



NEWS

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ENDING 4-MONTH HIATUS, TUNNELING TO RESUME BENEATH HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD EARLY SATURDAY

Excavation of the Metro Rail north tunnel is scheduled to resume beneath Hollywood Boulevard early Saturday morning, the MTA announced today. Continuation of the work will end a four-month hiatus that began last August following greater-than-expected settlement of soils near Hudson Avenue.

"With the approval from the Federal Transit Administration, we will proceed with extreme vigilance to avoid the problems of the past," said Supervisor Mike Antonovich, MTA Board chairman.

Since excavation was halted, Aug. 18, the MTA's construction contractor, Shea-Kiewit-Kenny, has completed mitigation efforts to strengthen a 280-foot section of the north tunnel at Hudson Avenue. Steel columns were erected as temporary supports, steel struts were inserted in gaps between the precast concrete segments, circular steel beams were installed and the final tunnel liner has been poured.

Plans approved by the FTA and city engineers also call for steel struts to be substituted for wooden wedges in stretches of the tunnel already excavated beneath Hollywood Boulevard and in all newly excavated areas. The contractor also has made provisions for grouting inside the tunnel during excavation and from the surface above and ahead of the tunnel digging machines.

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TUNNELING TO RESUME

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Precautions have been taken in anticipation of tunneling near Mann's Chinese Theater and the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. Chemical grouting has been injected into a 450-foot section of Hollywood Boulevard between Orchid Avenue and Orange Drive North to minimize settlement. Frequent MTA surveys have shown no ground settlement near either the Chinese Theater or the Roosevelt Hotel.

Chemical grouting also has been injected at the intersections of Cherokee and Las Palmas avenues and will be used elsewhere along the route, as necessary. Contact grouting will be used for the entire tunnel liner between the surrounding soil and the initial precast concrete liner segments.

"I am confident that these measures will minimize subsidence along Hollywood Boulevard," said John J. Adams, MTA interim executive officer, construction. "But, if we experience ground settlement of 3/4th inch in front of the tunneling machine or 1 1/2 inches behind the machine, we'll call an immediate halt to tunneling."

Adams noted that the north tunneling machines had passed the area of sandy soils when tunneling was halted and had entered more stable ground. This will further minimize surface settlement, he said. The south tunneling machine currently is stopped about 50 feet west of Whitley Avenue. The north tunneling machine is located 100 feet east of Orchid Avenue.

"Getting the tunneling started again gives us hope of meeting our schedules and opening Segment 2 in 1998," said Franklin E. White, MTA chief executive officer. "At the same time, we must act prudently to protect Hollywood's landmarks and to avoid as much as possible future disruptions of life and business in the community."

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