WHAT'S NEXT? Boston Properties' $715 million expansion of the Reston Town Center, called Reston Next, can be seen to the north of Reston Town Center Station. Clark Construction, which is part of the team building the Silver Line Phase 2, built Reston Next for Boston Properties. (photo courtesy of Clark Construction)

The Silver Line Effect:

Phase 2 Expected to Continue Growth in Economic Development Spawned by Phase 1

When Phase 2 of the Silver Line opens later this year, Washington Dulles International Airport and the dynamic Dulles Corridor will be tied into the Metrorail system, opening new options for travel, and commuting, job opportunities, lifestyles and leisure activities, and boosting the economic successes that began when Phase 1 was completed in 2014.

Phase 1 extends from the Orange Line near the East Falls Church Station through four stations in Tysons – McLean, Tysons Corner Center, Greensboro and Spring Hill – before terminating at Wiehle-Reston East Station. The Tysons and Wiehle station areas have changed dramatically since Phase 1 opened, and now Phase 2 corridor is already seeing major new developments.
"The completion of this extraordinary transportation infrastructure – stretching from Washington DC through one of the most vibrant regions in the country – is a testament to our federal, state and local leadership," said Antonio Calabrese, a land use attorney with DLA Piper. Calabrese has represented many of the Silver Line’s most successful projects including Capital One, MITRE and The View in Tysons as well as the proposed Rivana at Innovation Station, which is near one of three sites identified as a possible new home for the Washington Commanders stadium.

Dulles Airport has been preparing for the arrival of rail service and rail staffers report that calls are already coming from future travelers asking if the new line is open to take them from Dulles to downtown DC and beyond.

"Phase 1 of the Silver Line has helped make the Dulles Corridor one of the fastest-growing business areas in Virginia and in the nation," said John R. “Jack” Potter, president and CEO of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, which is managing the Silver Line project. “The significant construction and other development that has led to new jobs and economic growth around Phase 1, since it opened in 2014, now is being seen along the path of Phase 2. This project fits well with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority’s mission of providing world-class transportation services and facilities and fostering economic growth in the National Capital Region."

Phase 2 includes six stations, five along the Dulles Toll Road and Dulles Greenway from the eastern edge of Reston westward to Ashburn, with the sixth at the airport. The new stations – Reston Town Center, Herndon, Innovation Center, Dulles Airport, Loudoun Gateway and Ashburn – are virtually complete.

Paul J. Wiedefeld, general manager and CEO for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), which will operate the Silver Line, said during a March 24 press conference that Phase 2 will not be open for passenger service before summer.

“We will not be cutting a ribbon together on the Silver Line this spring,” Wiedefeld told the board, explaining that WMATA would not begin approximately 90 days of pre-revenue activities until at least April after remaining work is complete. “I would love to give you a date. I can’t.”

The Airports Authority contracted two major construction companies – Capital Rail Constructors, a partnership between Clark Construction and Kiewit Corporation,
CRC built the main systems, tracks, stations and support facilities for Phase 2, while Hensel-Phelps built a rail yard and maintenance facility on more than 90 acres of airport-owned land off Old Ox Road (Route 606).

All facilities, including the yard and all six Phase 2 stations, will open at the same time. WMATA will set the opening date once it completes testing and declares the Operational Readiness Date. WMATA will conduct a series of “pre-revenue activities” prior to the opening date that are expected to take approximately 90 days.

In the meantime, the development boom spurred by the opening of Phase 1 has transformed the Tysons area into what the New York Times recently hailed as a city unto itself. Major development projects include the Boro, built along the Route 7 corridor near the Greensboro Station, and the Capitol One Complex near the McLean Station which includes offices, residential and hotel space along with an entertainment hall and a rooftop eatery. Multiple residential projects have opened, while Macerich, owners of Tysons Corner Center, which previously transformed into a mixed-use development, have announced plans for additional office and residential space near Bloomingdale's and remaking the area once occupied by Lord and Taylor.

Comstock LLC has scored a major success with its Reston Station development at Wiehle-Reston East Station, which has anchored the end of the Silver Line since Phase 1 opened, landing Google as a tenant.

Even though it’s not open yet, Phase 2 has already sparked significant transformations along its path.

For example, Comstock will remain a major player at the end of the Silver Line even after Phase 2 opens because it also owns the Loudoun Station mixed-use development to the north of Ashburn Station. To the south of that station, pieces of the mixed-use Moorefield development have been steadily coming together in recent years in anticipation of Silver Line service. All along the Phase 2 alignment, construction vehicles can be seen making way for new development near all of the stations.

The Reston skyline transformed during the past several years, with major new projects popping up and being approved north and south of Reston Town Center Station. Boston Properties recently announced a multi-million dollar project to renovate the public spaces at the Town Center. In Herndon, the town is planning for big changes near the north side of Herndon Station, while Fairfax has added parking to Herndon-Monroe Park and Ride, which now includes a pavilion to enter the Silver Line.
Between Herndon and Innovation Center stations, Arrowbrook Centre is rising along the south of the Dulles Toll Road, while farther to the west, Rocks Engineering is completing the Landing at Innovation Center South where it has built a garage for the Metro station there. To the north of the Toll Road at Innovation Center sits land planned for Novais Partners mixed-use Rivana project. To the north of Rivana is one of three rumored Virginia locations being proposed by the General Assembly for a possible new Washington Commanders Stadium.

The canopies over five of the six new Silver Line stations opening later this year will look like this one at Innovation Center Station. Those five stations look like Wiehle-Reston East Station, which will cease to be the end of the line once Phase 2 opens. Dulles Airport Station is the only one of Phase 2 with a different design, one that mimics the Eero Saarinen-designed main terminal at Dulles. Some people see a face in this photo; do you?

Past and Present Project Members Bid Farewell to John Kearney and James Van Zee in March

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority’s Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project construction team last week bid farewell to two veteran project leaders whose combined service to the Silver Line spanned nearly four
decades.

John Kearney, the seasoned engineer who was construction manager of Phases 1 and 2 of the rail project before being named director of program management earlier this year, left after 17 years directing the project, following years of work helping to win early approvals of rail to Dulles.

Known for his enthusiasm, engineering skills, cooperative nature and leadership, Kearney was a fountain of information and understood not only construction but also the importance of the rail line to the region’s economic future and complexities of building such a huge publicly funded transit system. In Phase 1, he wrote the construction execution plan, and scheduled all utility relocations and construction activities. During Phase 2, Kearney oversaw construction of the main system including tracks, stations, wayside facilities and systems.

A former college hockey player, he was formidable to many, but always willing to listen, negotiate and lead elected officials and reporters around construction sites.

Airports Authority president and CEO John E. “Jack” Potter thanked Kearney for his dedication to the project and his friendship.

Kearney called the Silver Line a "remarkable project. I don’t think anything can match up to the memories and pride that I have in not only being part of the team. This has been a blessing," he said, "one that I will try to duplicate in other locations."

Kearney will be joining the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.

James Van Zee who served as planning and project development manager for more than 15 years, retired after handing multiple critical issues including obtaining zoning changes, getting state and local permits for utilities and environmental issues, property transfers, rights of way and coordination with local officials. He proved himself to be a great communicator with the multiple agencies involved such as the Virginia Department of
Transportation and other state agencies, Loudoun and Fairfax counties, the town of Herndon, and the Dulles Greenway.

Van Zee was almost always smiling and educated all to be aware of impacts on the environment all along the Silver Line corridor. He made many trips to public hearings and multiple calls to Richmond. He knows the politics of transportation planning and execution and was known as our king of documents. He prided himself in his understanding the volumes of document that governed how the project was built.

In Phase 1, he championed a water restoration project near the West Falls Yard and construction of a $10 million cover box over tracks to minimize noise impacts. When Phase 2 began, he applauded project decisions to abide by the latest Chesapeake Bay Watershed regulations. Van Zee had a long career in regional planning – 45 years – and he brought that knowledge to the project, associates say.

He never stopped praising the huge economic benefits the project continues to make on the region.

Big crowds wished Kearney and Van Zee well during events in Herndon in Ashburn.
Nearly 10,000 craft workers have contributed to the project. That’s enough people to fill up the Concert Hall at the Kennedy Center 4 times.

60,000 cubic yards of concrete were used on the project. That’s enough to fill over 3.5 Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pools.

Workers laid 260,000 feet of rail, which equals the length of 867 FedEx Fields.

The 22 miles of cable trough are enough to make 5.5 roundtrips between the White House and the U.S. Capitol Building.

The more than 700 miles of cable is long enough to stretch from Washington, DC to Chicago.

The project required more than 2 million tons of crushed aggregate from local quarries. That weighs the equivalent of 25 Washington Monuments.
Interested in news and updates about Phase 2 of the Silver Line?

DCMP WEBSITE: www.dullesmetro.com

TWITTER: @DullesMetrorail

DCMP OUTREACH OFFICE: outreach@dullesmetro.com

PROJECT HOTLINE: Report Construction Concerns at 1.844.385.7245