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Rublyovka Express Coming

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A high-speed commuter service to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's local station is part of a package of measures to upgrade Moscow's rail system.

Aeroexpress, the company that runs the nonstop services to Moscow's three airports, plans to set up a new high-speed service from Belorussky Station to the Usovo stop on prestigious Rublyovo-Uspenskoye Shosse by the end of 2013.

"It was partly the Moscow city government's idea as a way to ease pressure on the road network," a Russian Railways spokesman told The Moscow Times by telephone.

Russian Railways has agreed to spend 1 billion rubles ($32 million) on infrastructure for the service, including a new terminal building at the station and laying a new third lane of tracks from Belorussky Station as far as Rabochy Posyolok, just inside the Moscow Ring Road. The rest of the line will continue to be served by a single track, the spokesman said.

The rest of the project will be funded entirely by Aeroexpress, a 50-50 joint venture between

the rail monopoly and a private consortium called TransGroup. Kommersant on Monday quoted an anonymous source who put the full value of the project at 5.7 billion rubles. The new service will open by the end of 2013.

Usovo is the last station on a branch line that runs parallel to Rublyovo-Uspenskoye Shosse from Belorussky Station and lies just a few hundred meters from the driveway to Vladimir Putin's Novo-Ogaryovo residence.

The neighborhood also boasts a business center, an Uzbek restaurant and a vast imitation Byzantine church complex built with Rosneft funding that opened last year. A 3D theater is under construction opposite the station.

The Russian Railways spokesman said the trains expected to serve "middle-class passengers," but some experts expressed bewilderment at the choice.

The prestigious dacha communities in the area are generally only accessible by car from the station, and Rublyovo-Uspenskoye Shosse is regularly closed to make way for presidential and prime ministerial motorcades — making the station impractical for park-and-ride commuters.

"I just don't understand who is going to use it — especially since they would have to switch to the metro or a bus once they get into Moscow," said Dmitry Rozhkov, a transport analyst at Metropole.

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