

UPGRADES UPDATE

by John Hawkins

The revised Government funding agreement of 20 October 2010 includes a list of milestones which reveal current thinking on the line upgrades to 2015.

The Jubilee upgrade is now to be completed in 2011, delivering a 33% increase in capacity. A new SSL signalling contract is also to be signed in 2011. Improved ticket machines (including Oyster vending) are to be introduced at all LU stations in 2011, whilst the introduction of contactless bankcard technology for fare payment across all transport modes is due in 2012.

2013 will see a 21% capacity increase on the Victoria Line as the full fleet of new trains run entirely under new signalling. Tunnelling works will also begin at Bond Street for congestion relief and Crossrail interchange, and the roll out of S Stock on the Metropolitan Line will be completed. Those replacing C Stock will be in place in 2014. The Northern Line upgrade is now planned for completion in 2014, delivering a 20% increase in capacity. However, a footnote states that this programme is currently under review, including the possibility of bringing forward further line capacity through additional rolling stock. This has been known as Upgrade 2.

2014 also sees the new ticket hall and station entrance at Paddington H&C, and a new entrance to Bank Waterloo & City Line platforms (subject to agreement with Legal & General). The Piccadilly Line upgrade is no longer within the timescale of this funding period, but 2014 will see life-extension work on the line's signalling completed, whilst 2015 sees delivery of the prototype for a low-energy, higher-capacity train for the Piccadilly and Bakerloo lines. So delay to the Piccadilly line upgrade means it can benefit from these new trains, and perhaps the 2009 stock will be the last conventional tube trains built, although the Northern Line will need additional trains (above) whilst its current fleet are mid-way through their projected lives.

What appears to be a new target for 2015, investment in existing signalling, trains, safety critical station equipment and civil assets (e.g. bridges, tunnels, embankments) results in an 18% improvement in the reliability of passenger journeys compared with 2010 (measured by Lost Customer Hours).

Projects funded in the current period, but due for later completion include the 2016 completion of S-stock introduction on the District Line, the completion of the Northern ticket hall at Victoria, and the opening of new passenger facilities at Tottenham Court Road for congestion relief and Crossrail interchange. 2017 will see the completion of the Bond Street congestion relief and Crossrail interchange works.

2018 sees 25% of track on the Bakerloo, Central, Victoria and SSL lines replaced, with the full signalling upgrade across the SSL network complete, the SSL power works complete, and the full SSL upgrade complete, delivering a 33% capacity increase. The full Victoria station scheme is also completed in 2018, but works to relieve station congestion at Bank, Northern Line, will not be complete until 2021.