

# Platform Improvement Project Frequently Asked Questions

Summer 2020

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

### What are the dates for the summer shutdown?

All nine Orange and Silver line stations west of Ballston-MU will be closed starting Saturday, May 23. The initial construction plan had the stations reopening at the beginning of September. However, with the effects of the Covid-19 public health emergency on construction largely unknown, including social distancing measures by construction crews and supply chain impacts, Metro will announce the reopening date for the affected stations later this summer.

### Why did Metro expand the summer shutdown area?

Originally, Metro planned to close only Vienna, Dunn Loring and East Falls Church stations, while West Falls Church would remain open to customers. Due to the Covid-19 public health emergency and historically low ridership, Metro decided to expand the summer shutdown area to include all Orange and Silver line stations west of Ballston-MU. The revised summer shutdown plan limits exposure of frontline staff and contractors, mitigates delays to Metro's Capital Program and minimizes inconvenience to the public later on. The new plan also allows the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) to conduct work on the Silver Line "phase II" project.

### Will any other work be done besides the platform repairs?

In addition to making the platforms safer and more accessible at the four Orange Line stations, Metro will make improvements to enhance the customer experience. Key improvements include new slip-resistant tiles on the station platforms and mezzanines, new stainless-steel platform shelters with charging ports and improved Passenger Information Displays (PIDS). On the Silver Line, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) will work to connect the existing line with the new "phase II" stations.

### Why does Metro need to close the stations to make repairs?

The outdoor platforms are deteriorating after decades of wear and tear and exposure to weather and de-icing agents. The platforms are being fully reconstructed now to ensure they remain safe and accessible for customers for years to come. Closing the stations completely, instead of overnight work, single tracking and weekend outages, allows work that would normally take years to get done in a matter of months.

### Will there be noise associated with construction?

Metro and its contractors are employing an aggressive construction strategy to rehabilitate station platforms at the Orange Line stations. This includes shifts working around the clock at some work sites. Nighttime work may involve concrete sawcutting and jackhammering activities for periods of time, both of which will generate noise. We are working to execute this project as quickly and efficiently as possible, and regret any discomfort and inconvenience caused by the work. If you have additional questions or concerns about noise, please contact Metro Customer Service at 202-637-1328.

## RAIL SERVICE

### Will there be any impacts to rail service?

In addition to the closure of nine rail stations west of Ballston, there will be no Silver Line trains operating in the system beginning Saturday, May 23. The remainder of the system will continue to operate at reduced service levels during Metro's response to Covid-19. For the latest schedules, visit the [wmata.com/Covid-19](http://wmata.com/Covid-19).

### Can East Falls Church station be completed first to restore Silver Line service early?

Beginning May 23, the Silver Line stations west of Ballston-MU will be closed and Silver Line trains will not operate throughout the Metrorail system. Metro will closely monitor the platform reconstruction work at East Falls Church, as well as the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's (MWAA's) work on the Silver Line "phase II" project and look for opportunities to restore Silver Line service as soon as possible.

## SHUTTLE SERVICE

### How long will the shuttles take?

Shuttle times will vary depending on traffic and weather conditions, and customers should plan on adding extra time to their commute. However, for planning purposes, the following estimates are available:

- Orange Line Local
  - Vienna – Ballston-MU: 55 min.
  - Dunn Loring – Ballston-MU: 30 min.
  - West Falls Church – Ballston-MU: 15 min.
- Orange Line Express
  - Vienna – Ballston-MU: 25 min.
- Silver Line Local
  - Wiehle-Reston East – Ballston-MU: 35 min.
  - Wiehle-Reston East – Tysons Corner: 15 min.
  - Tysons Corner – Ballston-MU: 20 min.



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## SHUTTLE SERVICE (Cont'd)

### What will the shuttles look like?

Most shuttles will be coach buses, however some Metrobuses may also be used. Every shuttle will have a "Metro Shuttle Bus" decal on the side of the bus and color-coded dashboard signs indicating the shuttle route and destination.

### How frequently will shuttles run?

Shuttles will run seven days a week, approximately every 10 minutes on weekdays and approximately every 15 minutes on weekends.

### What hours will the shuttles run?

Shuttles will operate during the same hours as the rail system, currently 5 a.m. – 9 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m. – 9 p.m. on weekends during the Covid-19 public health emergency. The shuttles will meet the first and last trains at Ballston-MU. If the rail system hours change, shuttle hours will be adjusted accordingly.

### Why are the shuttles not serving Greensboro, McLean and East Falls Church stations?

On March 26, Metro temporarily closed stations as part of its response to the Covid-19 public health emergency. Greensboro Station was closed due to its close proximity to Spring Hill Station (0.7 miles). McLean Station was closed due to its extremely low ridership (at the time the station was closed, ridership was less than 150 daily trips – down more than 90%). East Falls Church Station was also closed due to low ridership (less than 250 daily trips when the station was closed).

Shuttles are not currently serving the stations closed due to Covid-19 response. Metro has planned for the capacity and operating requirements for the shuttle buses to allow for service to Greensboro, McLean, and/or East Falls Church if deemed necessary.

## BUS SERVICE

### Are buses that stop at the stations moving because of the project?

Some Loudoun County and Fairfax County routes that serve the West Falls Church Station north bus loop were relocated on February 24. Starting May 23, some Metrobus routes at Dunn Loring and West Falls Church will be relocated to different stops within the bus loops to accommodate the shuttles. Signage will be posted at the stations to direct customers.

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

### Will it be safe to ride the shuttle buses?

Your safety and well-being, and the safety and well-being of our frontline employees, is our top priority. With that in mind, Metro continues to call for essential travel only and requires all customers to wear a cloth face covering while traveling on Metro, including the shuttle buses. Most of the shuttle operations will be conducted using coach buses, which have one door at the front of the vehicle. This is different from regular Metrobuses, where rear door boarding is currently being utilized. Shuttle bus operators will wear face coverings, and the number of passengers on each bus will be limited to allow for some social distancing. Metro customers are encouraged to maintain social distancing to the extent possible, including when forming lines to enter the shuttle buses.

### What steps is Metro taking to prepare for people returning to work and transit ridership increasing?

In January, Metro activated its Pandemic Task Force to ensure the agency was prepared to respond to the Covid-19 public health emergency. The task force developed a four-phased Pandemic Flu Plan (PFP) for responding to Covid-19. Metro is currently planning for phase four of the plan (the recovery phase), which includes recommendations on service levels, safety precautions and operational logistics. The task force is working with local, state and federal bodies to guide its decisions. On May 11, Metro released a Covid-19 pandemic recovery plan, outlining a flexible blueprint for ramping up service, while protecting customers and employees, as the region prepares for recovery from the public health crisis. You can learn more about the plan and Metro's response to Covid-19 at [wmata.com/Covid-19](http://wmata.com/Covid-19).

### What happens if ridership starts to increase this summer while the Orange and Silver line stations are closed?

Metro ridership at Orange and Silver line stations west of Ballston-MU is currently down 95%. The current shuttle plan is scalable and allows Metro to ramp up shuttle service to meet increased demand, if necessary.

Metro will continue monitoring ridership and will take steps to ensure service levels meet demand, while following the appropriate guidance from Metro's Covid-19 pandemic recovery plan.



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## PARKING & BIKING

### What are the parking impacts at each station?

Construction crews began staging equipment and materials for this summer's Platform Improvement Project in mid-March, with impacts to parking at the four Orange Line stations west of Ballston-MU. These parking closures will continue through the end of the project:

- At East Falls Church, there is no parking available, but the Kiss & Ride remains open for customer pick-ups and drop-offs only
- At West Falls Church, parking is reduced by 50%
- At Dunn Loring, part of the Kiss & Ride lot is closed, but the parking garage remains open with no impacts
- At Vienna, the north parking lot is closed, but the south parking lot and garages remain open, with plenty of capacity

### Will parking be free?

When the stations close on May 23, parking at West Falls Church, Dunn Loring and Vienna will be free of charge for the duration of the shutdown. There is no parking available at East Falls Church due to construction staging.

On the Silver Line, the only station with parking is Wiehle-Reston East. Fairfax County operates that parking lot and has decided that parking will be free until the station reopens.

### Will I still have to pay for my reserved parking spot?

You will still be billed for your reserved parking spot and your privileges to your spot will remain. If you have any questions about your reserved parking space, please contact Metro's Parking Office at 202-667-3030.

### Will the location of the bike racks/lockers change?

Bike racks and lockers will remain in place except at East Falls Church Station. At that station, some bike racks have already been relocated to the bus loop.

### Will I be able to take my bike on the shuttle?

Yes, bicycles can be stowed in the luggage compartment of the coach buses and transported on the front racks of regular Metrobuses.

## FARES

### Will I need to show my SmartTrip card to board the shuttle?

No, the shuttle buses will be free.

### How can I load my SmartTrip card if the station will be closed?

Customers are encouraged to reload their SmartTrip card online at [wmata.com/smartrip](http://wmata.com/smartrip), or set up an Auto Reload. You will also be able to load your card at any open Metro station.

## ACCESSIBILITY

### Will shuttles be available for customers with accessibility needs?

All shuttles will be accessible. ADA shuttles will also be available upon customer request. These shuttles will provide service between the impacted stations and Ballston-MU only.

### Will there be accessible walkways to access the shuttles?

Accessible pedestrian walkways will be maintained at all the stations.

### Will service animals be allowed on the shuttles?

Service animals that assist people with disabilities will be permitted on the shuttle buses, as they are on Metrorail and Metrobus.

If you don't see what you're looking for in the FAQs, feel free to submit a question at [wmata.com/platforms](http://wmata.com/platforms)



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