

Pocket Tracks

Summary

The addition of special trackwork at key locations in the system will provide more flexibility to the overall system.

- Pocket tracks: allow trains to turn back in the direction from which they came (short-lining), gap trains to be stored until placed in revenue service, and the staging of track equipment until nighttime trackwork
- Crossovers: allow trains to single track during incidents or trackwork

Purpose and Need

The Metrorail system includes various single- and double-crossovers and additional ones will shorten the distance of single tracking. The system also has seven mid-route turnbacks, each of which is configured to operate as a third or “pocket” track capable of storing an eight-car train. To improve efficiency and reduce operating costs, certain lines could utilize a pocket track for a “short-lining” turnback to provide improved service to the highest-demand segments of the line. Other new pocket tracks would allow for storage of gap trains, disabled trains and track equipment.

Benefits

- Better matches rail system demand with operations
- Provides system flexibility to a two-track system in order to shift service around incidents and enable scheduled trackwork
- Potentially reduces operating costs
- Offers staging of trains in pocket tracks for events



and track equipment for night maintenance

- Might offer staging of gap trains and temporary storage of disabled trains

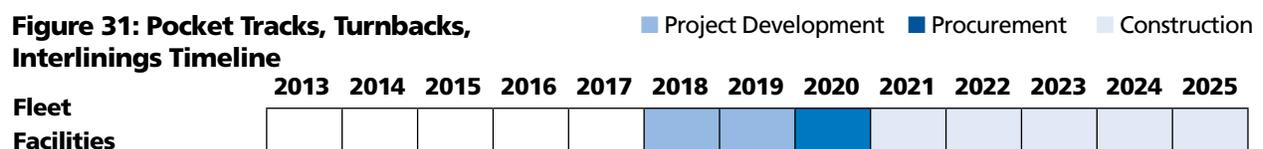
Considerations

- The addition of special trackwork will add labor and costs to the annual maintenance program.
- Unlike at-grade sections, any new trackwork within tunnel sections will be a more complex undertaking and may involve structural modifications.
- Access and timeframe for installation of special trackwork will be restricted to nighttime hours and weekends.

Status of Ongoing Projects

- Core Capacity Study (2002): considered a pocket track inbound of Potomac Avenue Station and a tail track outbound of Pentagon Station.
- Orange-Blue Line rehabilitation contract (ongoing): may upgrade the National Airport Station pocket track.

Figure 31: Pocket Tracks, Turnbacks, Interlinings Timeline



- Potomac Yard Station Environmental Impact Statement: may result in a pocket track, but for track equipment.
- In the coming fiscal year, Metro will study the location of new special trackwork as a prelude to this Metro 2025 program element.

Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate

\$500 million (\$2012)

While Metro has standard designs for special trackwork, each project site will have its unique engineering and construction issues. Costs will include project management, design, track rights, construction, train control and communications connections, testing and start-up.

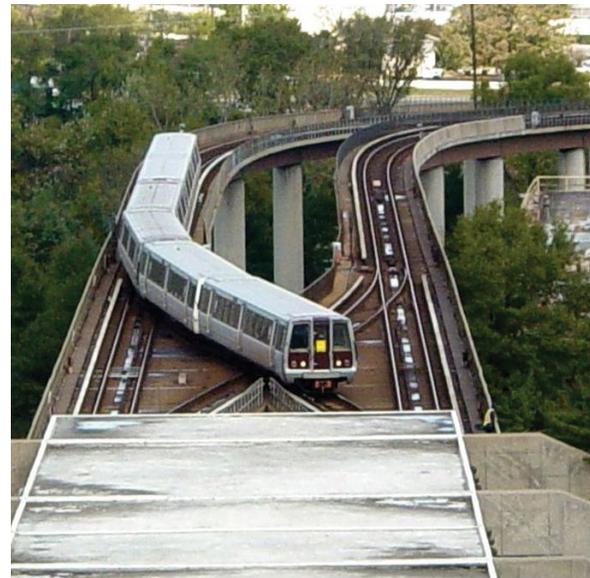


Figure 32: Location of Existing Pocket Tracks, Junctions, and Yards

