

Friendship Heights Escalator Replacement

Metro is beginning the replacement of the three long entrance escalators at the Friendship Heights station as part of a major capital project at the Western Avenue entrance of Friendship Heights station.

The current escalators, which are almost 35 years old and have exceeded their useful life, will be replaced with brand new escalators that are more durable and reliable. The project also includes the replacement of three shorter escalators between the landing and bus bay or street, two of which have already been completed. Metro's contractor, KONE, will replace the remaining four escalators beginning with the removal of the second small escalator between the bus bay and landing then installing the three longer escalators one at a time; completing each of the three longer units from the landing to the mezzanine first then finish with the final shorter unit to the bus bay.

During construction, customers will have access to the elevator and two escalators, one running in each direction, on the Western Avenue entrance along with the Jennifer Street entrance. The stairs and one escalator will remain open for access to the bus bay.

How long will the project take?

Each escalator will require approximately 38 weeks for site preparation, demolition, construction, installation and testing. Replacing all four escalators in succession will take approximately 2 ½ years. Metro engineers will work closely with the project contractor, KONE, to ensure the work is done as safely and efficiently as possible.

Why will it take so long?

The Friendship Heights escalators are 310 feet long and transport riders 65 feet from the station mezzanine to the entrance landing so their replacement is more complicated than an average escalator replacement. For example, the mid-level landing requires the smaller unit between the landing and bus bay to be removed prior to the longer middle units and will require considerably more crane activity to remove the structures and major trusses that hold each of the escalators.

The escalators will be replaced one at a time rather than all at once. For safety reasons, the work can only be conducted when the station is closed to customers and the adjacent escalators are not in service. Taken together, these factors extend the project timeline to about 34 months. However, portions of the new escalators are manufactured in advance and are in storage so the project can move forward efficiently.

How will this work affect my trip?

Customers can continue to use the Western Avenue entrance. Instead of having three escalators available from the landing to the mezzanine, only two will be available during the project: one

going up, and one going down. The elevator at this entrance will remain in service during construction. Metro will have escalator technicians on standby at Friendship Heights to respond immediately to any outage affecting the two available escalators. Customers may also consider using the Jennifer Street entrance to the station.

Riders should be aware that in the event of a service disruption, the station may need to be temporarily closed to prevent safety hazards related to overcrowding.

When will Friendship Heights Station need to be closed?

Metro may need to temporarily close the station to prevent overcrowding during service disruptions or other events – such as a disabled train, medical emergency, infrastructure problem or power failure. This may happen with little notice. When the station is temporarily closed, Red Line trains will bypass the station in both directions and passengers on the platform must exit the station.

How will I know if the station is closed?

Sign up for MetroAlerts to receive emails or text messages alerting you whenever there is a disruption on the Red Line or closure of the Friendship Heights. MetroAlerts will send another notification when the station has reopened. You can sign up at wmata.com/metroalerts.

What is Metro doing to ensure safe operations?

For the duration of the project, Metro will have Transit Police, emergency management, rail supervision and escalator technicians at Friendship Heights station at all times the Metrorail system is open. The personnel at the station will continually monitor operations and take appropriate steps to ensure that the station is not overcrowded and that escalators and elevators remain available for entry and exit. While we know that a temporarily closure of Friendship Heights is inconvenient, please understand that your safety is our absolute highest priority.

Friendship Heights Station Quick Facts

- Friendship Heights Station opened August 25, 1984
- Friendship Heights Station serves nearly 8,100 passengers on an average weekday
- Friendship Heights's longer entrance escalators are 310 feet long and rise 65 feet
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