to assist with locating potential graves. The archaeologically controlled excavations of the discovered remains began August 30 and ended November 6. From November 7 until March 16, archaeological preparation, cataloguing and identification were performed on the recovered bones and artifacts. The presentation of preliminary results was made to the public at the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee's March 23rd meeting.

6. Excavation took place between June and November. During that time you already knew of Chinese artifacts. How come you did not inform the Chinese Historical Society at that time so they could have helped you?

A While the archaeologically-controlled excavation took place from August until November, the analysis didn't happen until after the excavation was completed. The archaeologist reported finding Chinese artifacts in September. However, the artifacts were covered in clay and were not cleaned

or counted until all excavation was completed. During the excavation the relative abundance of Chinese artifacts was not known. Upon the identification of these Asian-related remains, the archaeologist was directed to work with the Chinese Historical Society of Southern CA. Metro has since been working collaboratively with the Chinese community as well as the other interested communities that exist along the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension alignment.

7. What can you say about Native American remains at the Crematorium?

A The project archaeologist found no information of known Native American burials on the Eastside in the areas adjacent to the County Crematorium. During their research, the archaeologists learned of one female who was half Native American and half Caucasian. The burial registers indicate that she was buried there for a short time then disinterred and moved to a Catholic cemetery.

8. The environmental planning process undertaken years ago should have anticipated today's findings.

A The research completed by Metro's environmental consultants indicated that there was no evidence that graves were present at the site.

9. Metro needs to develop technical policy for staff and contractors to carry out. Policy should address:

- > **Disrupted ghost spirits**
- > **Taking care of body bones found**
- > **Taking care of associated grave artifacts found**
- > **How to understand these through the associated historical records**

A Metro has developed and is adhering to technical policies created to deal with situations in which there are ancient bones and/or artifacts that are recovered. A Cultural Resource Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (CRMMP) to cover technical policies and such issues was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office in December 2004 as required in the FEIS/EIR. All procedures included in that Plan have been adhered to. Following the discovery of remains at the site, from June 24 to August 29 an archaeological treatment plan consistent with the protocols of the CRMMP was developed and provided for public review at the Review Advisory Committee meeting. The treatment plan follows the *Standards for Data Collection*

from *Human Skeletal Remains*. This is the current professional standard in archaeology for dealing with human remains.

10. What type of medical waste was found?

A In addition to partial and whole skeletal remains, amputations were also found on the site. There were also medical jars that may have contained organ tissue.

11. How do you determine nationality from bones?

A Nationality can be determined only if a cranium is found and even then it depends on whether or not specific portions of the skull are preserved. This is a standard forensic anthropological technique, which can be referenced in textbooks.

12. What was the value of the Cogstone contract ?

A Cogstone Resources Management Inc. is not a direct recipient of a Metro contract. They are a sub-contractor to UltraSystems who has the contract with Metro for mitigation measures along the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension. To date \$418,000 has been expended on Mitigation Measures mostly for Cogstone Resource Management on the Crematorium work.

13. Why was Harvard University contacted rather than the CHSSC regarding Chinese artifacts?

A Cogstone requested translation of the grave markers from multiple sources, including the Chinese Historical Society, to ensure accuracy. The Harvard consultant assisted in identifying the names and villages and even provided an 1893 map of Southern China with several of the villages marked.

14. Why do you classify bottles as trash?

A The archaeologist stated that the bottles found, along with a jar of cold cream and stove part, were probably trash from the 1970s and 1990s. It was not stated that ALL bottles were catalogued as trash.

15. Who makes up the archaeological team? Are they professionals, students or grad students? If they are students, are any of them using this case for personal projects such as a thesis or independent documentary? Will any of them have any personal financial gain out of this?

A The archaeological team is made up of professionals who have met or exceeded the State's Office of Historic Preservation's requirements of a bachelor's degree in anthropology or archaeology. Most team members have experience excavating burials. None of the team members have planned or will plan to film a documentary on these discoveries. All of the team members are compensated commensurate with their education and experience as is appropriate for their skilled labor. Some consultants volunteered their services, while others were paid.

16. What are you going to do with the artifacts? Where does Metro go from here?

A Soon after making the discoveries, Metro made a commitment to work with the community to devise a re-interment plan, a ceremony and memorial for all the findings. As a result, the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee was formed and will, through their work, make a recommendation to the project team through the Review Advisory Committee. Their recommendation will address the final treatment of the human remains as well as the associated artifacts recovered from the site.

17. Was CA Section 801 from the Health and Safety Code violated by Metro?

- > A notice of declaration had to be published.
- > Metro had to contact families of the exhumed.
- > Metro had to publish in newspapers for 4 consecutive weeks the names of the bodies that were going to be disinterred.

A Metro did not violate any regulations related to the findings. Upon discovering the skeletal remains and artifacts, Metro quickly reported the findings to the Department of Health Services (DHS). DHS then contacted the County Coroner's Office. Metro followed up and met with the County Health Department staff which have been involved in each step of the process. Metro will continue to work with the County Health Department to determine the appropriate method of re-interring the discovered remains with the level of respect they deserve.

18. How were the remains processed?

A The human remains have been processed in accordance with the archaeological treatment plan. All procedures followed the *Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains*, which is the current professional standard in archaeology.

Each bone and artifact recovered was brushed, identified and recorded. If the bones found were in good enough condition, the identification could have included age, gender, pathology and nationality.

19. Where are the remains being kept?

- A** The findings were individually wrapped in tissue paper and placed in cardboard boxes for transport to the archaeologists' lab where further research and cataloging was done.

20. What is meant by laboratory?

- A** The laboratory is in Cogstone's office and contains all the necessary equipment to complete the various tasks described above.

21. Is there a plan for a memorial?

- A** Once Metro and the Department of Health Services has determined how the remains may be re-interred, determinations for the re-interment, ceremony and memorial will be made by the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee. They will have submitted their recommendations to Metro through the Review Advisory Committee.

22. What will Metro do about:

- > Given that there is a shortage of land in LA, do you have a plan as to where this memorial will be built and how it will be funded?
 - > What is Metro going to do to make things right?
 - > What is Metro going to do to make everybody whole?
 - > What will happen to the bones and historic relics?
 - > How will the families be given respect?
 - > Is there any money that will be re-funded to the families who had to pay \$10 to bury their loved ones?
 - > Will it be refunded at today's value?
 - > Who will subsidize the cost of the monument?
 - > What are we going to do to pay honor, duty and respect to all who were dug up?
 - > How will we pay honor, duty and respect to one of our members' whose grandfather was dug up?
- A** Metro will consider all the recommendations submitted by the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee and will work with them through the entire process of re-interment.

23. What evidence did you search for to determine if there were Native American villages in East LA?

- A** Archaeological record searches (the State Historic Preservation Office supports regional centers where archaeological information is submitted) were done for the EIR and found no recorded prehistoric villages or artifacts in East LA. In addition, historical records at European contact (Mission period) indicate no villages between Yaanga (Los Angeles) and Ochuunga (South Pasadena) – see *The First Angelinos* by W. McCawley.

24. Where is the respect for the dead, their families and our community? What is Metro going to do to right the wrongs they've committed?

- A** Metro anticipates that the Ad-Hoc Subcommittee recommendations to the full Review Advisory Committee will take into consideration the interests of the various impacted communities. Those recommendations will be reviewed by Metro. Once the final recommendations have been approved by Metro and the County, they can be implemented and the process respectfully brought to closure.

25. Since the deceased's families purchased properties, how can the County re-sell those plots to Metro?

- A** At the March 23rd Metro Board meeting, Supervisor Mike Antonovich introduced a motion in which he calls for an investigation.