M NEWS
METRO

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MTA SUSPENDS TUNNELING FOR HOLLYWOOD SUBWAY; ASKS TUNNEL REVIEW BOARD TO EVALUATE CONSTRUCTION

The MTA has suspended tunneling for Metro Red Line Segment 2 and has asked its existing Tunnel Review Board to evaluate construction techniques and safety procedures. This Board was established and has been used for review throughout the tunneling phase of the Project.

"We ordered a halt to tunneling because the contractor was experiencing greater-than-anticipated ground settlement at the Hollywood Boulevard/Hudson Street intersection," said Franklin E. White, MTA chief executive officer.

White said he has directed the MTA's Rail Construction Corporation (RCC) to work with the Review Board to develop and implement a plan to assure public safety and the protection of property.

"Tunneling will not resume until the Review Board is confident that work can proceed safely," White said.

"We remain diligent in our continued efforts to minimize subsidence along the path of the subway and maximize the safety of our work on this important transit project," said Edward McSpedon, construction executive officer and RCC president.

The situation has stabilized and monitoring for settlement continues around the clock. Tunneling in the impacted area has been completed and the tunnel machines are west of the Hollywood/Hudson intersection. The number one machine (north tunnel) is stopped 200 feet west of Highland and the number two machine (south tunnel) is at Whitley Place.

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Repair work continues to an impacted portion of the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The sidewalk adjacent to the curb, where the stars are located, has tilted up to two inches in some places. The work included removal and storage of the stars, stabilization of the sidewalk, and restoration. Work is being monitored by the Historic Resources Group, MTA's historic preservation consultant for the Hollywood area. The sidewalk area next to the buildings remains open to pedestrian traffic.

Cracks have been identified in the walls and floors of some buildings. A team of structural engineers continues to assess buildings in the impacted area. City inspectors red tagged an historic building at 6531 Hollywood Boulevard. The building had previously been yellow tagged prohibiting occupancy, as a result of the Northridge earthquake. Tunneling operations continue to incorporate a number of precautionary measures and techniques:

- Ground penetrating radar is being used at street level to locate possible voids beneath the surface. Where appropriate, exploratory holes are being drilled to aid in locating voids. If necessary, concrete grouting will be used to fill voids and to stabilize the surface.

- Engineers continue 24-hour monitoring of the area and continue to take surface measurements to document any additional settlement.

- A state-of-the-art optical measurement device is being used in the north tunnel to monitor any movement.

- The contractor has installed additional support columns to the north tunnel concrete liner until the specific cause of the settlement has been determined.

- A team of structural engineers, including City Building and Safety, continue analysis of buildings in the area.

- DWP, the Gas Company, and Pacific Bell maintain twenty-four hour readiness.

- The contractor continues interim repairs to sidewalks where separations or tilting have occurred.

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Should grouting activity be necessary, it may require the use of the parking lane. Any lane closure will be coordinated with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation.

White said the MTA has cooperated closely with Los Angeles District 13 Councilmember Jackie Goldberg to keep the Hollywood business community and residents informed about its construction and safety activities. In addition, MTA's Risk Management staff has established a customer service desk in the Public Affairs field office at 6286 Hollywood Blvd. to assist those who may have insurance claims.

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