

All aboard

In this Jubilee year, Jacobs is proud to celebrate the Elizabeth line, set to transform travel across London and boost urban regeneration

The Elizabeth line, built by Crossrail, is one of the largest and most complex infrastructure projects in the UK: a transformational new high-frequency, east-west, cross-London train service, named after Elizabeth II and opening in the year of her Platinum Jubilee. One company at the heart of its development is Jacobs, a firm that provides technical, professional and construction services, with a proven record in delivering major infrastructure projects that benefit communities, cities and the economy.

“Jacobs has been involved with the Elizabeth line for more than two decades across a number of areas,” says Russell Pilgrim, Jacobs’ Programme Director, who oversees the company’s key contributions to this landmark project. “We provide a number of interventional solutions to tackle complex problems for our clients – the Department for Transport, Transport for London and Crossrail. These include sponsor assurance, strategic programme management and technical engineering.”

Jacobs employs more than 9,000 people in the UK, supporting projects with outcomes designed to improve security, social equity, resilience and productivity, while safeguarding the environment. It became carbon neutral in 2020 and its approach to sustainability supports net zero. By creating multipurpose, resilient and socially cohesive infrastructure solutions, it is building a better future.

The Elizabeth line will do this as a first-in-kind, fully digitalised railway, increasing connectivity for millions of people and enabling an inclusive society through increased access to jobs and education. New, fully accessible stations have been built that have transformed the public realm, unlocking new development and housing opportunities. Meanwhile, the huge demands of the project have provided invaluable experience to a

generation of engineers, among other highly skilled professions. “We have talked to clients around the world – in Malaysia, Australia, Canada and the United States – about the benefits and lessons of this project,” says Pilgrim. “There is a lot of interest in knowledge sharing and learning legacy. One scheme has supported more than 1,000 apprentices, and more than 40,000 young people have been engaged through the Young Crossrail Programme, going into schools and encouraging take-up of STEM subjects.”

Pilgrim enjoyed his role as a STEM ambassador so much that he volunteered with the Prince’s Trust as a business mentor, working with young people to help turn their inspiring ideas into a business reality. That’s what Jacobs does on a greater scale, offering solutions-focused services so clients can achieve their ultimate outcomes. Pilgrim is inspired by the people he has worked with and draws a connection with other projects that have provided many transport and regeneration benefits, such as the Jubilee and Victoria lines. Interestingly, both are London transport projects with royal links.

“The Jubilee line was named for the Silver Jubilee, while The Queen opened the Victoria line in 1969,” he says. “We are now more than 50 years along from that moment, which makes me think about all those people 50 years into the future who will benefit from the Elizabeth line – just as we benefited from the Victoria line. The evolution of these infrastructure projects sees the UK constantly improve its infrastructure through future-smart places. It’s very exciting to see the Elizabeth line open in a Jubilee year and create a legacy that will last generations.”

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