



NEWS

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FTA GIVES TUNNELING GO-AHEAD ON HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD, RELEASES FUNDING FOR FUTURE MASS TRANSIT PROJECTS

The Federal Transit Administration today gave the MTA the go-ahead to resume tunneling on Hollywood Boulevard and lifted its restrictions on approximately \$1.3 billion in funding for future Metro Rail projects.

In a letter announcing his decision, FTA Administrator Gordon J. Linton said the MTA's recent actions have demonstrated its "commitment to take control of the Red Line project and properly exercise stewardship of Federal funds."

"This excellent news illustrates the cooperation between the MTA and the FTA in solving problems that have prevented us from making progress on the Red Line project," said Ed Edelman, MTA Chairman and County Supervisor. "We can now continue forward with assurances that future projects will be funded."

Linton's letter cited the reorganization of the MTA's rail construction division, including the disbanding of the Rail Construction Corporation, and the technical plan for resuming tunneling as key to the FTA's action. The reorganization, Linton wrote, "is a significant change which places a heightened emphasis on quality and safety...(and clarifies)...accountability and responsibility for implementation of the Red Line project."

"We now have a rail construction organization that places the responsibility for construction quality and safety squarely on the MTA and not on a consulting firm," White said. "This has been a painful lesson for us all, but the outcome will ensure the citizens of Los Angeles County of a better, more efficient rail transit system."

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Linton also said he has directed the FTA's oversight consultant, Hill International, to increase the level of site visits to the Metro Rail project, conduct weekly status reviews with the MTA executive office, and issue a weekly progress report to the FTA.

Lifting the restriction on federal funding of future rail projects will positively impact projects in the San Fernando Valley, East Los Angeles and the Mid-City area.

White said the MTA expects to resume tunneling in mid-December in the Number 2 (south) tunnel beneath Hollywood Boulevard. Tunneling in the north tunnel should begin in early January following completion of remedial work on the 280 feet of distressed tunnel section under the Hollywood Boulevard/Hudson Avenue intersection.

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