

DUS News Digest

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ProgressiveRailroading.com

The Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Division of Transit and Rail will distribute \$21 million in Funding Advancement for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery (FASTER) funds for statewide and regional transit projects.

Twenty-two projects, including renovations to Denver's Union Station to accommodate Amtrak, will be partially funded by FASTER dollars over the next two years, according to a CDOT prepared statement.

Other rail-related projects include construction of a pedestrian bridge between light-rail and Greyhound stations in Denver; construction of a new Amtrak/Greyhound station in Lamar; and multi-modal facility construction for Amtrak, Greyhound and the local bus system in Trinidad.

The Colorado Transportation Commission, which awarded the funds, will meet in January to consider recommendations for \$15 million in FASTER funds.

December 30, 2010

By Jeffrey Leib, Denver Post



Workers fasten down the rails near the new light-rail station last week.



Workers move a wall attached by cables to a crane in the bus-terminal area.

RTD is uncertain how some elements of its \$6.5 billion FasTracks transit expansion will be paid for, but redevelopment of the project's heart — Denver's Union Station — is proceeding rapidly. About 20 acres around the historic rail terminal are being transformed into a new light-rail station, a 1,100-foot-long underground bus depot and an eight-track commuter-rail station, all at a cost of about \$484 million.

The Denver Union Station Project Authority plans to renovate the historic station, portions of which are more than 120 years old. The Regional Transportation District is exploring new uses for the rehabilitated station, which could house retail and other commercial tenants.

The authority, which goes by DUSPA, must complete the entire Union Station redevelopment by April 2014.

The new \$57 million light-rail station, with two platforms and three tracks, is about 60 percent complete and is due to open in July. The station is about two blocks west of the historic station and will be primarily served by an extension of the 16th Street Mall bus shuttle.

The current light-rail platform is next to Union Station, but that facility must be vacated so contractors can build the second phase of the underground bus station, said Michael Sullivan, DUSPA's development manager for the project.

RTD's light-rail operations cannot be switched to the new station until 16th Street is extended there so mall buses can ferry passengers to and from light rail, Sullivan said.

From the new light-rail platform, travelers can get to Union Station by walking underground through the bus terminal or by walking at ground level along a newly constructed and landscaped 17th Street above the bus depot. Three sets of escalators and elevators will convey passengers from the underground station to 17th Street.

The new bus terminal will replace RTD's existing Market Street station.

Work on the \$219 million bus terminal is about 30 percent complete. The terminal will have 22 bus bays and separate parking spaces for an additional six buses.



Michael Sullivan, development manager for the project, stands in the station's pedestrian walkway, a portion of which will be removed. (Aaron Ontiveroz, The Denver Post) about 30 percent complete. The terminal will have 22 bus bays and separate parking spaces for an additional six buses.

Commuter-train lines built as part of RTD's FasTracks program will arrive at Union Station on tracks constructed just west of the structure. The open-air commuter-rail station, costing \$145 million, will sit over the easternmost portion of the underground bus terminal.

The tunnel in Union Station that has taken passengers to their trains for about 95 years will be eliminated to allow construction of the commuter-rail platforms above the tunnel area.

To allow development of the new commuter-rail station and renovation of the historic structure, DUSPA is moving Amtrak's operation out of Union Station on February 1.



The windows of historic Union Station offer a view of the construction site.

The project authority has renovated a building at Wewatta and 21st streets, just west of Coors Field, to serve as a temporary Amtrak station until late 2013. Contractors have removed the steel rail-platform canopy from tracks west of Union Station and relocated them to the new Amtrak platform near Wewatta and 21st.

"We're working hard to make a temporary and reasonable accommodation for our customers," said Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari. "The good news is that it is only temporary, and our plan is to be back in the historic station in a little more than two years."