Phase 2 Rail Construction Hits 78 Percent

While the heavy rains of late spring have slowed some construction, Phase 2 of the Silver Line is about 78 percent complete as of late May. Phase 2 includes 6 stations: Reston Town Center, Herndon, Innovation Center, Dulles Airport, Loudoun Gateway and Ashburn.

Herndon Station Parking Garage Almost Complete

Fairfax County is building new parking garages to serve the future Herndon and Innovation Metrorail stations. According to Fairfax transportation official Mark Canale, the Herndon garage is 82 percent complete. Most of the exterior is complete but electrical work and building interior spaces remain to be done. The pace of construction at the garage is ahead of schedule, but Canale said he did not expect the garage to open prior to the opening of all of Phase 2. Construction at the Innovation Center garage is 50 percent complete.

Old Meadow/Route 123 Improvements Planned

The Dulles Rail Project plan to improve the busy intersection of Old Meadow Road and Route 123 in Tysons Corner is being reviewed, pending the outcome of a traffic analysis of possible impacts during construction. As details emerge, additional public meetings with those who live and work in this area will be held.

Bus Stop Repairs Nearly Finished at Tysons Stations

Road repairs at the bus stops serving the McLean and Spring Hill Metrorail stations are almost done. This work requires riders of WMATA and Fairfax County buses to use different bus stops for several weeks.

Loudoun Gateway Work Hits Hard Rock

Construction of the Loudoun Gateway Station has slowed a bit because the contractor has hit some very hard rock which has required using a rock cruscher, according to Loudoun County’s Alan Winn. Loudoun is building this facility along with two garages that will serve Ashburn Station. One of the Ashburn garages is being built through public-private partnership between the county and developer Comstock LLC, which is self-financing that garage. Loudoun has appropriated $84 million for the design and construction of the other two garages. Construction previously hit other snags when workers encountered extremely hard rock elsewhere along the Phase 2 rail alignment.

Innovation Ave. Closure Continues through September

A temporary closure of the old Innovation Avenue alignment southeast of the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT) building has been extended until the end of September 2018 because of construction of the Innovation Center Station’s north pavilion, pedestrian bridge and associated utility work. The closure is located between Greene Drive and the currently closed section of old Innovation Avenue.
Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project officials are awaiting results of microscopic testing of samples from precast concrete panels used in construction of five of the six new Metrorail stations in Phase 2 of the Silver Line.

The testing is being done following the mid-May release of allegations, unsealed in federal district court in Alexandria, saying there are problems with the stone aggregate used to fabricate the panels by Universal Concrete Corp. of Stowe, Pa.

The allegations came in a whistleblower lawsuit filed by a former employee at Universal saying that the concrete company, a subcontractor for Capital Rail Constructors (CRC), the main contractor building Phase 2, used aggregate from a quarry other than the one specified in its contract.

That aggregate must be tested for compliance with project requirements. The unsealing of court documents was the first time the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority learned of the potential problems with the aggregate.

The authority has hired Dulles Rail Consultants, an independent entity, to oversee a microscopic examination of four core samples from each of the five stations involved: Reston Town Center, Herndon, Innovation Center, Loudoun Gateway and Ashburn.

Results of those tests are expected in late summer. That’s when MWAA officials will make decisions on the next steps. In addition, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) which will eventually operate Phase 2, will be doing its own investigation.

Meanwhile, significant progress has been made on resolving previously identified water penetration problems with precast concrete panels that threatened the required 100-year durability of the project.

A rail-mounted extraction machine, a large device custom-made to remove and replace panels that weigh as much as 24 tons, has been used by CRC crews to remove some panels at the Herndon and Innovation Center stations.

CRC has also committed to spraying all station panels with a special sealant this summer and paying for future treatments by WMATA as needed every 10 years.

Here’s a view looking east from the Innovation Center Station platform in the median of the Dulles Toll Road. (Courtesy of Amanda Scarangella, Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project)