



NEWS

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MTA BEGINS BORING TUNNEL FROM UNIVERSAL CITY TO HOLLYWOOD

An MTA contractor yesterday activated the first of two tunnel boring machines at its Universal City worksite and began mining through the Hollywood Hills south to Hollywood.

The twin tunnels, when completed, will pass 12,630 feet through eight distinct geologic formations, ranging in depth from 165 to 900 feet before meeting the Metro Red Line tunnels at La Brea Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard. The \$125.6 million project will link North Hollywood with two subway stations and two miles of tunnel, and the rest of the Red Line system.

"The people and business community of the Valley have been eagerly anticipating the arrival of rail transportation," said Larry Zarian, MTA chairman. "Today is an important milestone that brings us much closer to realizing that goal."

The tunnel project, which is being built by the construction firm Traylor Brothers/Frontier Kemper J.V., has a number of precautionary measures in place to protect the environment and private property along the alignment.

"We're sensitive to community concerns, and have been very cautious in our construction approach," said Joe Drew, MTA chief executive officer. "We've limited our use of construction explosives, enhanced our grouting program to reduce the amount of water entering the tunnels, and adopted a special insurance program to allow speedy resolution of any damage claims."

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Unlike previous segments of Red Line tunnel which were built through loose sedimentary ground, the tunnels from Universal City to Hollywood pass through solid rock, including formations of very hard granite.

Over 90 per cent of the tunnels will be built with two Full Face Hard Rock Tunnel Boring Machines. The machines use a rotating cutting head rather than the digger arm used in previous tunneling projects.

The tunnel boring machines, christened "Thelma and Louise" by Traylor Brothers workers, have been modified to allow them to grout the tunnel as it is built, reducing the amount of water intrusion and lowering the levels of water that will be discharged during construction. The MTA has committed to monitor the effects of tunneling on vegetation and wildlife all along the tunnel route.

Work at the Universal City site began last July when the contractor began excavating an access shaft for the tunnel boring machines. Workers are assembling the second tunnel boring machine at the bottom of the shaft, which is 85 feet deep, 63 feet wide, and 371 feet long.

The second machine will begin tunneling in the next two months. Tunneling is expected to be completed early in 1997.

Traylor Brothers was awarded the contract for the Universal City to Hollywood tunnels in December 1994. The company has completed over 40 miles of tunnel worldwide, and their experience includes subway/railway tunnels in San Francisco, Buffalo, Baltimore, Washington, DC, and Singapore.

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