



NEWS

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CONTACT: STEVE CHESSER/JIM SMART
MTA PRESS RELATIONS
213-922-2718/922-2700
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TWO MILE WILSHIRE METRO RED LINE EXTENSION OPENS TO THE PUBLIC JULY 13

The MTA's Metro Red Line subway will expand by nearly 50% when the Wilshire Avenue extension on the line opens to the public July 13, 1996.

Sixteen Metro bus lines will link with three new rail stations on Wilshire, providing speedy connections for thousands of commuters.

Red Line riders will be able to transfer to the Metro Blue Line surface rail which operates between downtown Los Angeles and downtown Long Beach. Passengers on the Blue Line also can transfer directly to the Metro Green Line which runs between Norwalk and Redondo Beach and serves Los Angeles International Airport.

The Metro Red Line also provides connections at Union Station for local and regional buses, Metrolink commuter rail lines and Amtrak long distance rail service.

"This extension is an important link to future rail transportation in Southern California," said MTA Chairman Larry Zarian. "The MTA continues to make investments for our future so all citizens can use the bus and rail system to help alleviate gridlock on our streets and highways."

Trains will operate every 5 minutes from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and again during evening weekday rush hours, from 3:15 p.m. to 6:25 p.m. Between morning and evening peak hours, trains will operate every 8 minutes. During evenings, trains will run every 20 minutes from 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. They will not operate between 11:45 p.m. and 4:45 a.m.

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"The opening of the extension caps five years of construction and brings to 44 the number of passenger rail stations operated by the MTA," said Joe Drew, the MTA's CEO. "As part of the opening of this extension to the Red Line, three new stations will come on line on Wilshire -- at Vermont, Normandie and Western avenues."

"Metro Red Line ridership is expected to increase from the present 22,000 daily boarding passengers to 40,000 within one year," Drew added. "It won't take long for the commuters to realize just how quickly they can move from bus to rail and back again, and how much faster they will be able to reach their destination because of the Red Line Wilshire extension."

The Red Line will be open free to the public July 13 and 14 between 5 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.

The cash fare for a ride on the Red Line becomes \$1.35 on Monday, July 15. Ninety cent discount tokens, sold in bags of 10, are available, reducing the cost of the fare by 45 cents. Discounted monthly passes, good for both bus and train service, also are sold at more than 700 outlets.

The travel time from Wilshire/Western, the new temporary western terminus of the line, to Union Station is expected to be 12 minutes. Trains can travel up to 55 MPH, however, the average speed is expected to be 35 m.p.h. due to station stops.

The Red Line train cars are 75 feet long and can carry up to 180 passengers per car. Two rail cars will form the non-peak hour trains, with four-car trains to operate during weekend rush hours. The cars and stations are designed to accommodate elderly and disabled passengers.

In all, 500,000 cubic yards of earth were removed to make way for the tunnels and stations of the Wilshire Red Line extension. An estimated 400,000 tons of concrete form the tunnel walls and stations. The subway tunnels average 60 feet below the surface traffic on Wilshire Boulevard.

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The safety of the Red Line design and construction was demonstrated during the 1994 Northridge earthquake when inspection of the 4.4 miles then in service showed no damage. The Metro Red Line is designed to move with the earth in the event of a quake and to continue operating during small and moderate tremors.

The Wilshire rail project includes \$3.4 million for improvements to sidewalks, tree plantings and amenities such as bus benches and information kiosks. Known as streetscape, the intent of the effort is to revitalize the area and make it more attractive and accessible to pedestrians.

"I'm very excited about the new Wilshire extension, especially the three new stations, as they are all in the Second Supervisorial District," said Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, L.A. County 2nd District Supervisor and an MTA director. "I expect the new extension will make life much easier for people who use public transit to get to work in the downtown area, especially for those who ride buses along the heavily-traveled Vermont corridor.

"I also think surface traffic along Wilshire will be eased, because there will be fewer automobiles in use by business commuters," she added. "It's also possible that traffic to and from downtown Los Angeles on the Santa Monica Freeway may become lighter."

The opening of the Wilshire/Western extension of the Red Line marks the second phase of a subway construction project which will eventually involve 22 miles of subway connecting downtown Los Angeles, North Hollywood, East Los Angeles and the Pico-Union district.

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"This is a wonderful historical moment for transportation in Los Angeles," said L.A. City Councilman Nate Holden. "With the opening of the second segment of the Metro Red Line Subway, passengers will travel via subway through the Wilshire corridor to Union Station. I'm pleased to see a success made from this great partnership between the City of Los Angeles and the MTA. Here is something progressive that will take us well into the 21st Century, as a model transportation link we can be proud of accomplishing in 1996.

"My congratulations to all who contributed to another segment of the Metro Red Line subway project," he added.

Currently under construction and slated for completion in December of 1998 is the 4.8 mile Vermont/Hollywood segment from Wilshire/Vermont to Hollywood/Vine in Hollywood. Work also is underway to extend the subway from Hollywood/Vine under the Hollywood Hills to North Hollywood. This leg of the Red Line is expected to open in 2001.

Future expansion of the Red Line is planned from Wilshire/ Western southwest to Pico/San Vicente, and from Union Station to Whittier/Atlantic in East Los Angeles.

Construction of the Metro Red Line is being financed through a combination of federal and state funding, and matching funds from sales tax initiatives approved by voters of Los Angeles County.

Work on the Wilshire/Western extension began in April 1991, almost two years before the initial 4.4 mile section of the Metro Red Line was opened in January, 1993. The two miles of tunnel were finished in January, 1993. The firm of Parsons Dillingham served as the construction manager for the project which was designed by the Engineering Management Consultants. The primary contractor on the tunnel segments and the three stations was the Los Angeles firm Tutor/Saliba Perini.

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The Wilshire/Vermont station cost \$73.5 million, while the Wilshire Western station cost \$60.8 million. The Wilshire/Normandie station contract included the length of tunnel from Normandie to Western Avenue, and cost \$98 million.

Safety and security of passengers has been of primary importance in the design and construction of the Red Line Wilshire extension. All stations, parking lots and rail line properties are patrolled by uniformed police. Closed circuit television monitors the interior of the stations and there are easily identified emergency phones.

All train cars are equipped with an on-board intercom system allowing passengers to communicate with train operators and central control personnel.

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