

First passenger trains travel on new section of Northern line tunnel

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Transport for London (TfL) says it has passed a major milestone in the overhaul of Bank station during the Easter weekend, with test passenger trains running through the new tunnel for the first time.

Over 2km of new southbound running tunnel has been installed as part of the Bank Station Capacity Upgrade, which will increase capacity in the station by 40 per cent.

Multiple runs using two passenger trains were made through the new Northern line tunnels and new southbound platform, which gave engineers the opportunity to check both the new railway systems and station systems to ensure that the Northern line will be ready to reopen to customers in mid-May. From this date, customers will benefit from a new, wider southbound Northern line platform, three new passageways to make moving through the station quicker and easier, and a spacious new concourse.

Furthermore, over the Easter weekend, engineers on the project began testing the new signalling software as well as the new signalling hardware for the new southbound tunnel.

These milestones follow significant progress made on the project since the Bank branch of the Northern

line closed between Kennington and Moorgate in mid-January. Since the last update in late March, TfL's project team has completed the final tunnelling 'tie ins' to connect the new infrastructure into the existing network and installed all the new track, platform finishes and station systems. In the next few weeks, the focus will move to installing and testing the final station systems and familiarising station staff with the new layout and systems.

Jason Benka, senior project manager for TfL, said: "We have been making great progress in the intricate and complex work that is required below ground at Bank to boost capacity and make it easier to navigate. Having worked on the project for five years, it was a really exciting moment to finally see a train travel through the new section of tunnel. This huge milestone is testament to the hard work of the team. We're looking forward to reopening the station in mid-May and showing customers the new platform, passageways and concourse – with further improvements to come later this year."

The upgrade of Bank station will see its capacity increased by 40 per cent when work finishes later this year, with improvements still to come including step-free access to the Northern line and improved access to the DLR platforms. There will also be more direct routes within the station and a new station entrance on Cannon Street. Improving this station at the heart of London's financial centre will address long-standing capacity issues and make journeys through Bank safer, easier, quicker, and more comfortable when fully complete later in 2022