

# **DUS News Digest**

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January 30, 2011

By Jeff Leib, Denver Post



The Union Station area is undergoing a \$484 million redevelopment. (AAron Ontiveroz, Denver Post file photo)

Beginning Tuesday, Amtrak will relocate its Denver train platform from Union Station to a temporary station and platform nearby at 21st and Wewatta streets, just west of Coors Field.

The relocation is expected to last for at least three years and was necessitated by the \$484 million redevelopment of the immediate area around Union Station, which will become a new transit hub for the Regional Transportation District.

RTD's project will bring eight commuter-rail tracks into Union Station, and Amtrak will use one of them when the project is finished. The redevelopment also includes a new light-rail platform and an underground regional bus facility.

Amtrak operates two trains daily through Denver — the eastbound and westbound California Zephyr line that links Chicago and the Bay Area near San Francisco. An average of 350 passengers get on and off Amtrak trains in Denver each day.

The temporary Amtrak station will have limited short-term and long-term parking, and it is served by RTD buses, the intercity train operator said.

Also on Tuesday, contractors will close forever the underground pedestrian tunnel in Union Station that links the depot's train room with rail platforms to the west. The tunnel is the last remaining of three such underground passageways at Union Station, according to a history of the station. The first tunnel was constructed in 1916.

January 30, 2011

By Andy Youtz, Denver Post

Your attention please, Amtrak Train No. 6, the California Zephyr, is scheduled to arrive at 8 p.m.

Living near Denver's Union Station, we have listened to that announcement with a mixture of reverence and amusement for well over 10 years. The delivery — originally a doleful liturgical drone, later a melodious Southern twang and most recently a gray newscaster neutral — is variously encouraging, admonishing or simply instructive, depending on the mood and character of the person at the mike.

Please remain in the station until a boarding announcement is made.

Today it sounds simply cheerless because on Tuesday, Amtrak moves its Denver operations to a temporary facility at Wewatta and 21st streets, behind Coors Field. Known locally as the light bulb building (from its former use), the place has been renovated to support all of the activities that previously went on in front of and inside of Union Station.

It signals the beginning of a three-year upgrade and conversion of the venerable landmark structure — originally built in 1880 and expanded in 1914 — to the multimodal transportation hub envisioned by RTD and the city over many years of planning and securing of funds.

Passengers will be called for check-in by group number. Please, make yourselves comfortable and remain seated until your group is called.

This summer, the light rail and mall bus stop now located at the west side of the station on Wewatta Street will move further west to a new location adjacent to the Millennium Bridge. On Tuesday, the tunnel under the tracks connecting the east and west sides of the station will also close, so all of the activities previously occurring at the drive-through plaza on Wynkoop Street — passenger pick-up and drop-off, taxi queuing, baggage handling, bus line staging and commuter scurrying — will abruptly end. In three years or so, when the project is completed, RTD's Market Street station will close and all transit operations — Amtrak, Free Mall Ride and light rail station — will be reunited on the west side of Union Station around the new RTD underground "bus box."

Ladies and gentlemen, Amtrak Train No. 6, the California Zephyr from San Francisco, Emeryville, Sacramento, Reno, Salt Lake City, Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, Fraser and Winter Park is now arriving on track No. 1.

The Superliners appear from behind the Ice House parking structure, backing slowly, silently to a halt under the canopy. The arriving passengers emerge and file along the platform down to the tunnel and into the station.

A modern industrial tug attached incongruously to a line of antique, steel-wheeled luggage carts lumbers back from the baggage car just behind the locomotive, and into the side of the station.

Group No. 1, please check in on the right side of the conductor's desk.

All along the Wynkoop Street drive-through plaza, departing passengers mill about in that awkward moment of goodbye hugs, kisses and handshakes, then slowly but purposefully turn and trudge through the heavy wooden doors and into the station.

Amtrak train No. 6, the California Zephyr, is now ready for boarding.

The action reverses and the departing passengers proceed out to the train while the tug tows its perky little caravan back to the baggage car.

Last and final call for train No. 6, the California Zephyr departing for Chicago and all intermediate connecting points. All aboo-ooard.

The locomotive horn sounds twice, then slowly the procession pulls away from the station and out of sight. We raise a toast to the end of one era and the start of the next.

As we have come to appreciate, Lower Downtown Denver is an enviable melding of historic preservation with relentless ongoing renewal.

Andy Youtz lives in Lower Downtown Denver and works in sales and marketing.

January 31, 2011

By Jeff Leib, Denver Post

Starting today, contractors will close forever the underground pedestrian tunnel in Union Station that links the depot's train room with rail platforms to the west. The tunnel is the last remaining of three such underground passageways at Union Station, according to a history of the station. The first tunnel was constructed in 1916. The new commuter-rail tracks will be constructed above the area where the tunnel currently sits.

Also today, Amtrak will relocate its Denver train platform from Union Station to a temporary station and platform nearby at 21st and Wewatta streets, just west of Coors Field.

The relocation is expected to last for at least three years and was necessitated by the \$484 million redevelopment of the immediate area around Union Station, which will become a new transit hub for the Regional Transportation District.

RTD's project will bring eight commuter-rail tracks into Union Station, and Amtrak will use one of them when the project is finished. The redevelopment also includes a new light-rail platform and an underground regional bus facility.

Amtrak operates two trains daily through Denver — the eastbound and westbound California Zephyr line that links Chicago and the Bay Area near San Francisco. An average of 350 passengers get on and off Amtrak trains in Denver each day.

The temporary Amtrak station will have limited short-term and long-term parking, and it is served by RTD buses, the intercity train operator said.

January 31, 2011

By Joel Warner, Westword

Beginning tomorrow, as part of Denver Union Station's ambitious redevelopment into a modern transit hub, the historic station's underground pedestrian tunnel connecting Wynkoop and Wewatta streets will be closed.

And here's the really bad news: It's never, ever going to reopen.

In the scheme of things, the loss likely won't have much of an impact, especially since the city is getting a world-class transportation center in exchange. Still, the tunnel will be missed. With platform signs still emblazoned with the names of trains that have long since steamed away for good, it's a living reminder of Union Station's golden years as the gateway to the city.

Not only that, but its ceramic-tiled stretch has offered commuters, tourists and revelers alike both a hint of East Coast urbanism (it's the closest thing this town has to the vibe of a subway station) and a quiet respite to the bustle of LoDo. Many a rumor has been generated about the tunnel, such as how the black-and-white historic photos that once graced its walls were taken down for good after a visitor, armed with a screwdriver and other tools, decided to abscond with a few of them.

Goodbye tunnel goodbye.

January 31, 2011

By Gene Bowker, Denver Examiner



This will be Amtrak's new home until spring 2014.

Beginning Feb. 1, Amtrak will temporarily relocate from the historic Denver Union Station to 1800 21st St., at the intersection of 21st St. and Wewatta St., west of Coors Field in Downtown Denver's Prospect Neighborhood.

The move is necessary to accommodate construction of the new commuter rail station at Denver Union Station that will serve Amtrak and the East, Gold, North Metro and Northwest Rail commuter rail lines. When improvements are complete, Denver Union Station will be the centerpiece of the Regional Transportation District's FasTracks transit expansion program and will serve as a multimodal hub for the region. Amtrak will return to Union Station in the spring of 2014.

In addition to the eight-track Amtrak and RTD commuter rail station, the \$484 million Denver Union Station redevelopment project includes a 22-bay regional bus facility, new light rail station for current and future light rail lines, extension of the 16th Street Mall Shuttle and several public plazas to integrate transit services with adjacent neighborhoods.

The temporary station is completely accessible to passengers with disabilities, offers Quik-Trak® self-serve ticketing kiosks, free WiFi and vending machines with snacks and beverages.

Free parking is available at the temporary station for Amtrak passengers with proper validation. Amtrak passengers are encouraged to plan to be picked up and dropped off at the temporary location.

Approximately 15 short-term parking spaces are available at the lot on the east side of the station, and 25 long-term parking spots are available on the west side of the station under the 20th Street viaduct. The temporary station is served by a RTD bus stop just steps from the door.

Amtrak operates two trains daily through Denver – the westbound California Zephyr departing at 8:05 a.m. and the eastbound California Zephyr departing at 7:10 p.m. The California Zephyr runs

between Chicago and Emeryville, coursing through the plains of Nebraska to Denver, across the Rockies to Salt Lake City, and then through Reno and the Sierras to Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay.

Amtrak passengers also use Amtrak Thruway Motorcoaches at Denver to connect with the Amtrak Southwest Chief at Raton, N.M. That service will also be transferred to the temporary station at 1800 21st St.

Last year, 128,410 Amtrak passengers used the Denver station. For more information, Amtrak customers locally can call 303-825-2583 or the toll-free Amtrak contact centers at 800-USA-RAIL.

“The opening of the temporary Amtrak station represents another significant milestone for the project,” said Elbra Wedgeworth, president of the Denver Union Station Project Authority in a recent press release

Also on Feb. 1, the passenger tunnel in Union Station will be closed to allow for completion of a new underground regional bus facility. The tunnel has provided access for passengers to reach their trains since its opening in 1926. Passengers should use the 16th Street Mall Shuttle or the 16th Street sidewalk to get to and from the light rail platform.



January 31, 2011

Denver Business Journal

The relocation of Amtrak service from Denver Union Station has been delayed because of foul weather in the Denver area, including expected sub-zero temperatures.

Amtrak was to have relocated its service to lines near Coors Field, beginning Feb. 1, for construction of a commuter-rail station at the site of Denver Union Station. Amtrak is slated to return to the train station in 2014.

The relocation to the temporary station, at 1800 21st St., has been postponed until Feb. 4.

Amtrak operates two daily trains through Denver. The westbound California Zephyr leaves at 8:05 a.m. and the eastbound California Zephyr departs at 7:10 p.m.

Amtrak counted 128,410 passengers in Denver last year.

February 1, 2011

Denver Post

Amtrak and Union Station officials said they are postponing the move of Amtrak's operations from the station to a nearby temporary terminal until Friday because subzero weather is delaying track changes needed for the move.

Amtrak had planned to move to the temporary station and platform at 21st and Wewatta streets today.

The relocation, which is to last for a little more than three years, is to accommodate the redevelopment of Union Station as a mass-transit hub for the Regional Transportation District's FasTracks program.

The temporary Amtrak station is about three blocks north of Union Station, just to the west of Coors Field. It is served by RTD bus routes. The station has limited short-term and long-term parking.

February 1, 2011

By Ellsworth D. Grant, DBEtoday.com

### Regional Bus Facility

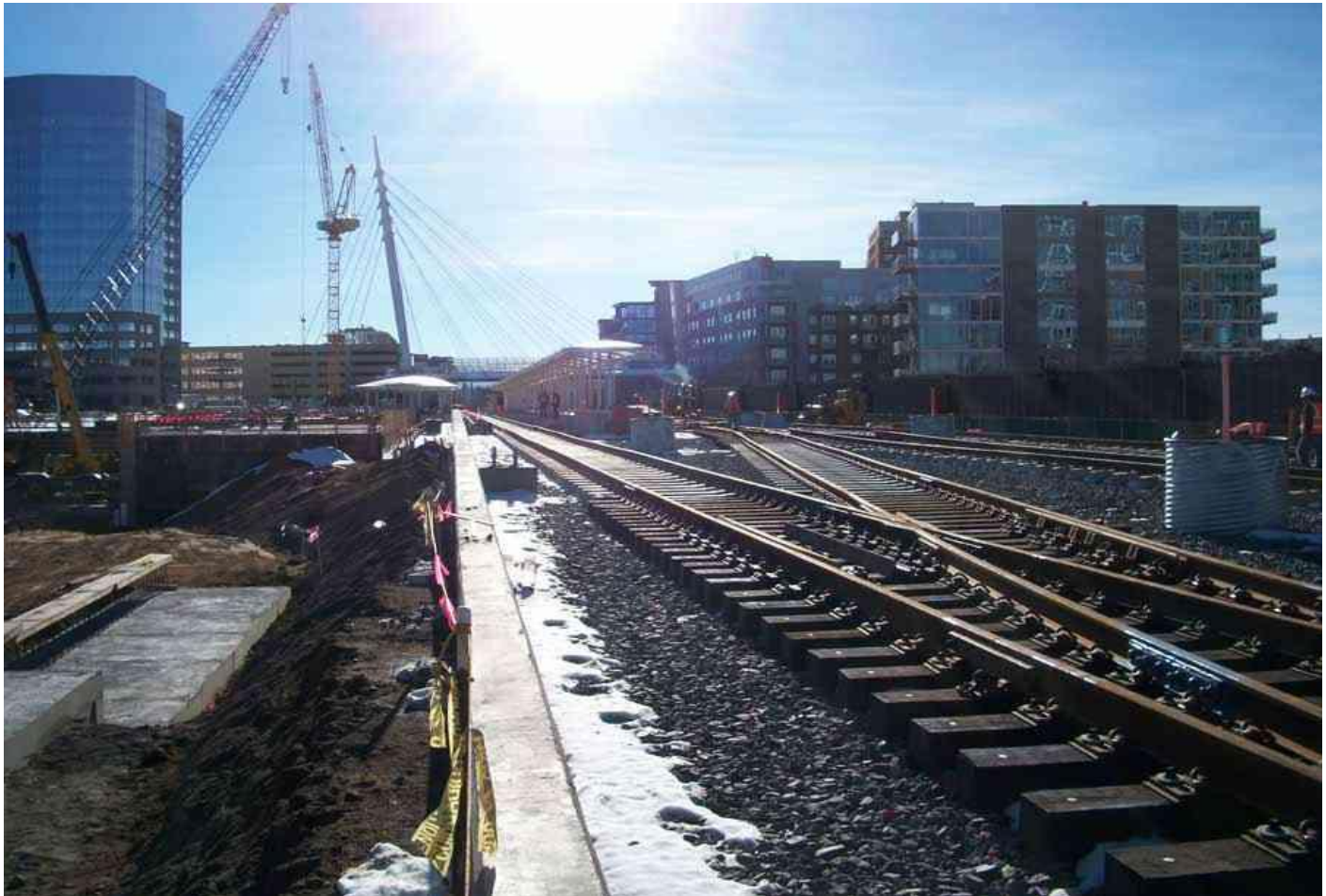


Final wall for regional bus facility phase 1 - Photo Credit - Union Station

The last section of wall for the underground bus facility structure that has been left open to get equipment in and out will be poured the beginning of February. Crews are also working on grading and pouring the base slab for the west entrance into the bus facility. The top deck (roof) of the structure continues to be poured and once complete, crews will begin work on the interior.

Continue reading on the next page.

## Light Rail Platform



Track installation at LTR station - Photo Credit: Union Station

Track installation is the primary activity in the LRT platform area. Crews are also installing gutters on the canopies and windscreens.

## Streets and Utilities

There will be utility relocation and installation on Wynkoop Street from 15th Street to 19th Street beginning in February and continuing for several weeks. This is a collaborative effort with Qwest, Comcast and DUS Project utility teams. There will be lane and sidewalk restrictions associated with this work. Please use caution when driving and walking in this area.

Crews will also be installing utilities in Chestnut Place and 16th Street within the construction boundaries.



Once the Bus/HOV lanes have been detoured, crews will begin to demolish the old Bus/HOV lane and associated canopies behind the DUS building. After February 9th, there will not be any access out of the west doors of the DUS building.

#### Changes to Pedestrian Access

The construction fence along 16th Street between the Millennium Bridge and Wewatta Street has moved to be directly adjacent to the LRT tracks. Pedestrians need to use the sidewalk along the south side of 16th Street beside the building and yield to LRT trains when crossing at the east end of the Millennium Bridge.

#### Amtrak Moving to Temporary Station February 4th



Amtrak's temporary station being readied for opening day - Photo Credit: Union Station

Effective February 4th., 2011, Amtrak service will relocate from the historic Denver Union Station (DUS) to a temporary station located at 1800 21st Street, at the intersection of 21st Street and Wewatta Street behind Coors Field. Amtrak will return to DUS in the spring of 2014.

Please continue reading on the next page.

## Pedestrian Tunnel Closing at DUS



Pedestrian tunnel closes Feb. 1, 2011 - Photo Credit: Union Station

Another change coming on February 1, 2011, will be the closure of the pedestrian tunnel. Transit customers should use either the 16th Street Mall Shuttle or the 16th Street sidewalk to get to and from the light rail platform.

## Bus/HOV Lane Operations Changes

On February 9th, the Bus/HOV lane behind Union Station will close to accommodate construction. Buses using the Bus/HOV lane will no longer pick up and drop off transit customers behind Denver Union Station.

All transit customers who board/deboard at Denver Union Station Gates B, C and D will now do so at Market Street Station.

Inbound buses will go from 19th Street to Blake Street, Blake to 16th Street and enter into Market Street Station.

Outbound buses will pick up passengers inside Market Street Station, follow 16th Street to Wazee, Wazee to 19th and head to the Bus/HOV lane.

Routes affected by this change include:

Express Bus via HOV Lanes:

31 X

40 X

80 X

86 X

120 X

Regional Bus via HOV Lanes:

BV

BF

BX

L

LX

For information, call RTD's telephone information center (TIC) at 303-299-6000, or visit [www.rtd-denver.com](http://www.rtd-denver.com). The TDD phone number for speech and hearing impaired is 303-299-6089. The TIC is open Monday-Friday from 6 a.m. – 8 p.m. and weekends/holidays from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.