



## Virgin Trains Announces Construction Start for Rail Between Orlando and South Florida



Virgin Trains USA announced Tuesday that its team of builders has started construction on long-awaited tracks between West Palm Beach and Orlando International Airport.

Formerly known as

Brightline, the privately owned passenger-rail company is beginning the expansion at the airport with the installation there of 3 miles of track, signals and related infrastructure and the development of 70 acres for a maintenance shop.

The start of additional rail construction from the airport to West Palm Beach “is imminent” the company said in its announcement. Virgin Trains expects project completion and the start of service to be in 2022.

“This monumental infrastructure project will include the laying of 490,000 ties and transporting 2.35 million tons of granite and limestone by 20,000 railcars,” the company said in its statement. “Additionally, approximately two million spikes and bolts will be hammered and put in place over the next 36 months.”

Construction of railway will include about 35 miles of new track from the airport to near Cocoa along the State Road

528 corridor. Another 129 miles of rail along the east coast will require upgrades to 56 miles of existing track and construction of 100 miles of new track.

Virgin Trains began operating last year between Miami and West Palm Beach, a 67-mile trip that takes 74 minutes.

The company also has announced plans to develop service between Orlando’s airport and Tampa with a station at Walt Disney World.

That service from Miami to Tampa has the potential to serve 10 million passengers annually, according to financial reporting last year by Virgin Trains.

The company has said it will spend \$4 billion on developing passenger service between South Florida and Orlando, a private investment that will eclipse the nearly \$3 billion in public funding of Orlando International Airport’s construction of a new terminal.

According to Virgin Trains, Hubbard Construction Company, Wharton-Smith Inc., The Middlesex Corporation, Granite and HSR Constructors – a joint venture of the transit contractors Herzog, Stacy and Witbeck and Railworks – are the major contractors in the expansion between West Palm Beach and Orlando.

To Read More: <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/transportation/os-ne-virgin-trains-builder-announced-20190521-gxapxfkzzgahoc6phnccwhu4-story.html>



### About The FDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on FDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.

### About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with FDOT as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program. We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

# What Tech Can Do to Reduce Risk on Construction Sites

*Insights from industry data on tech implementation & use for a smarter, safer jobsite*



New technologies continue to emerge to improve the jobsite, from wearables to virtual reality to robotics. Most of these hold the promise of improving productivity and ultimately profitability, but perhaps the biggest advantage they offer is

their ability to help contractors address the high degree of risk inherent in the construction process. But is the construction industry poised to embrace these new technologies? That is the question posed in a new study from Dodge Data & Analytics and Triax Technologies, "Using Technology to Improve Risk Management in Construction SmartMarket Insight," and the answer is complicated.

The study, which includes responses from 135 contractors to an online survey and insights shared in in-depth interviews with 12 senior executives in the insurance industry, clearly reveals the need for helping contractors address risk. The findings show that over half of contractors have at least a moderate level of difficulty with ongoing management of project risks (66%), preparing critical assessments of project risks (63%), dealing with accounting issues (61%) and identifying project risks (51%).

The findings show that a key part of the challenge is in gathering data on which to base risk management strategies. Less than half of the contractors (45%) believe that there are clear ways to measure a project's overall risk performance. Even fewer (43%) say that overall project risk performance is frequently measured at their companies. The insurance executives also observe in their interviews that most contractors are not currently using technology to effectively gather and analyze data to manage risk, although a few believe that contractor capabilities are beginning to improve in this area.

The challenges that contractors face in risk management,

though, are not attributable to any undue skepticism about technology. The findings reveal that over half of contractors are already widely implementing technology for training, and they also commonly use technology for safety incident documentation and job hazard analysis.

Even more telling, though, are their expectations about the potential of emerging Internet of Things (IoT) technology to address risk. Nearly three quarters believe IoT technologies will reduce occupational risks, such as worker injuries, and well over half have similarly high expectations for them to mitigate risks to the general public and risks of property damage. Research done by Dodge Data & Analytics on other topics with contractors has generally shown them to be relatively skeptical in their expectations of unproven strategies, and thus, for this audience in particular, their expectations about technologies that many do not yet use demonstrate keen interest.

So, does this mean that the construction industry is on the verge of a major sea-change due to technology adoption? Possibly, but there are some hurdles to overcome. The biggest challenge revealed by the study is how to fund investments in technology. Only 10% of contractors currently have dedicated innovation budgets, and most simply absorb the costs in expectation of future gains (44%) or pass on the costs to their clients (32%). Both approaches limit the degree to which they can invest, even in technologies they believe hold great potential. The lack of resources dedicated to technology adoption at most companies also makes ease of use the top factor that they consider when evaluating technology, scoring even higher on the survey than the cost of the technology, with 79% ranking ease-of-use among their top three considerations, compared with 73% for cost. Clearly, cost will play an important role in their evaluation of technology in the future. The biggest driver that would encourage adoption for contractors is the prospect of negotiating lower insurance premiums.

To Read More, See Excerpt: <https://www.constructionbusinessowner.com/safety/promise-technology-reduce-risk-construction-sites>

## Supportive Services Offered



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