

= Asker Line =

The Asker Line ( Norwegian : Askerbanen ) is a 9 @. @ 5 @- @ kilometre ( 5 @. @ 9 mi ) railway line between Asker and Lysaker in Norway . The line runs along the same corridor as the Drammen Line , offering increased capacity , speed and regularity on the rail network west of Oslo . The first part opened in 2005 , and in 2011 an extension opened from Sandvika to Lysaker . An extension to Skøyen in Oslo will perhaps be built after 2020 . Most of the railway is in tunnel and is dimensioned for 160 km / h ( 99 mph ) running . The entire railway is electrified at 15 kV 16 2 ? 3 Hz AC . The first section cost NOK 3 @. @ 7 billion , while the second is budgeted at NOK 2 @. @ 7 billion .

The purpose of the new line is to allow regional and express trains to run directly between Asker Station , Sandvika Station and Lysaker Station , without being slowed and delayed by commuter trains that make frequent stops at intermediate stations . The Asker Line will improve regularity , and capacity will increase from 12 to 26 trains per hour in each direction . Travel time from Asker to Skøyen Station will be reduced from 20 to 13 minutes . The line has received criticism for not being a true high @- @ speed line , and for Lysaker Station not being in compliance with accessibility requirements . Similar parallel , high @- @ speed lines have been or will be built northeast and southeast of Oslo .

The line is built , owned and maintained by the Norwegian National Rail Administration . At Sandvika , the line connects to the Drammen Line , which runs to Oslo Central Station in the east . At Asker , the line connects to the Spikkestad and Drammen Lines ; the latter connects to the Sørland- and Vestfold Line at Drammen . The line is served by Norwegian State Railways with regional trains to Vestfold , Buskerud and Telemark , and the express trains along the Sørland Line and the Bergen Line ; in addition , the Airport Express Train operates from Asker to Oslo Airport , Gardermoen . During night , freight trains also use the line .

= = Background = =

Following the construction of the high @- @ speed Gardermoen Line from Oslo , via Oslo Airport , Gardermoen , to Eidsvoll , the Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communications started planning additional high @- @ speed lines west and southeast of Oslo . The Asker and Follo Lines would allow express and regional trains to travel faster and more reliably to Drammen and Ski , leaving the old tracks for slower freight trains , and commuter trains making frequent stops . Construction of the Follo Line will , at the earliest , be completed in 2015 .

The Gardermoen Line had shown that profits could be made by operating passenger trains , but that it would not be possible to debt @- @ finance short @- @ distance tracks in Eastern Norway . Therefore , a conventional financial method for the Asker Line was started . While the railway is entirely financed through allocation through the state budget , the prioritising was secured through a political compromise for investments in Greater Oslo , the Oslo Package 2 . Financing of a diverse range of road and public transport investments ? including new motorways , extension of the Oslo Metro and new railways ? would be made through a " package " . This involved both state , county and toll funding being collected in one lot , and then redistributing the funds to the agencies responsible for the investments .

Prior to the construction , the Western Corridor had a capacity of 12 ? 14 trains per hour in each direction west of Skøyen . The first section of the Asker Line , from Asker to Sandvika , increased the capacity with an additional two trains . The opening of Lysaker Station will increase capacity with four more , since all stations along the line between Oslo and Drammen will then have four platforms . When the whole line is completed , total capacity in the Western Corridor will be 26 trains per hour . This is equivalent to 5 @, @ 500 cars per hour , and exceeds the capacity of a four @- @ lane motorway .

The Asker Line is also a necessary component to allow a high @- @ speed route to be built along the Vestfold and Ringerike Lines . The former is planned to branch off at Drammen , while the latter would branch of at Sandvika , and become a 60 @- @ kilometre ( 37 mi ) shortening of the Bergen Line . The first sections of the upgraded Vestfold Line opened in 1995 and 2001 , and additional

proposals are under planning for the remaining sections .

= = Route = =

= = = Asker Station = = =

Asker Station is the end of the Asker Line , and trains must continue westwards along the Spikkestad Line or the Drammen Line . The latter immediately enters the Lieråsen Tunnel , allowing the same speeds as the Asker Line to Drammen . The Spikkestad Line is only used by the commuter trains to Spikkestad . Along with building the line , Asker Station was upgraded from five to six platforms , and also received a new , artistically decorated underpass between the platforms . The station is located 23 @. @ 16 kilometres ( 14 @. @ 39 mi ) from Oslo Central Station ( Oslo S ) at 104 @. @ 6 metres ( 343 ft ) elevation .

= = = Asker ? Sandvika = = =

Construction of the section between Asker and Sandvika started in 2001 , and was completed in 2005 . It was officially opened by Torild Skogsholm , Minister of Transport from the Liberal Party , on 27 August . This section is dominated by the 3 @, @ 590 @-@ metre ( 2 @. @ 23 mi ) Tanum Tunnel and the 3 @, @ 790 @-@ metre ( 2 @. @ 35 mi ) Skaugum Tunnel , and cost NOK 3 @. @ 7 billion . For the last 1 @. @ 5 kilometres ( 0 @. @ 93 mi ) of track west of Sandvika , the Asker and Drammen Line have been built along the same , new , right @-@ of @-@ way . The Drammen Line , leaves Slepnden Station , and joins the Asker Line just after the latter leaves the Tanum Tunnel .

= = = Sandvika Station = = =

Sandvika Station is 14 @. @ 14 km ( 8 @. @ 79 mi ) from Oslo S , at 12 @. @ 0 metres ( 39 @. @ 4 ft ) elevation . The track layout has been criticised by among others Norsk Bane , for not permitting high through speeds . A sharp curve before the station will not permit trains to travel at more than 80 km / h ( 50 mph ) , even if they are not scheduled to stop at the station . This will increase travel time , and hinder the efficiency of the line should it be used later for high @-@ speed lines to Vestfold or Western Norway . The proposed Ringerike Line would demerge just west of Sandvika Station .

= = = Sandvika ? Lysaker = = =

Construction of the second section started in 2007 and was completed in 2011 . The section between Sandvika and Lysaker is 6 @. @ 7 kilometres ( 4 @. @ 2 mi ) , most of which runs through the 5 @. @ 5 @-@ kilometre ( 3 @. @ 4 mi ) Bærum Tunnel . There was local debate whether the tunnel should be built using a tunnel boring machine or by drilling and blasting . The latter was preferred by the Rail Administration , since it allowed a shorter construction time , and a NOK 700 million saving . Total budget is NOK 2 @, @ 787 million .

= = = Lysaker Station = = =

Lysaker Station serves as the main public transport hub for Eastern Bærum , parts of Western Oslo and Fornebu . Within 800 metres ( 2 @, @ 600 ft ) , there are 20 @, @ 000 jobs , with an additional 10 ? 15 @, @ 000 in development . Located 7 @. @ 00 kilometres ( 4 @. @ 35 mi ) west of Oslo S , it is receiving a major overhaul between 2006 and 2009 , including 1 @. @ 2 km ( 0 @. @ 75 mi ) of new track . The current station will be entirely replaced , and the number of platforms increased from two to four . More than one thousand buses depart from Lysaker Station each day , and it has been proposed as the terminus of the Fornebu Line ? a tramway originally proposed as a people mover .

The NOK 1 billion renovation has become a scandal , due to the station being built in a curve , and

thus does not have straight platforms . This will become a security problem ; in addition it will create a gap up to 40 centimetres ( 16 in ) between the train and the platform , hindering accessibility to the trains for disabled people . Norges Statsbaner claims they will have to buy new trains due to this station alone , costing the state @-@ owned company NOK 1 @.@ 5 billion . Minister of Transport , Liv Signe Navarsete from the Centre Party , has said that resolving the problems by building a straight station is not an alternative , since it would cost an additional hundred @-@ millions of NOK , and delay the new station several years .

= = = Lysaker ? Skøyen = = =

The last section is a proposed 2 @.@ 1 @-@ kilometre ( 1 @.@ 3 mi ) section from Lysaker to Skøyen ; the latter not being modified as part of the extension , since it was upgraded in 1999 . The government has not set a date to start construction , but it will not be until at least 2020 , since other projects will be prioritised over this section . No specific route has been finalised , and the project has been proposed to either run parallel to the current Drammen Line , or by placing all four tracks through a new tunnel . The former has been preferred by the Rail Administration , while the latter ? which would cost NOK 1 billion more ? has been preferred by the municipality . There are no intermediate commuter stations between Skøyen and Lysaker , so there is little regularity or speed potential to gain from the construction , since the Oslo Tunnel from Skøyen to Oslo Central Station will still remain a bottleneck with only two tracks . Advocates have claimed that there is no gain from building this section without building two additional tracks all the way to the central station .

= = Operation = =

Norges Statsbaner ( NSB ) operates their express trains on the Bergen and Sørland Line on the Asker Line , along with the regional trains along the Vestfold Line . They also operate some of Oslo Commuter Rail trains , that do not stop on the intermediate stations . Other commuter trains use the old Drammen Line , along with freight trains . However , in 2006 , the night freight trains were moved to the new line , despite operating at less than 100 km / h ( 62 mph ) . The Flytoget airport express train operates along the line three times per hour using Class 71 multiple units , connecting the main stations west of Oslo to Oslo Airport , Gardermoen .

With the opening of the new line , NSB stopped operating their commuter trains from Drammen to Oslo with stops at Høn , Hvalstad and Billingstad . Passengers from Drammen now need to transfer in Asker , but all other passengers have travel times reduced from 48 to 36 minutes .