



NEWS

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NORTH HOLLYWOOD TUNNELING HALTED DUE TO SURFACE SETTLEMENT

Metro Rail tunneling in North Hollywood was halted early today when a loss of soil at the tunnel face resulted in settlement of approximately five inches in a small area at the intersection of Lankershim Boulevard and Weddington Street.

The tunneling contractor, Obayashi Corporation, took immediate measures to minimize further subsidence. The contractor also alerted the Department of Water and Power, which sent crews to monitor water lines and shut them off if required as a precautionary measure.

John J. Adams, MTA interim executive officer, construction, said tunneling was halted about 2 a.m. when a loss of soil at the face of the tunnel caused a void to develop above the tunneling machine. The void, in turn, apparently caused the street surface to settle. There has been no damage to surrounding properties.

"Currently, Obayashi is taking measures to minimize further subsidence in the street and to ensure public safety," Adams said. "When this process is completed later today, this area of the street can be reopened to traffic."

The contractor is using the outside northbound lane of Lankershim, which has been blocked off to traffic, to drill into the void and inject gravel and compaction grout to stabilize the surrounding ground. Engineers are continually monitoring the street surface for further settlement.

Prior to the start of tunneling, the contractor chemically grouted a 40-foot zone ahead of the tunnel portal to minimize loss of soil. Steel struts are being used to support tunnel liner segments.

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Measures also have included exposing critical water lines in the area to observe any leaks that might develop. Monitoring equipment was installed in the first 1,000 feet to observe ground conditions. Arrangements also were made to have DWP and Gas Company personnel on call.

Adams said the MTA is evaluating Obayashi's mining equipment and techniques. The construction contract for the North Hollywood tunnels requires Obayashi to conduct mining without loss of ground at the tunnel face.

"Obayashi is working with some of the nation's top mining experts to develop safe, effective techniques for tunneling in this type of soil," said Adams. "The contractor has proceeded very cautiously and will continue to do so."

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