



NEWS

October 22, 1997

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SUBWAY TUNNEL BORING MACHINE BREAKS THROUGH TO HOLLYWOOD; START OF VALLEY METRO RED LINE SERVICE IN SIGHT

In a defining moment for one of the most ambitious public works projects ever undertaken in the world, the MTA and its Metro Rail contractors today capped a decade of tunneling when a huge tunnel boring machine (TBM) plowed through the last wall of dirt in the first of twin 17.4-mile long subway tunnels that will link downtown and the San Fernando Valley via Hollywood with a spur to Wilshire and Western.

The feat, accomplished when a TBM weighing 700,000 pounds and measuring 22-feet, 8-inches in diameter — with 200 feet of trailing machinery and conveyer belts — burst through at approximately 10 a.m. near the La Brea access shaft just off of Hollywood Boulevard.

The latest Metro Rail milestone, achieved by contractor Traylor Brothers and Frontier Kemper J.V., foreshadows the start of Metro Red Line service planned for Hollywood in December 1998 and service to Universal City and North Hollywood in the year 2000.

"While the MTA's subway program has not been without controversy, one fact remains clear: today's breakthrough is another step toward completing the North Hollywood extension," said Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Chairman Richard J. Riordan. "This milestone serves as a signal to the public and the MTA's funding partners that the agency is committed to meeting the challenges of finishing this and other transportation projects already underway."

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The Metro Rail subway is being built in segments. One 6.5 mile section already is in service and transporting about 40,000 average weekday boarding passengers between Union Station downtown out to Wilshire and Western.

The rest of the Metro Red Line system, which will run underground up Vermont to Hollywood Boulevard and then through the Santa Monica Mountains to Universal City and North Hollywood, is under construction. About two dozen different MTA contractors are working on the project.

Tunneling contractor Traylor Brothers and Frontier Kemper J.V has been working beneath the Santa Monica Mountains between Hollywood and Universal City for the past 2-1/2 years. Completion of the twin 17-foot, 10-inch diameter tunnels ranks as one of the most difficult phases in Metro Red Line subway construction history as miners dug through 12,630 feet and six distinct geologic formations, ranging in depth from 165 to 900 feet. The cost of the tunneling project was approximately \$154 million.

When the second, or left tunnel is completed, more than 312,000 cubic yards of dirt, or 35,700 truck loads will have been removed. Unlike previous segments of the Metro Red Line, built through loose sedimentary ground, these tunnels pass primarily through solid rock under steep mountain terrain.

About 125 men and women worked on the project daily, digging and installing more than 10.2 million pounds of steel. More than 91,000 cubic yards of concrete will be poured when the final tunnel liner is completed. More than 90 percent of the tunnels were built with two full-face, hard-rock tunnel boring machines, the first successful use of a TBM for a large diameter tunnel in Los Angeles County.

In the last 10 years, during construction of the entire Metro Red Line, enough dirt has been excavated to fill up the Pasadena Rose Bowl 3-1/2 times, enough steel to build 90,000 automobiles and enough concrete to build a 5-foot wide sidewalk from Los Angeles to Boston. The \$5.4 billion currently expended

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for all Metro Red Line and light rail Blue and Green line construction has created or maintained 130,000 direct jobs and over 183,000 indirect jobs for a total of more than 313,000 jobs.

MTA's Metro Rail system, comprised of the Metro Red Lines and light rail Metro Green and Blue lines, currently spans 48 miles and serves nearly 110,000 boarding passengers each weekday. In the year 2000 total daily ridership will exceed 170,000.

Today, one in 12 of MTA's boarding passengers rely on rail to take them to their destinations. When the subway begins servicing North Hollywood, trains will carry about one in seven boarding passengers.

MTA-215

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