



NEWS

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METRO RED LINE TUNNELING CREW BREAKS THROUGH BENEATH WILSHIRE BOULEVARD AT VERMONT AVENUE

After digging around the clock for the past year, a giant tunneling machine broke through into the Wilshire/Vermont underground subway station today, marking the completion of tunnel excavation of the Vermont Avenue alignment of the Metro Red Line extension now under construction.

"This milestone eliminates the last underground barrier between Wilshire and Hollywood Boulevards," said Richard Alatorre, MTA Chairman and Los Angeles City Councilman. "It is a major achievement for our construction crews. We are laying the foundation for a system that will seriously attack congestion and air pollution aboveground."

The construction now under way will link with the 4.4 miles of subway currently in operation between Union Station in downtown Los Angeles and MacArthur Park. The initial operating portion of the subway records an estimated 18,000 boardings per weekday, with many passengers transferring to and from the Metro Blue Line to Long Beach and the five Metrolink lines.

An estimated 70 percent of the tunneling work is completed on the alignments that will extend the Red Line west beneath Wilshire Boulevard to Western Avenue, north beneath Vermont Avenue to Hollywood Boulevard, and west again to Hollywood and Vine. Ultimately, the Red Line will extend 11.6 miles to North Hollywood.

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RED LINE TUNNELING

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"Our engineers used a unique design feature at the Wilshire/Vermont station," said Franklin White, MTA's Chief Executive Officer. "The tunnels that run parallel beneath Vermont Avenue transition to a stacked arrangement, and enter the station at two levels, rather than the typical side-by-side arrangement. This will allow trains to branch out in two directions from this major interchange station to both the West Side and north to Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley".

The lower, inbound tunnel broke through into the Wilshire/Vermont station in May. The segment completed today is the upper, outbound tunnel.

"Tunnel excavation is one of the most complex and difficult aspects of this project," said Edward McSpedon, MTA Executive Officer, Construction, and president of the Rail Construction Corporation. "Even so, our contractor, Shea/Kiewit/Kenney has safely progressed an average of one hundred feet per work day, and in 2.7 miles of digging, excavated some 400,000 cubic yards of dirt."

Tunneling began last June at Barnsdall Park, moving south along Vermont Avenue, and west along Hollywood Boulevard. The Hollywood Boulevard tunnel will reach the site of the Hollywood/Highland station in October 1994. The tunnel from MacArthur Park to Wilshire/Western already is completed.

Construction of the North Hollywood branch of the Red Line began last January. Construction of stations, tunnel lining, and track and power installation will continue, with service to Wilshire/Western scheduled to begin July 1996. Service to Hollywood/Vine is to start in September 1998.

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