



NEWS

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RED LINE WHEEL LIFE EXPECTANCY RISES TO 200,000 MILES AS A RESULT OF MODIFICATIONS, MAINTENANCE MEASURES

Wheel life on Metro Red Line trains is expected to exceed 200,000 miles as a result of a series of equipment modifications and maintenance measures initiated by the MTA during the past six months.

In a report to the Rail Construction Corporation Board, MTA staff said, "Current wear rate projections continue to improve well beyond the original range predicted....It appears that we are well on our way to resolving this issue."

Wheel wear problems on the subway first surfaced in mid-1993. At that time, the steel wheels required repairs between 3,000 and 6,000 miles and were being replaced at about 18,000 miles. Special consultants retained by the MTA attributed the excessive wheel wear, in part, to the high proportion of curved track on Segment 1 of the Red Line (approximately 50 percent).

As a precaution, train speed was reduced at Union Station and Westlake Station, as well as on two tight curves. Wheels were constantly monitored for wear. In recent months, as a result of these and other measures, life expectancy has grown steadily as operating and maintenance changes took effect.

Five specific remedies were recommended by MTA consultants. An MTA task force has implemented three of the five to improve wheel life:

- ◆ The most effective measure to extend wheel life has been the application of lubricants to the subway rails, both manually and by lubricators mounted on each car. Six new stationary wayside lubricators also will be installed on Segment 1 tracks. Similar systems will be used on Segment 2 and 3 tracks.

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- ◆ Harder steel wheels have been installed on 26 of the 30 Red Line cars. All cars eventually will have these "Class B" wheels.
- ◆ Wheels on 28 cars have been reconfigured to a "worn wheel" profile that retards wear.

Still to be implemented are two recommendations for changes to the subway cars' suspension and support systems. Modifications currently are being tested. All wheel-improvement modifications made to the Red Line cars will be included at no additional cost to the MTA on the 42 cars recently ordered from Breda, the manufacturer.

"Staff will continue to monitor the situation closely and to evaluate the impacts on wheel and rail life," wrote Edward McSpedon, MTA executive officer, construction; Arthur T. Leahy, executive officer, operations; and Dave Mazzo, RCC director of engineering.

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