

# METRO RAIL ON TRACK

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## The Moon Shines Bright on Success

The lights are on along both sides of the platform at the Silver Line's Dulles Airport Station, marking passage of a major milestone for Phase 2 of the Silver Line construction. On a cold winter night in February, the moon could be seen overlooking the windscreens that help the station resemble the iconic Eero Saarinen-designed main airport terminal. Besides lending to the architecture, the windscreens provide protection from the elements for passengers waiting on the platform for future trains, according to the Airports Authority's Stephen Barna, who directed that aspect element of the project among many others. Maryland-based W.M. Schlosser Co. Inc. constructed the windscreens, while Capital Rail Constructors, a joint venture of Clark Construction and Kiewit Infrastructure South Co., built the station itself as part of the main project contract. (Photo courtesy of Mark Ottinger/W.M. Schlosser Co., Inc.)

## Metro seeks input on FY 22 budget to support regional recovery amid pandemic-related financial constraints

*Without additional federal dollars, some Silver Line stations could be impacted*

The public comment period for possible changes to Metro's Fiscal Year 2022 budget continues through 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 16.

Metro is facing a significant budget shortfall due to a decrease in ridership caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, with ridership down about 90 percent and 60 percent on Metrorail and Metrobus, respectively. Federal relief funding has allowed Metro to avoid layoffs, continue providing essential travel service, and prepare for transit ridership to return. However, even with the additional federal funding and management actions such as limiting the use of contractors and shrinking Metro's workforce by attrition, there is not enough money to fill the entire budget gap for the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2021.

Metro is working with its Congressional delegation to secure additional funding to continue providing service as the region comes back to work. But service cuts remain a looming threat, and Metro must plan accordingly.

Through the end of calendar year 2021, the proposed budget would maintain current Metrorail service levels and hours. On Metrobus, full or partial service would be restored on 10 additional lines, late night service (until 2 a.m) would be added on 24 lines in late Spring 2021, and coverage to support commuter and school-based travel would be added in Fall 2021.

The budget maximizes the amount of time Metro can maintain these service levels to provide predictability for riders while closing the funding gap projected in the second half of FY22. If Metro does not receive additional federal funding, service cuts and layoffs will be necessary beginning January 2022.

The following proposals would take effect in January 2022 in the absence of additional federal relief funding:

- **Metrorail** – Close up to 22 Metrorail stations with low ridership that are near other stations. Silver Line Stations that could be affected include McLean, Greensboro and future Reston Town Center, Innovation and Loudoun Gateway (606).
- **Metrobus** – Consolidate the Metrobus system into 50 lines that would serve the highest ridership routes, fully or partially covering 64 existing lines. Service would be equivalent to approximately 50 percent of pre-pandemic levels. Visit [wmata.com/budget](http://wmata.com/budget) to view all lines affected by the proposals.

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## **Silver Line Phase 2 attacks problems, prepares for final testing**

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA), leaders of the Silver Line Phase 2 construction project, are preparing for additional testing of the complex systems necessary for opening of the extension from the Wiehle-Reston East Station westward through Dulles Airport and ending in Ashburn.

In addition, the tie-in of the second phase to the first phase at the Wiehle-Reston East must be completed before turning the project over to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). This will require another temporary shutdown of existing rail service at Wiehle-Reston East as well as major coordination between contractors and WMATA.

Additional dynamic and other final testings will follow before the project is ready to turnover to WMATA. After turnover happens WMATA then will conduct its own pre-revenue testing, which is expected to take about five months.

The rail team first must resolve some issues that WMATA outlined during a public meeting in February. Those issues include negative cross bond spacing, direct fixation fasteners, water-

related platform issues, car hoists in the rail yard and establishment of escrow  
Issues related to ballast in the rail yard, and cracks in panels in stations are resolved and the screenwall at the Dulles Airport Station is complete.

The Phase 2 opening date for the public also depends on budget issues facing WMATA as COVID-19 impacts continue to slam revenues, which are dramatically below previous years' revenues. An infusion of federal dollars has allowed WMATA to anticipate opening this year.

Meanwhile, WMATA is launching a major public outreach effort to keep the public informed about possible future service changes. Information on those meetings will soon be posted on the WMATA website.

COVID 19 has not slowed construction. All workers are following safety procedures including wearing masks and maintaining social distances. Tours and public presentations have been replaced by virtual sessions.

[Click here to read on the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project website.](#)

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Interested in news and updates about Phase 2 of the Silver Line?

DCMP WEBSITE: [www.dullesmetro.com](http://www.dullesmetro.com)

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