

# Silvertown Tunnel - Progress Report

## June 2022

### BACKGROUND

The first new road crossing of the Thames to be built in over 30 years, the Silvertown Tunnel will link Greenwich Peninsula to Newham and the nearby A12/A13

On schedule to open in 2025, the 1.4km-long tunnel under the River Thames will help relieve congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel and allow for better cross-river public transport links with one lane in the tunnel dedicated to buses, coaches and HGVs.

With journeys on average 20 minutes faster once opened, the Silvertown Tunnel is part of £1bn investment in east London and will support sustainable growth and the creation of more than 280,000 new jobs.

### MAJOR MILESTONE AHEAD OF TUNNELLING

We reached a major project milestone recently ahead of the tunnelling, when the first elements of the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) were lowered into the launch chamber.

The first element to be lowered down was part of the TBM shield, followed by the 250-tonne main drive of the TBM. Using a 600-tonne crawler with a super lift, a four-point lifting and set down operation was undertaken. Each lift takes approximately two hours to achieve and around twenty lifting operations will be required to fully lower all the parts into the launch chamber.

The TBM for the Silvertown Tunnel Project is the largest diameter tunnel boring machine to be used in the UK. The front section alone weighs in at 1,200 tonnes which makes it 95 times heavier than a double decker bus. It passed the factory acceptance test successfully in December 2021 and since arriving in pieces to site has been prepared ahead of final assembly within the launch chamber. Throughout the next month, the Silvertown tunnelling team will continue to lift parts into the launch chamber before final sign-off and start of tunnelling later this summer.



### FURTHER INFORMATION

[TfL - Background](#)

[Silvertown Tunnel Leaflet 2021](#)

[BuildUK Factsheet](#)

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## OUR TBM GETS A NAME!

As is traditional in tunnelling projects, Riverlinx has given their tunnel boring machine (TBM) a female name in honour of someone who has made an outstanding contribution to her sector or community.

Following an internal competition among TfL and Riverlinx employees - the TBM will be named 'Jill' in honour of [Jill Viner](#) - the first female to drive a London bus in June 1974. Both Riverlinx and TfL feel that Jill Viner is a fitting choice given how the tunnel will create new cross-river bus opportunities and Jill's contribution to the history of women bus drivers in London and equality within the transport industry.

Juan Angel Martinez, Project Director at Riverlinx CJV said: "It gives me and the whole team an enormous sense of pride to have reached this important milestone for the Silvertown Tunnel project.

*"The start of final assembly of the TBM within the launch chamber is a major milestone for the Silvertown Tunnel project"*

## NEXT STEPS

Work is continuing at pace at both Greenwich and Newham sites to help prepare for the next few months of construction and development.

This includes the construction of the TBM rotation chamber; enabling works and utilities diversion works for Boord Street bridge development; and civils works for utility diversions in Millennium Way.

## UNSUBSCRIBE

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Tradition states that the machines must be officially named before they can start work and, as the patron saint of miners and tunnellers is Saint Barbara, they are given female names, our TBM will be named "Jill". There has been a lot of hard work involved to get us to this point, and the achievements so far are a great example of what collaboration and excellent teamwork can deliver."

Helen Wright, Head of Delivery at Transport for London said: "The start of final assembly of the TBM within the launch chamber is a major milestone for the Silvertown Tunnel project as we prepare for the start of tunnelling later this year. I'm delighted that we will be naming the TBM after Jill Viner – a fitting name given how the tunnel will radically improve bus access across the river at this location."

