

## **DUS News Digest**

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August 12, 2011

By Matthew Rodriguez, Your Hub

RTD is planning to open a new light-rail station about two blocks west of Denver Union Station on Monday after shutting it down for a few weeks to relocate it.

The Regional Transportation District also is planning to open an extension of the 16th Street Mall bus shuttle to Chestnut Street near the Millennium Bridge.

RTD officials are planning to hold an event 7 to 9 a.m. Monday to mark the completion of the work. "It's a great opportunity for people to see the progress that we are making with the RTD FasTracks program," said Daria Serna, spokeswoman for RTD.

According to RTD, the light-rail station at Union Station was the 11th busiest in its system last summer. The district tallied an average of nearly 4,000 passengers boarding and exiting each weekday.

The new light-rail station, which cost about \$65 million to build and relocate, is part of RTD's roughly \$480 million Denver Union Station project. The transportation hub will include the light-rail station, a commuter rail station, an 1,100-foot-long underground bus facility and a new turnaround for the 16th Street Mall bus shuttles.

Crews already have put in the foundation for the underground bus facility, connecting it to skylights and ventilation tubes.

"There is an enormous concrete box underground that had to go in first," said Hunter Sydnor, a spokeswoman for Kiewit, the project's contractor. "The paving of this couldn't happen until all the other stuff was done."

Construction on the redevelopment began in 2009 and is scheduled to be completed by spring 2014. Officials plan to complete the commuter rail station on the site by then, connecting it to Denver International Airport by 2016.

The site includes five pads for mixed-use development, and RTD has sold three. According to the district, private entity Union Station Neighborhood Co. has the rights to purchase the other two, but they haven't been sold.

The roughly three-week closure of the Central Platte Valley light-rail line also included shutting down and relocating the Auraria West station.

## New light-rail station in LoDo opens

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August 15, 2011

By The Denver Post



Passengers mill about the new light rail platform at Union Station this morning, August 15, 2011.  
(Steve Nehf | The Denver Post)

The light-rail station two blocks west of Denver Union Station opens Monday at 7 a.m. with music, speeches and refreshments.

The station is adjacent to the Millennium Bridge in Lower Downtown Denver.

A performance by the Denver Municipal Band Brass Quintet will be followed by a formal ceremony planned from 7:50 a.m. to 8:15 a.m., with refreshments provided by Denver businesses.

Speakers will include Mayor Michael Hancock, Denver Union Station Project Authority chairwoman Elbra Wedgeworth, Regional Transportation District board chairman Lee Kemp, City Councilwoman Judy Montero and RTD board member Angie Malpiede.

"Denver Union Station is the centerpiece of the RTD's FasTracks transit expansion program and will serve as a multimodal hub for the region," the transit agency said in a statement this afternoon.

The new platform, at 16th Street and Chestnut Place, will have a shuttle connection to the 16th Street Mall.

For route and schedule information, visit [rtd-denver.com](http://rtd-denver.com) or call RTD at 303-299-6000 or, for the hearing impaired, 303-299-6089.

August 15, 2011

By The Republic

DENVER — A new light rail station has opened in Denver near downtown's Union Station.

The new station opened Monday morning two blocks west of the station. It was built as part of the expansion of mass transit in the Denver area.

The FasTracks project's goal is to build 122 miles of commuter rail and light rail. City officials hope to eventually have a line from Denver International Airport to downtown.

The project is slated to be completed in 2019 but is currently underfunded

August 15, 2011

By KUSA-TV

The three weeks of temporary light-rail closures along the Central Platt Valley come to an end, and light rail will resume full operation Monday morning.

The Regional Transportation District celebrated the grand opening of the new Denver Union Station Light Rail Station Monday morning. The new light rail station is located two blocks west of Denver Union Station adjacent to the Millennium Bridge.

A ceremonial train arrived at the station at 7:40 a.m. followed by a formal ceremony.

Light-rail trains will begin arriving and departing from the new station; the 16th Street FreeMall Ride will be extended to the new station; Wewatta St. between 19th and 16th avenues will close and Chestnut Place between 19th and 16th avenues will open.

Denver Union Station is the centerpiece of the RTD's FasTracks transit expansion program and will serve as a multi-modal hub for the region.

Phillip Washington is the general manager of RTD and explained how this is a huge step toward completion of the FasTracks project.

"When you think about the fact that the west corridor will open up in less than two years," Washington said. "The train to the airport will be coming here in about four-and-a-half years, and the line from downtown to Arvada and Wheat Ridge will be in about four-and-a-half years. This is huge."

Daria Serna is the public information officer with RTD and said if you have not seen the area west of Union station for quite some time, you may not recognize it.

"We are about 45 percent complete with the Union Station redevelopment," Serna explained. "We are building out a light-rail system. We will be bringing in a commuter rail also and building a bus bay underneath with 23 gates."

## New Light Rail Stop Opens At Union Station

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August 15, 2011

By CBS4-TV



DENVER (CBS4) - RTD opened its new light rail stop at Union Station on Monday morning.

The stop is located two blocks west of Union Station next to the Millennium Bridge. It's part of the Union Station renovation project.

RTD also extended the free buses along the 16th Street Mall to make it easier for commuters to get downtown.

“With the opening of the new location for light rail, we have a new piece of the transportation hub that will ultimately connect our communities and neighborhoods,” Mayor Michael Hancock said. “I’m proud to be here today to mark what is only the beginning of a long and prosperous metro-wide, public/private partnership.”

With room for eight commuter rail tracks and a 22-bay regional bus facility, Denver Union Station will serve as the central hub for routes spanning from the south metro area and Jefferson County to downtown Denver and Denver International Airport.

## New Light Rail Station Opens In Downtown Denver

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August 15, 2011

By Deb Stanley, KMGH-TV

DENVER -- A new light rail station opened near downtown Denver's Union Station on Monday.

The new light rail station is located two blocks west of Denver Union Station adjacent to the Millennium Bridge.

The new station has a shuttle connection to the 16th Street Mall.

Denver Union Station is a key part of the FasTracks rail expansion. The project's goal is to build 122 miles of commuter rail and light rail and city officials hope to eventually have a line from Denver International Airport to downtown.

FasTracks has a 2019 completion date but is currently underfunded.



## New Light Rail station opens in LoDo

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August 15, 2011

By KDVR-TV



RTD opened a new Light Rail station at 16th and Chestnut Place Monday.

The new station is two blocks west of the Union Station, where the old platform used to be. The 16th Street Free MallRide was also extended to the new station at the base of Millennium Bridge.

A formal ceremony marked the opening of the new station at 8 a.m. Monday.

The new construction was necessary as part of the FasTracks projects for the West Rail Line Project and Union Station Rail Project.

Other downtown stations that had been closed for the last three weeks for electrical upgrades also reopened Monday.

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New light rail station opening in downtown Denver

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August 15, 2011

By The San Antonio Express

DENVER (AP) — Mayor Michael Hancock will be speaking at the opening of a new light rail station in downtown Denver's Union Station.

Hancock and Regional Transportation District officials will be present at a celebration Monday morning marking the opening of the new rail station.

Denver Union Station is a key part of the FasTracks rail expansion. The project's goal is to build 122 miles of commuter rail and light rail and city officials hope to eventually have a line from Denver International Airport to downtown.

FasTracks has a 2019 completion date but is currently underfunded.

## Denver RTD opens LoDo LRT station

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August 15, 2011

By Railway Age Magazine

Denver's Regional Transportation District Monday opened a light rail transit station two blocks west of Denver Union Station, with opening ceremonies held as early as 7:00 a.m. local time.

The station, at 16th Street and Chestnut Place next to the Millennium Bridge in Lower Downtown (LoDo), will offer shuttle bus connections to the city's 16th Street Mall.

"Denver Union Station is the centerpiece of the RTD's FasTracks transit expansion program and will serve as a multimodal hub for the region," RTD said in a statement.

August 15, 2011

By Ryan Warner, KCFR Radio



[Photos: David Hill]

Starting today, light rail passengers headed to and from Union Station have a new station. It's the first finished element of the \$488 million redevelopment of Union Station. This new light rail stop is next to the Millenium Bridge downtown. It replaces one closer to the old train hall. Eventually, the area will become a major transit hub for Amtrak, commuter rail to DIA, buses and light rail. For an update, Ryan Warner speaks with Roger Sherman, who's spokesman for the project.

Mayor Hancock urges rail project wrap-up, is hopeful on tax vote

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By Jeffrey Leib, The Denver Post

August 16, 2011



The new Union Station light-rail platform opened to raves on Monday, about two blocks west of its previous location. Arriving passenger Barb Nisley said of the new facility: "It's beautiful." RTD also extended the free 16th Street Mall shuttle bus to serve the new platform. (RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post)

Denver Mayor Michael Hancock took advantage of the commemoration of the opening of RTD's new light-rail platform at Union Station on Monday to reiterate his pledge to complete the massive FasTracks transit expansion.

"My hope is that we go to voters in 2012," Hancock said of the possibility of asking voters in the eight-county Denver area to double the existing 0.4 percent FasTracks sales tax. The mayor discussed the tax in a post-ceremony interview with The Denver Post.

Of a possible vote next year, the mayor acknowledged, "We have to build a best case for it."

Hancock said among the factors public officials will weigh as they consider a tax vote are the state of the economy and what competing measures may be on the 2012 ballot.

Voters approved the original FasTracks tax in 2004, but since then, lower-than-anticipated tax revenues and higher-than-expected construction costs have combined to leave the project more than \$2 billion short of what is needed for completion.

In celebrating the new light-rail station, Hancock said, "Very soon, I want to take that 28 minute ride to DIA. That will continue to transform the entire region and connect Denver with the rest of the world."

The construction tab for the new light-rail platform is about \$37 million, but the Denver Union Station Project Authority also is spending \$113 million on a commuter-rail facility just outside the west doors of historic Union Station.

RTD expects to start construction in earnest soon on the \$1.1 billion East Corridor commuter train to Denver International Airport. It is due to open in 2016.

In opening the new light-rail platform at Union Station, RTD restarted service on its Central Platte Valley rail line that had been closed for a few weeks for various construction projects.

RTD also extended its 16th Street Mall free shuttle bus on Monday to serve the new platform.

"It's an easy transition," said Kelsey Ripley as she arrived on an E line train at the new station around 7:50 a.m. Ripley and a fellow commuter, Kelly Schaible, work only a block away at Gates Corp.

Some transit advocates had complained about Union Station redevelopment designs that placed the light-rail platform about two blocks west of its old location — and further from the historic station.

August 18, 2011

By Ken Schroepel, Denver Infill Blog

Now that the new light rail station is open at Denver Union Station, a number of people have asked me, “So, what’s next?” To answer that question, here is a list of milestones relating to the new Union Station transit center project that you’ll see over the next few years. Keep in mind that most of these dates are tentative and may shift around a bit as the project advances, but this should give you a general idea of the sequence of upcoming milestones for the project.

- August 2011: New light rail station opens. Wewatta detour begins. 16th Street Mall and shuttle service extended to new station.
- Late 2011: Development team selected by RTD for renovation/reuse of historic station.
- Early 2012: Construction begins on north wing building (IMA Financial HQ). Construction on south wing building will likely begin in 2012 as well.
- Early/mid 2012: Construction begins on historic station and Wynkoop Plaza.
- Early/mid 2013: West corridor light rail opens with service to Union Station.
- Late 2013/Early 2014: Underground bus facility at Union Station opens. Market Street Station closes. Downtown Circulator service begins.
- Mid-2014: Commuter rail station and all remaining project elements are completed. Amtrak moves back to Union Station.
- January 2016: East Corridor commuter rail line to DIA opens with service to Union Station.
- Mid-2016: Gold Line commuter rail line to Arvada/Wheat Ridge opens with service to Union Station.

Except for the two wing buildings, not included in the list are the private-sector developments planned for around the station. It is highly likely several of these will break ground within the next few years. Obviously, we’ll report on those when they are announced. Also, if I receive more accurate schedule information, I’ll edit/update this list.