

Chicago Tribune

Blue Line renovations on 5 Northwest Side stations to start this fall

Jon Hilkevitch | March 11, 2015



Commuters at the CTA Cumberland blue line station on Feb. 5, 2015. (Antonio Perez / Chicago Tribune)

Renovations will begin in the fall and take about a year to complete on the next five stations receiving upgrades on the O'Hare branch of the Blue Line, under a \$25.6 million contract that the CTA board approved Wednesday.

The five Northwest Side stations are at Addison, Irving Park, Montrose, Harlem and Cumberland.

"The Addison station may be the most important of those projects because we are adding accessibility to that station by putting an elevator there," said Chris Bushell, CTA chief infrastructure officer. "This station was chosen predominantly because of input from the accessibility community."

The upcoming phase of work follows the rehabilitation last year of the Damen, Western and California stations.

Stations that will receive face-lifts through 2018 are at Grand, Chicago, Division, Logan Square and Jefferson Park, transit officials said.

The CTA is spending \$492 million to modernize O'Hare branch tracks, signals and stations and upgrade elevated and subway infrastructure as well as electrical power and wireless communications. The branch, which was extended from Jefferson Park to O'Hare International Airport in 1984, is used by more than 80,000 riders on an average weekday, according to CTA reports.

When the four-year project is completed in three years, the 12.5-mile trip between downtown and O'Hare will be cut by about 10 minutes, to about 35 minutes' travel time each way, officials predict. Chicago-based companies, F.H. Paschen and S.N. Nielsen, were awarded the \$25.6 million contract for the upcoming station work.

Addison will be first. The station house will be extended and a new elevator and enclosed stairway will be installed, CTA officials said. The platforms will be improved, canopies will be repaired and benches and windbreaks will be refurbished. The station will also get LED lights. The five stations will remain open during construction, except for some weekend-only closures at Addison and Montrose, officials said.