

A L L A B O A R D

## Northern Virginia Prepares for Silver Line Opening

Source: [Washington Post](#)

Saturday, July 26 will see the launch of one of the nation's largest public transportation projects as the first phase of Northern Virginia's [Silver Line](#) is added to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority's ([WMATA](#)) Metrorail network. The 11.6-mile extension of service from the existing East Falls Church in Arlington County station to

the new Wiehle-Reston East station in Fairfax County will add five new stations to the current 86-station, 106-mile system, currently the second-busiest transit operation in the nation after the New York City Subway.

Opening ceremonies for the new Silver Line route will begin at the Wiehle-Reston East

station and continue as the first Silver Line train heads east through the four new stations serving Fairfax County's Tysons Corner suburban downtown district, the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> largest area of economic activity and the largest in Virginia. The residential population of Tysons Corner is expected to skyrocket from 20,000 to 100,000 over the coming decades with the Silver Line's arrival, with an additional 60 to 70 million square feet of new development fueled by the line. The new rail service is expected to generate 30,000 new daily Metrorail trips by 2030, adding to the existing network's average daily ridership of more than 750,000.

"The Silver Line is going to be a major driver, a game changer, because it opens up the Tysons market for easy access from the entire D.C. metro region," said Michael Caplin, Director of the Tysons Partnership, a consortium of developers, planners and other groups with a stake in the future of Tysons.

A second phase of the project will extend Silver Line service another 11.5 miles west in 2018 to reach the Fairfax County communities of Reston and Herndon as well as Washington Dulles International Airport and two additional stations at Routes 606 and 772 – Metrorail's first stations in Loudon County. Six new stations will be included with the Silver Line's second phase.

*(For more information on the Metrorail network, see [RAIL #19](#). Additionally, stay tuned for a full-length feature profile of the Silver*

Line – as well as passenger rail across Virginia – in the next edition of RAIL, #36 – ed)



Source: Rural Missouri

### Ridership Booming on Amtrak's Illinois, Missouri Trains

Due to a number of capital investment projects in both [Illinois and Missouri](#), ridership on Amtrak trains travelling between Chicago, St. Louis and Kansas City is reaching new highs. Over the past year, ridership has doubled on the Chicago – St. Louis corridor, while *Missouri River Runner* between St. Louis and Chicago has also seen significant ridership growth.

Leaders in both states point to upgraded tracks, new passing sidings and improved signaling that has allowed for increased speeds and enhanced reliability for the entire corridor. On-time performance for the *Missouri River Runner* has improved from 64 percent to 90 percent following the installation of new passing sidings between St. Louis and Kansas City, while 110-mph service is now offered on a 15-mile stretch near Dwight, Ill. Over the

next five years, the majority of the Chicago – St. Louis route will be capable of 110-mph speeds.

“Ridership has more than doubled because there are more opportunities for people to arrive, more opportunities for people to go back and forth the same day,” says Amtrak Spokesman Marc Magliari. “In the next five years, we’re going to have two 110-mph routes from Chicago: one to St. Louis and one to Detroit.”

(For more information on Amtrak’s state-supported service in the midwest, see [RAIL #18](#) – ed)

### Ontario Premier Proposes Toronto-Kitchener-London High-Speed Rail Within A Decade

Kathleen Wynne – the Premier of Ontario – recently argued that establishing Canada’s first high-speed rail line between Toronto and London could be possible within a decade. Wynne, who assumed Ontario’s top elected office in 2013, believes a combination of federal, provincial and local funding sources could make high-speed service through one of Canada’s most densely-populated corridors a reality by 2024. An in-depth report studying the roughly 190-

mile corridor is expected to be released later this summer, with a future expansion to reach Windsor to be included in the study.

“Yes it is, that’s what the engineers and experts have said is possible and that’s why the minister of transportation has talked about that time frame, that decade,” Wynne said in a recent interview with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. “We’re in the process right now of doing the environmental assessment” for the high speed rail, which includes the corridor to Windsor. That report is with the minister of transportation and we’ll make sure that the information is available.”

A high-speed rail line between Toronto, London and Windsor could compliment existing [VIA Rail intercity service](#) and [GO Train commuter rail](#) operations within the corridor. Currently, [Metrolinx](#) – the Ontario agency charged with transportation improvements



Source: AM980



The former will replace Anaheim's existing rail station and serve California's planned high-speed rail network, as well as Amtrak *Surfliner* and [Metrolink commuter rail](#) trains along with local and regional bus service, while the latter already serves both [Amtrak Surfliner](#) and Metrolink trains. When the replica mission-style Santa Ana station opened in 1985, it was the largest new passenger rail terminal constructed since 1955.

In addition to connecting two key regional transportation nodes, the streetcar would also link important retail, commercial and residential zones, as well as large entertainment destinations including the Disneyland Resort, the Anaheim Convention Center and sports facilities for the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and the Anaheim Ducks baseball and hockey clubs, respectively. An initial \$180 million operating segment in Santa Ana may be the project's first stage, likely to be supported by a mix of federal, state and local investment. The [Orange County Transportation Authority \(OCTA\)](#) could serve as the entity to operate the service, with construction beginning as early as 2015 and operations underway by 2017.

“What we're talking about is a circle that would connect Central County,” Santa Ana Mayor Miguel Pulido told the Orange County Register. “If you travel around the world and look at transit systems, these circles are very important because that's the way, often, that transit works. People are able to get on at different points and go in diverse directions and connect.”

## Sound Transit Launches Northgate Extension Tunnel Boring

After completing tunnel boring work last year on the 3.5-mile [University Link](#) extension of Seattle's [Link light-rail](#) line, the same boring machines have begun work on an additional 3.5-mile tunnel to support the system's [Northgate extension](#). Combined, the projects will add more than 7.6 miles and five new stations of light-rail infrastructure to the Link network, along with 60,000 additional daily riders. The University Link expansion is scheduled to open in 2016, followed by the Northgate extension in 2021.

Seattle's Central Link route opened in 2009 and carries more than 30,000 daily riders on a 15.6-mile line through 13 stations between downtown Seattle and Seattle-Tacoma (SeaTac) International Airport. In addition to the under-construction University and Northgate extensions, [Sound Transit](#) is planning three additional expansions to the network: an 8.5-mile route continuing from [Northgate to Lynnwood](#) by 2023; the 22-mile [East Link](#) line stretching from downtown to Redmond, also in 2023; and the 23-mile [South Link](#) to connect both of Sound Transit's light-rail lines, the existing Central Link southern terminus at SeaTac with the Tacoma Link in Tacoma, although the completion date for that project is yet unknown. By 2030, Sound Transit's Link network is expected to carry more than 280,000 riders and create more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs.

“It's great to see these machines going underground,” said Sound Transit Board Chair and King County Executive Dow Constantine. “It will be even better when their job is finished and millions of light rail riders will sail past one of the biggest traffic bottlenecks in the state.”



Source: Sound Transit