

# Fed OK gets subway moving

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This rendering gives a cutaway view of how the Wilshire/Fairfax subway station by LACMA could look. Illustration/Metro

The Federal Transit Administration has granted a crucial approval to the Westside Subway, ushering in a new era for the project as Metro prepares to seek federal funding and begins advance work on construction.

The FTA's "record of decision" means that environmental studies for the subway project have met all federal requirements. While most of the money to build the subway will come from Measure R, the voter-approved ½-cent sales tax, constructing the project also will require federal matching funds. The FTA's environmental approval clears the way for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority to pursue funding under the federal New Starts program.

It also sets the stage for work to begin on a number of other fronts.

In addition to relocating utilities and acquiring property needed to build the project, contractors for Metro soon will begin building an "exploratory shaft" near the [La Brea Tar Pits](#) to help the agency evaluate the area's "unique ground conditions."

The shaft, to be built on a [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#) parking lot at the southwest corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Ogden Drive, will allow engineers to expand on the data gathered in the environmental review process as they investigate earth pressure and gassy ground conditions in the area. The 40x20x75 foot shaft also is expected to be used to demonstrate safe construction procedures and to help refine construction cost estimates for the project.

The shaft will be built over the course of 13 months, starting this fall, and will remain in place for monitoring through the fall of 2014.

Because the area is rich in fossils, a full-time paleontologist will be on-site to make sure discoveries are properly

handled and turned over to the county's [George C. Page Museum](#).

The [Westside Subway Extension](#) will include [seven new stations along its 9-mile route](#), running from the current end point of the Purple Line at Wilshire and Western to the VA Hospital in Westwood.

Construction on the first part of the the line, to Wilshire and La Cienega, is expected to begin in 2014 and conclude by 2020, with the entire project finishing up by 2036 under the current timetable. However, Metro is hoping to accelerate construction of the \$5.6 billion project under the [America Fast Forward](#) initiative and a [proposed extension of Measure R](#), and to finish the entire route by 2022.

When complete, the subway will make it possible to travel from downtown Los Angeles to the Westwood/UCLA station in 25 minutes.



A paleontologist will be on duty at Metro's "exploratory shaft" near the La Brea Tar Pits in case of fossil finds.

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