



# Metrorail on Track

## Construction of Silver Line to Dulles and Beyond Rolling Along

Construction has reached 32 percent for Phase 2 of Metro's Silver Line, the \$6.5 billion rail line that will eventually connect Washington Dulles International Airport and eastern Loudoun County with Tysons Corner, Arlington, downtown DC and the metropolitan Washington region.

Being built by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, owners of Washington Dulles International and Reagan National airports, the system is one of the largest construction projects in America. Phase 1, including four stations in Tysons Corner and one in Reston, opened in July 2014. Phase 2 includes stations in Reston, Herndon, at Route 28, at Dulles airport and in eastern Loudoun – at Loudoun Gateway (Route 606) and at Ashburn (Route 772), which will be the end of the Silver Line.

Construction is speeding up all along the Dulles Corridor which basically follows the Dulles Airport Access Highway/Dulles Toll Road path, swings off into the airport and then follows the Dulles Greenway to Ashburn. Crews are building a 14-mile long duct bank, which has been likened to a giant extension cord, that will provide electrical power to the system. Trackwalls are being built, bridges over environmental areas and roads are under construction, and gradings and excavations are underway.

At several locations, crews have encountered dense rocks which have forced excavations by hand because drills cannot break through the rock. Some blasting has taken place along the Dulles Greenway and Route 606 near the site of the future massive rail maintenance yard, which will be the largest in the existing Metro system.

At Dulles Airport where the tracks are aerial, many of the piers and guideways (bridges) to support those tracks are in place, and pouring decks for trackbeds is almost 50 percent complete.

Project Executive Director Charles Stark reports that the "first tracks are in place" at Dulles. Five of eight large straddle bents needed for the tracks to cross existing busy roads have been poured. Guideways are in place near the car rental agencies and soon will be in the cargo areas near Fed Ex facilities.



*The elevated aerial guideway at the north end of Dulles International Airport will carry trains into and out of the new rail maintenance yard and into the median of the Dulles Greenway, where the trains will return to at-grade ballasted track. Photo by: Jennifer Alcott, Capital Rail Constructors*

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Construction is well underway at four of the six stations:

- The **Reston Town Center Station** in the median of the Dulles Airport Access Highway Corridor just west of the Reston Parkway exit – two tower cranes are being used at this site where excavations and foundations are complete and precast concrete and steel work is ongoing.
- At the **Herndon Station**, also in the highway corridor and near the existing Herndon-Monroe Park and Ride, bus stops have been adjusted and foundations are done. Precast and steel work continues through the end of this year.
- The **Innovation Center Station** near Route 28 and the Center for Innovative Technology is out of the ground and looks like the existing Wiehle Station. Ceilings are being built and platform work is set to begin late fall.
- The **Dulles Airport Station** excavations and foundations are done along the face of the parking garage facing the main terminal, steel and precast work continues and the transformation on an existing tunnel beneath the parking bowl into a connection via moving sidewalks from the station to the terminal is taking place.



*A large concrete span (straddle bent) is constructed over the eastbound lanes of the Dulles Greenway. Photo by: Jennifer Alcott, Capital Rail Constructors*

Preliminary work such as clearings and excavations are beginning at the Loudoun Gateway Station in the median of the Dulles Greenway near Route 606, and at the Ashburn Station at Route 772 near Broadlands.

The first riders aren't expected until 2020. Construction should be complete in 2019, followed by testing before MWAA turns the project over to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the entity that will own and operate the rail line and set the opening date.

Meanwhile, local officials and business leaders continue to praise the positive impacts of the opening of the four Tysons Corner stations that are part of Phase 1. Cranes along Routes 7 and 123 dominate the Tysons skyline where transit-oriented, mixed-use developments are springing up and new rentals in high rises are commanding rents ranging generally from \$1,700 a month to several thousand. Sales and the numbers of shoppers at Tysons Corner Center are soaring along with new housing units and restaurants.

Capital One is building its new corporate headquarters, which will almost match the height of the Washington Monument, near McLean Station, while Tysons Galleria converts vast spaces into restaurants.

Route 7, once dominated by confusing traffic patterns, is becoming a sort of Main Street where new construction will feature street-level retail in high-rise residential and office buildings. The old Westpark Hotel and some buildings in the SAIC complex have been demolished to make space for The Boro, which will be home to the largest Whole Foods in the DC area, a luxury movie theater and a new public library.

At the Wiehle-Reston East Station, the temporary end of the line, new housing and retail spaces in the Reston Station development are symbols of economic vitality and increasing transit-oriented lifestyles.

Currently developers and local officials are planning significant new transit-oriented projects at most of the stations along the Phase 2 alignment.

The opening of Phase 1 also triggered better access to Dulles Airport via Washington Flyer Silver Line Express Bus to and from the Wiehle-Reston East stations on a dedicated route for a \$5 fare per person each way. When Phase 2 opens, airport users will have a one-seat, no-transfer ride from DC to Dulles.



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