

Los Angeles bridges receive grades

Los Angeles City News Service, 11-30-10

LOS ANGELES —Los Angeles' bridges received an overall grade of C- minus from the city's Bureau of Engineering, but were nevertheless deemed safe, according a report presented today.

"In general, we are in good shape," Shailesh "Sunny" Patel, with the bureau's Structural Engineering Division, told the Board of Public Works.

"None of our bridges in our system is unsafe, I would say," he said.

"However, some bridges were built in the '20s and '30s. They were not built for a major earthquake. But even in a major earthquake, they may not collapse.

They may have localized damage, like the railing may be knocked off, but the bridge may not collapse."

Patel said bridges were rated based on federal guidelines on structural integrity, load rating capacity, serviceability, ability to provide an evacuation route during an emergency, and a multitude of other factors.

"Overall, at this current stage, our bridge system is at C-minus, which is not really bad considering half of our bridges are above designed life expectancy" of about 50 years, he said.

Patel noted that more than half of the city's 600 bridges received a grade of A, while about a quarter received a B, which stands for "good to fair condition with minor repairs" required.

More than 100 bridges received a grade of C, meaning they are in "fair to poor condition and can be operated be without continuous significant upgrades," Patel said.

Another 24 bridges got a D, which stands for "poor." None of the city's bridges got an F.

Patel said the city has completed two dozen bridge replacement or retrofit projects over the last several years, and hopes to finish another 59 projects over the next decade.

Of those 59 projects, however, 35 have been placed on hold because of insufficient funding.