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## Seoul & Provinces

# Seoul to implement record number of transport projects in 2020

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A newly open Line 9 subway train rolls into Gaehwa Station in this 2009 file photo. / Korea Times file

By Nikola Medimorec

This year we will see a lot of exciting developments to improve transport in Seoul. There will be subway extensions, walking improvement activities, cycling infrastructure expansions and many more projects. This article gives an overview of major projects for 2020.

### Subway extensions

There will be five subway line extensions in the Seoul capital region. The first project will be complete in March 2020: the Gyeongui-Jungang Line will be expanded by 3.7 kilometers from Munsan Station to Imjingang Station. Currently, there is an inter-city rail connection with only a couple of trains per day. Adding it to the wider metropolitan subway network will enable more services.

The city of Hanam will be made accessible through an extension of Line 5, with the 7.8km extension covering five new stations. It will be implemented in two phases, with the first extension in April and the second extension by December.

In August 2020 the Suin Line will be completed with the opening of the third phase. The first phase was launched in 2012 and phase 2 in 2016, allowing the operation of subway services from Incheon to Oido. The completion of the third phase will add seven stations, 19.9 km of rail and finally connect Incheon and Suwon via a direct subway line.

Line 7 will be extended by October 2020 by adding two more stations westward from Bupyeong-gu Office Station. The most important achievement of this small extension is that Line 7 will connect to Incheon Subway Line 2.

Lastly, Incheon Subway Line 1 will grow by one more station on Songdo. The Songdo Landmark City Station is expected to open in December 2020.

### Pedestrian policies

In 2017, Seoul initiated a series of urban projects to improve the walking environment within the city center. Seoulo 7017 was the kick-off project. It increased the number of people walking by 28.5 percent and raised the sales of shops in the area by 48.6 percent (according to credit card sales).

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### DARKROOM



In 2020, Seoul wants to work on pedestrian infrastructure in the neighborhoods of Bukchon, Gwanghwamun, Jeong-dong and Mugyo. Currently, a quarter of private car trips in Seoul are less than 2km and many of these could be replaced by trips on foot (or bicycle). Such a shift can lead to significant improvements of local air quality. Seoul is working on creating a better walking environment by widening the sidewalk, providing more shade with trees and installing more pedestrian crossings.

Seoul will host the Walk21 conference from Sept. 22 to 25. Walk21 is the biggest international conference on walking and livable cities. It will be the 21st anniversary of Walk21, marking an important moment in the global conference series. It is the second time that Walk21 is being held in Asia, after the 17th Walk21 in Hong Kong in 2016. Experts from all over their world will meet in Seoul to exchange ideas and discuss people-centered urban solutions.

"There are 10 million reasons why Seoul needs to be a walkable city and we are very much looking forward to working in partnership with SMG to help realize its full potential," said Jim Walker, founder and director of the Walk21 Foundation.

Hopefully, the conference will generate new measures and policies to further improve the walking environment.

### Promises for cycling and self-driving vehicles

Regarding cycling, Seoul promised to add 200 km of cycling infrastructure between 2016 and 2020. For example, in 2020, Seoul will complete bicycle paths parallel to Cheonggye Stream all the way to the Han River. Ttareungyi, Seoul's bikesharing system, surpassed 25,000 bicycles last year.

From December 2019 until the end of 2021, self-driving vehicles will be tested on Seoul's roads. Seoul and Hyundai Motor signed an agreement to run self-driving, autonomous vehicles on the streets of Gangnam. The plan is to start the trial with six vehicles and slowly increase it to 15 vehicles. All vehicles will be fuel-cell electric vehicles and it will require the modernization of traffic signals and road signs.

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