

How Will the New GTX-A Line Affect Daily Life?

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On December 28, 2024, the section of the Great Train Express (GTX) between Unjeongjungang Station and Seoul Station officially opened, following the earlier opening of the Suseo–Dongtan section in March. This new route dramatically shortens the travel time between the northwestern outskirts of the capital and its city center to about 20 minutes.

According to a 2014 feasibility report by the Korea Development Institute, the outdated and inefficient transit systems prompted the construction of the GTX line. To ensure on-time performance, the system was built with exclusive tracks and platforms.

What Is the GTX?

The GTX is a high-speed commuter rail system aimed at connecting major areas across the Seoul capital area. The system was introduced to meet the increasing demand for efficient long-distance transportation amid rapid suburban development.



The GTX-A display

A key merit of the GTX is its high speed and compact route. The train runs approximately at 180 kilometers per hour at maximum, with only five stops between Unjeongjungang Station and Seoul Station.

In addition, the line provides convenience through frequent operation. Trains run every 6-7 minutes between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., and 8-10 minutes even during non-peak hours. The first train departs Unjeongjungang at 5:30 a.m. and the last train from Seoul heading back at 12:38 a.m. the following day.

The GTX vs. Conventional Public Transportation

These advantages reduce travel burdens for daily commuters and Kyung Hee University (KHU) students, who commute between Paju or Goyang and Seoul Campus.

To assess the impact on students commuting to the Seoul Campus, a comparison was conducted between traditional public transport and the GTX-A route. On March 28, Friday, a test trip from Hoegi Station—near KHU’s Seoul Campus—to Yadang Station via the Gyeongui-Jungang Line took 70 minutes. From there, a bus ride to Unjeongjungang Station required about 15 minutes.

The return journey using the GTX-A was markedly faster: departing Unjeongjungang Station at 5:24 p.m., arriving at Seoul Station at 5:45 p.m., transferring to Line 1 at 5:52 p.m., and arriving back at Hoegi Station by 6:10 p.m. In total, the

return trip took only 46 minutes—a reduction of at least 20 to 30 minutes compared to traditional options.

Downsides of the GTX System

While the system brings clear benefits, it also faces challenges. The high fare stands out as a major concern—a single ride from Unjeongjungang to Seoul Station costs 4,450 won, which is more than double a typical subway fare.

Although youth passengers receive a 30% rebate through the K-Pass program, the discounted cost for daily commuting remains burdensome, particularly for university students. Moreover, while weekend travel offers a 10% fare discount to destinations like KINTEX Station, the overall cost still remains high compared to

existing public transit.

Unlike other subway lines, fare privileges for vulnerable groups are also limited. The GTX-A line only offers 50% discounts for seniors, people with disabilities, or national merit recipients.

Another notable drawback is that the GTX-A line has yet to directly connect the northern and southern parts of Seoul. Until this section is completed in 2028, passengers must transfer to other subway lines.

The newly opened GTX-A line provides KHU students from Paju and Goyang regions with a faster, more reliable commuting option. However, the system faces challenges due to high fares and poorly integrated transfer networks. Once these issues are resolved, the GTX system has the potential to revolutionize public transit across the capital region.

Schedule	Time
Take Gyeongui-Jungang Line at Hoegi Station	3:37 p.m.
Arrive at Yadang Station	4:47 p.m.
Move to Unjeongjungang Station for the GTX-A	Takes about 15 minutes by public bus
Take the GTX-A at Unjeongjungang Station	5:24 p.m.
Arrive at Seoul Station	5:45 p.m.
Transfer to Line 1	5:52 p.m.
Arrive at Hoegi Station	6:10 p.m.

Schedule and time of the journey

Kyungheedam-gil to Be Reborn as a Local Brand

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On April 6, “Kyungheedam-gil”, a commercial district near Kyung Hee University (KHU), was selected as a target for the 2025 Local Brand Fostering Project, organized by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) and Seoul Credit Guarantee Foundation (SCGF). The area was chosen for its vibrant and global atmosphere, shaped by students and international residents. Given its proximity to the University, the project is expected to impact KHU students.

What Is the 2025 Local Brand Fostering Project?

This joint project by the SCGF and the SMG aims to revitalize local economies by discovering unique content and nurturing creative small business owners. As offline shopping districts struggle with the rise of online consumption, this project was launched to help local business owners.

Areas are selected on criteria such as originality, growth potential, and the strength of their local storytelling. For example, Sharosu-gil, a street near Seoul National University, was chosen for its youthful and creative atmosphere, while Chemi Street near Gangnam Station was recognized as a hub for the K-life-style. These areas had been losing their unique charm due to the spread of commercial chains, but were rebranded by the development of local brand identities. Ultimately, these areas have transformed into destinations offering distinctive experiences.

What Is Kyungheedam-gil?

Kyungheedam-gil is a compound of Kyung Hee and *dam-gil*, meaning a street where stories flow. It is a five-minute

walk from Hoegi Station and is also close to nature-friendly attractions such as Cheonjang Mountain and Hongneung Arboretum. The area is known for traditional eateries, unique local shops, and diverse global restaurants, like Kong Kebab, Bonghwa Lamb Skewers, and Kota.

With nearby universities such as KHU, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), and the University of Seoul (UOS), the area maintains a youthful and distinctive vibe. It is seen as a place where the spirit of youth, diversity, and locality coexist—qualities that contributed to its selection for the project.

Future of Kyungheedam-gil: Plans and Expectations

Through this project, SCGF, SMG, and the local government are willing to build a local network together, develop brand identity, produce content, and implement both online and offline marketing strategies. A unique slogan tailored to Kyungheedam-gil’s identity is also expected to be developed, like Sharosu-gil’s “One Day Pause, Sharosu-gil.”

The Foundation’s planning team expects the project to serve as a launchpad for small

business owners to grow their brands, while visitors experience the area as a vibrant space filled with food, performances, and various markets. Eventually, they aim to establish Kyungheedam-gil as one of Seoul’s sustainable local brands.

Local business owners and students also shared their expectations for the project. The owner of the bakery Portuá said, “Most of our customers are from KHU, HUFS, and UOS, and we also get foreigners from time to time. I’m looking forward to getting more diverse customers throughout the project.”

Nam Ha-kyung, a sophomore in the Dept. of Political Science and International Relations at

KHU said, “I am excited to see the area become more vibrant. Since it is called Kyungheedam-gil, I hope there will be lots of activities that KHU students can enjoy.”

The selection of Kyungheedam-gil for the Local Brand Fostering Project marks a promising turning point for the commercial district near KHU. In particular, the development of a local brand centered on young people and foreigners is likely to impact KHU students directly. Through this project, the area around the University is poised to transform into a sustainable space that energizes both student life and the local community.



Kyungheedam-gil area map

Photo: Dongdaemun District (ddm.go.kr)