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City begins work on Metro Line One

by Le Hung Vong

HCM CITY — Minister of Transport Dinh La Thang and HCM City authorities broke ground for construction of the country's first metro line yesterday.

Costing US\$2.2 billion, Metro Line 1 will become operational in 2017, according to Nguyen Do Luong, head of the Urban Railway Management Authority, and be able to transport 186,000 passengers per day when construction is completed in 2017 and 620,000 passengers per day by 2020.

Set to become the backbone of the city's Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) system, the near 20-km-long Metro Line No 1 will pass through HCM City's districts 1, 2, 9, Binh Thanh and Thu Duc, as well as Di An Town in Binh Duong Province, and consist of a 2.6-km underground section connecting Ben Thanh Market and Ba Son Shipyard, with three underground stations.



Metro Line 1, Viet Nam's first metro line worth US\$2.2 billion, will pass through several districts in HCM City. The nearly 20km line will become the backbone of the city's Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) system. — VNA/VNS Photo Hoang Hai

The first 17.1-km stretch is an 11-station overhead section that will run from Ben Thanh Market in District 1 to Suoi Tien in District 9 via Ba Son Shipyard in District 1, and Van Thanh Park and Tan Cang in Binh Thanh District.

Under a contract signed with the HCM City's Urban Railway Management Authority, a consortium of Japan's Sumitomo Corporation and Viet Nam's Civil Engineering Construction Corp No 6 (Cienco 6) will design, survey, execute, supply equipment, test, operate, offer utility services, and maintain stations of the 17.1-km overhead section of HCM City's Metro Line 1.

The construction of this section is the first of the project's three packages, costing US\$560 million.

The other packages are for construction of an underground section between Ben Thanh Market and Ba Son Shipyard and for mechanical-electrical devices and maintenance.

Speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony, Le Hoang Quan, chairman of HCM City's People's Committee, said the ceremony marked an important milestone in the modernisation of HCM City's transport infrastructure.

"The construction of Metro Line No 1 will create a very important foundation for realising the next metro lines, and modernising and improving the city's urban transport system in general and mass rapid transport in particular," said Quan.

Huynh Van Hong, a 66-year-old resident of Thao Dien Ward in District 2, who had 1,020 sq. metres of land revoked for the project, said that, although he was unhappy to be among the families affected by the project, he received compensation for the revoked land in November last year, paving the way for construction of the project.

"Now that my family is living normally in a new home, I hope the project will progress smoothly and operate on schedule, to benefit people from all walks of society. It will be a significant return to my contribution to the project," said Hong.

Other lines

HCM City has also accelerated work on the rest of the city's metro projects, aiming to bring the entire network into operation by 2025.

Line 2 will run from Thu Thiem Peninsula in District 2 to the Tay Ninh Bus Station in District 12, passing through Pham Hong Thai, Cach Mang Thang Tam and Truong Chinh streets. At least 9.6km of the section's total length of 11.3km will be underground.

Construction of Metro Line 2 will be divided into two phases. The first phase will cover the section from Ben Thanh Market to Tham Luong, and the city authority aims to complete construction of this section by 2018.

The HCM City authority has also approved basic designs for Line 3A from Ben Thanh Market to Tan Kien and Line 3B from the Cong Hoa Crossroads in Tan Binh District to Hiep Binh Phuoc in Thu Duc District.

Line 4 will run from Lang Cha Ca Crossroads in Tan Binh District to Van Thanh Park in Binh Thanh District. Line 5, stretching some 17km, will run from Sai Gon Bridge in District 2 to Can Giuoc in District 8. The six-km-long Line 6 will run from Ba Queo in Tan Binh District to Phu Lam in District 6.

— VNS



The chairman of HCM City People's Committee, Le Hoang Quan (C), poses before a model of the city's Metro Line No.1. Groundbreaking on the subway project began this week. VNS Photo/Hoang Hai.



A route map for Metro Line No. 1.