

DUS News Digest

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Union Station Update #49

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February 25, 2011

By Rick Anstey, Denver Infill Blog

Our seven-week road trip was fun, but it's always good to get home. It's time to get back to business.

In spite of losing about two weeks to cold weather since early January, the Kiewit crew has made amazing progress. In this blog, I will concentrate on the underground bus terminal. Over the next few days I will also post updates on the light rail station, the temporary Amtrak terminal, and some projects on the periphery including the new DaVita building.

In the overall view of the bus terminal below, notice that the gap in the wall through which the crane traveled has been filled in, and the roof is nearly complete. Within a few days, the last of the roof girders will be in place, and the large crane will depart until it returns to work on the other half of the building next year.



The bus entrance and exit ramp is starting to take shape. The green slab in the photo below is rebar. This ramp will connect with 18th Street one block west of Chestnut Place. In fact, 18th Street will dead-end into this ramp. There will be second entrance and exit ramp at the opposite end of the terminal immediately behind Union Station.



There are two interesting things to see in the next photo. Workers are applying water proofing material to the roof of the bus terminal, and three of the eventual seven skylights are visible. As I mentioned several months ago, the grade of the entire project area will be increased several feet using the soil that is staged on site. Comparing the height of the workers with the height of the skylight structures, it appears that the structures are about 10-12 feet high. Once the grade is increased, almost all of the structure will be buried. Renderings of the skylights are [here](#) and [here](#) on the DUSPA website. And [here](#) is a view from the inside.



The most prominent above ground features of the bus terminal will be the air intake and two outlet towers that will be near the light rail station. In the photo below, you can see the foundations for those three towers. I took the second photo below on December 16, 2010. It isn't a great vantage point to see what is under the towers, but it's the best I have.



Union Station Update #50

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February 28, 2011

By Rick Anstey, Denver Infill Blog

Today's post is a milestone: the 50th update on this important project. I will devote number 50 to the new light rail and 16th Street mall shuttle stations.

The light rail station is looking good. Here are views from opposite ends. The first one is from the Millennium Bridge, and the other is from the Union Gateway Bridge.



Scroll to next page to see the second photograph.



You may have noticed an odd looking machine on the tracks. It's official name is a tamper and is visible in the first photo above. Like the names states, it picks up the tracks and tamps the stones firmly into place under the tracks to prevent subsequent settling and misalignment of the tracks.

This week the overhead catenary system (poles and overhead electric lines that power the light rail) will be installed. Then, this summer, the new tracks will be tied into the main line tracks on the other side of the Millennium Bridge, and the station will become operational.

The wider white canopy seen on the right side of the first photo covers the new passenger platform for the mall shuttle bus which will also become operational this summer. Obviously, the mall shuttle route will have to be extended to the new station. The bus will travel further along 16th Street and turn right onto a rebuilt Chestnut Place. Then it will turn left onto a new

section of 17th Street that will run above and alongside the underground bus terminal. Finally, it will turn left again and pull up to the new passenger platform. Once passengers board the bus, it will continue forward and turn left onto 16th Street a few dozen feet before reaching the Millennium Bridge.

Once the mall bus and light rail stations are open for business, the old stations will be removed in preparation for digging the other half of the underground bus terminal.

March 1, 2011, Denver Infill Blog

By Rick Anstey

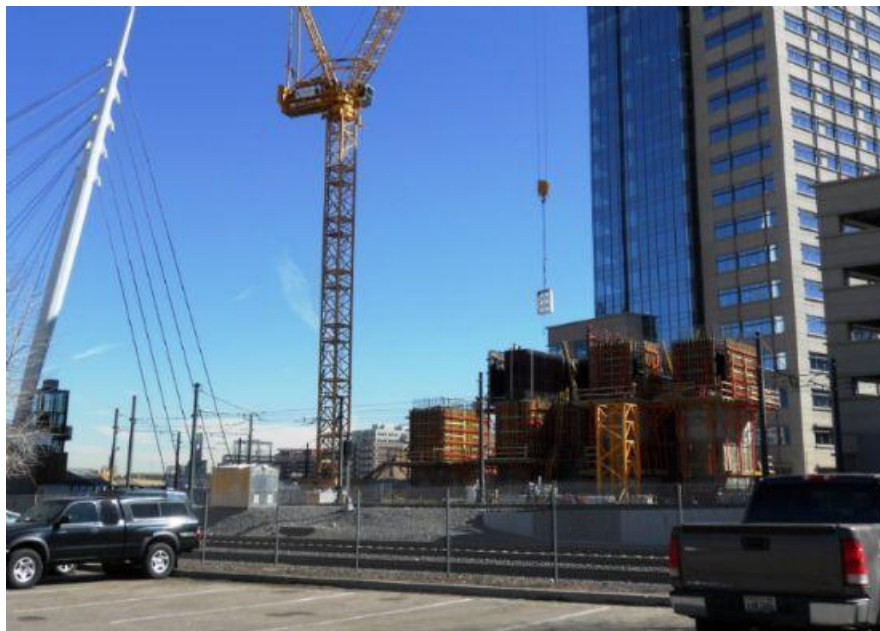
Last Friday, I promised that I would provide multiple updates to get you caught up after my long absence. This is the third of those updates.

Not only is the Union Station project rolling along, there is significant activity around the perimeter. In this post, I will touch on them briefly.

Construction of the DaVita Building across 16th Street is in full swing. I took the first of the following photos of it from the Millennium Bridge. The other is from the parking lot near 15th Street, behind McLoughlin's Restaurant. As you can see, the building is on its way up with elevator shafts and stairwells already two stories high. For background on the project, here's a link to Ken's blog about it from last July.



Scroll down to the next page for the second photograph.



DaVita's next door neighbor, 1900 16th Street, has been vacant since its completion a couple of years ago. The Denver Post reported recently that Pricewaterhouse Coopers and a law firm had committed to move into several floors of the building (I hoped to provide a link to the article, but couldn't find it). Last evening, I noticed that four of the upper floors were well lit and showed obvious signs of office activity, which cannot be seen during daylight hours. I could see office furniture, computer screens, and (construction?) workers. I took the following photo from my Glass House balcony. It's good to see the building is finally occupied, at least partially.



Until last summer, train tracks ran along the side of the EPA Building and 1414 Wynkoop. That location became an open lot after the tracks were removed in May (see background [here](#)). Equipment and materials, mostly large pipes, are now staged on the site awaiting some utility related action. I think, but don't know for sure, that the pipes may be used by Excel to expand its steam system through the area. Here's a photo.



Bassett Street in Riverfront Park is probably a little too far away from Union Station to claim that it's on the perimeter. Nonetheless, an interesting new project that will bring even more residents to Riverfront Park appears to be ready to start. A construction fence recently went up around 75% of the block bounded by Bassett, 18th, 19th and Little Raven streets across Bassett Street from the Manhattan Apartments. It must be the long-awaited Manhattan II. The only part of the block that is not inside the fence is Riverfront Park's Brownstones.



The only other imminent neighborhood project is the wing building immediately north of Union Station. I'll be watching for signs of construction. Here is Ken's blog of a year ago about that project, including a rendering of the building.

March 2, 2011

By Rick Anstey, Denver Infill Blog

Today's post is an update on Amtrak's move from Union Station to its new temporary station.

I'll start with Union Station. The first photo below is Amtrak's ticket window that was shut down on February 4 for about three years. The empty train room feels pretty ... well, empty. The second photo is a new wall at the top of the historic tunnel. While the artifacts from the tunnel are being saved, we've seen that tunnel for the last time.



Please scroll down to the next page to continue reading.



The few remaining tracks behind Union Station will be removed soon. Some of the concrete passenger platforms have already been torn up as shown in the first photo below. In the second photo, you can see that a new construction fence prevents access to the other end of the tunnel. Look through the fence and to the right. You can see two excavators that appear to be ready to demolish the tunnel.





Now let's go to Amtrak's new temporary train station. The move was originally scheduled for February 1, but weather delayed it for three days. It was simply too cold for workers to move the tracks so they would connect with the tracks at the new passenger platform.

Per David's request on February 13, I walked over to the station a few minutes before the California Zephyr arrived this morning. David wondered about the size of the station and movement of people boarding the train on the other side of Wewatta Street. Here's what I observed. The new station has about 150 seats, and about 100 of them were empty this morning so there appears to be ample space. However, Wednesdays may be slow days for Amtrak. The train arrived from Chicago at 9:20am, two hours late. During the wait, I chatted with an 85-year old passenger from San Francisco who, along with her husband, was visiting their daughter in Boulder. She expressed frustration with trying to find the new station by car. Luckily the train was late, or they might have missed it. In answer to one of my questions, she said that she prefers Union Station to the temporary station. No surprise, but the seats at the new station certainly look more comfortable than the old wooden benches. She and her husband boarded first and were driven to the train in what I would call a station wagon version of a golf cart. I left before the general boarding. Crossing Wewatta Street is probably a non-event with a new traffic light and crosswalk.

Here are two photos of my time at the station. The first one is the Zephyr parked at the new passenger platform. The second shows arriving passengers getting their bags in the parking lot in front of the station. There is a roller conveyor inside the station that is probably used in bad weather.



I think this post gets you up to date on the progress at Union Station. I'll be back in a few days with reports of new activity as it happens.