

DUS News Digest

September 9, 2011 to September 16, 2011

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September 12, 2011

Jackie Ganfield, Alliance for Sustainable Colorado

Amidst the current construction zone at Denver Union Station, there are positive highlights to look forward to in the near future. A few highlights for the upcoming Denver Union Station include:

Commuter Rail Train Hall

This will be located on the west side of Union Station. It will include eight RTD tracks. The Commuter Rail Train Hall has been designed to serve up to 10,000 people an hour, which is a historic capacity for Denver's public transportation services.

Regional Bus Facility

Market Street Station will be replaced with an expanded bus hub located near Denver Union Station and on 17th Street. This hub will feature twenty-two bays for commuters. RTD regional and express buses will utilize sixteen bays while four will be dedicated to the Downtown Circulator (frequent shuttle service) and two for other commercial carriers or new services.

Public Spaces

The future of public space at Denver Union Station is a prime example of innovative community design. These spaces will create opportunities for community gathering and travel transition for travelers and the local community. The key elements of water and green space will become featured aesthetics within Denver's urban setting. These significant changes in public space will be known as Wynkoop Plaza, the 17th Street Promenade/Gardens, the Wewatta Pavilion and the Light Rail Plaza.

September 13, 2011

By Rick Anstey, Denver Infill Blog

As always, it's a delight to return home to see the progress at Union Station (I've been out of town for two weeks). This week, I'll get us up to date with multiple posts.

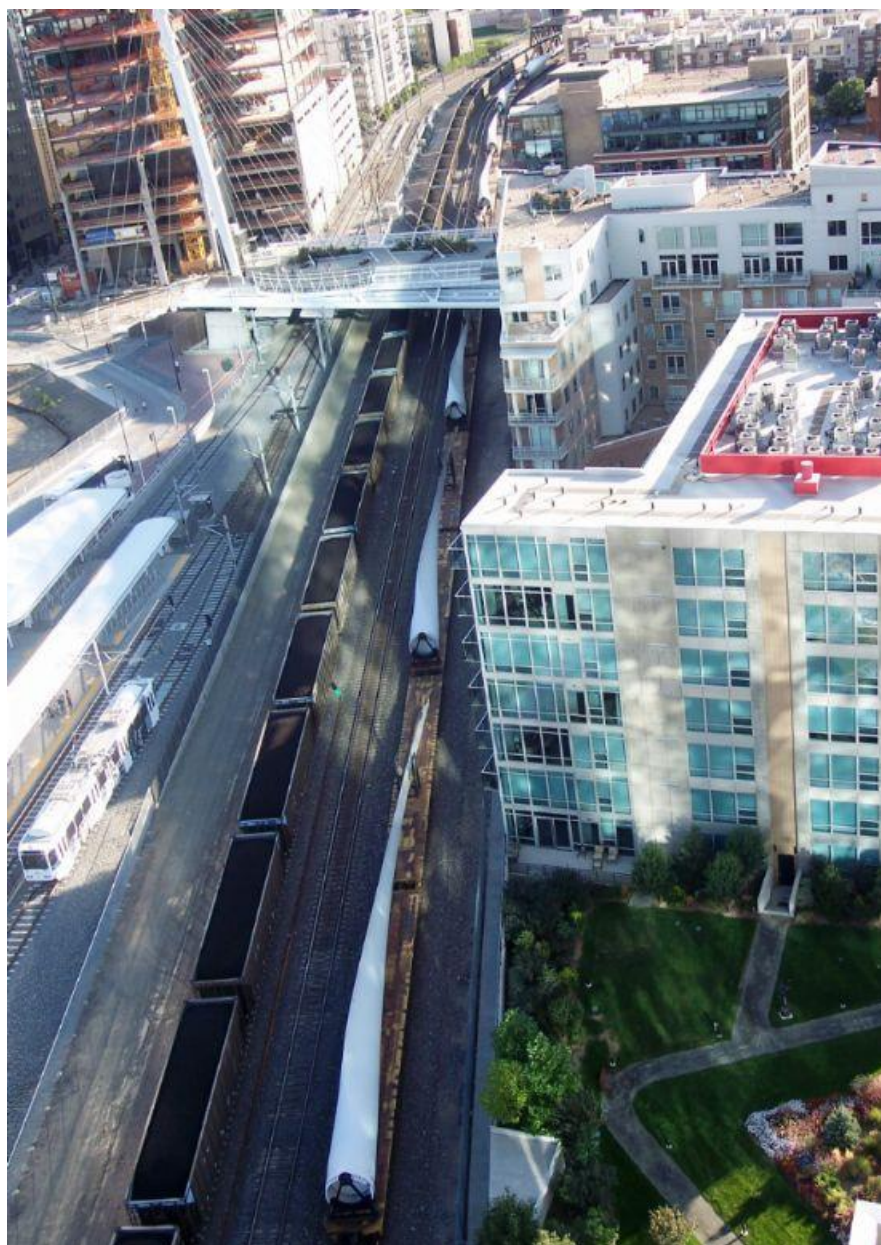
Today, we will look at the most obvious change. There is new pile of dirt along 16th Street. Excavation of the second half of the bus terminal is in full swing. As was the case with the first half of the bus terminal, this pile of "clean" dirt will eventually be used to back-fill behind the walls and to cover the roof. During my photo tour yesterday afternoon, I overheard two Kiewit employees taking about the pile. One mentioned to the other that it contains (or will contain) 65,000 cubic yards of dirt.



Almost all of the concrete that was the light rail station and mall shuttle station has been broken up, removed, and sent to the recycling location. Similarly, the top several feet of dirt that was contaminated by a century of coal dust is being removed from the site.

Today's quiz: What is missing in the photo above? As with the handful of previous Union Station quizzes, the prize for the correct answer is an all-expense-paid trip on the 16th Street mall shuttle.

Here is a bonus photo unrelated to the Union Station project. Last evening a train loaded with wind mill blades cruised through town. I counted 39 blades on 78 cars ... yes, it took two cars to carry each blade.



September 14, 2011

By Rick Anstey, Denver Infill Blog

You may have noticed some tear-drop shapes in the foreground of the picture in my previous posting (Kyle referenced them in his comment yesterday). Some are concrete; some are dirt; others are partially green. Here is a closeup of what will become the first elements of the project that are strictly ornamental.



The following two images are renderings from the DUSPA website. If you look carefully at the upper center of the first rendering, you can see that those tear-drop shapes will become gardens. The second rendering is a better view at the street level.





And what's up with the blue shrink-wrap on the new vent tubes? Well, there is a lot of work going on in the immediate area so the blue wrap is simply to protect them from damage.

September 15, 2011

By Rick Anstey, Denver Infill Blog

Some interesting information was discussed at a recent Denver Union Station Project Authority (DUSPA) meeting.

Union Station status, by the numbers (ya gotta love the precision)...

- The project is 46% complete.
- Light rail transit is 98.6% complete
- The bus terminal is 46.8% complete.
- Streets and plazas are 50% complete.
- Project completion is now projected for March 16, 2014, slightly ahead of the original schedule.
- \$211,000,000 of the \$488,000,000 budget has been paid out to date.

More good stuff ...

- The project team is monitoring for any settlement of the historic station due to the construction of the bus terminal and the drilling of dewatering wells to lower the water table. Shoring walls and a tie-back structure are being constructed to prevent any settlement.
- RTD selected artist Kevin Curry for the public art project. He will present his ideas to DUSPA at its November 2011 meeting.
- The pedestrian bridge at the north wing building is in final design review.

In case you missed the announcement in the business section of this morning's Denver Post, Zocalo Community Development plans to break ground early next year on a 12 story, 220 unit apartment building on 17th Street between Wewatta Street and Chestnut Place.

September 15, 2011

By Margaret Jackson, The Denver Post

A Denver development company plans to build a \$60 million apartment project at 17th and Chestnut streets, the first high-rise residential project announced for the Union Station neighborhood.

Zocalo Community Development expects to break ground early next year on the 13-story project, which will include 220 apartments and space for three restaurants, said David Zucker, principal of the company.

"We are part of the linkage between Lower Downtown, Union Station, (Riverfront Park and Highland)," said Zucker, who plans to seek Gold LEED energy-efficiency certification for the building.

The project, on the south side of 17th Street between Chestnut and Wewatta, is at the center of the transportation hub being built at Denver's historic Union Station.

"We are 200 feet to both sets of rail lines," Zucker said.

Zucker is partnering with Des Moines, Iowa-based Principal Real Estate Investors, one of the largest institutional real-estate managers in the country. Principal, which also invested in Zucker's Solera project at 20th and Lawrence streets, told Zucker in August 2010 that it was interested in doing a project in Denver's Central Platte Valley.

"When they asked me to find land over dinner, I was on the phone the next morning with some of those owners," said Zucker, who acquired the land from the Perlmutter family. "It was very clear that if it was not 50- yard-line real estate, they were not interested."

Bank of the West is providing construction financing for the project.

With several other multifamily projects planned for the area, Zucker is sure to have plenty of competition, said Bill Mosher, area director and principal of Trammell Crow, who is representing the Denver Union Station Project Authority.

Mosher estimates that up to 1,000 apartment units will be built in the area over the next few years, including projects at 1900 16th St. and 18th and Chestnut streets.

"You want to see this whole area developed as a mixed-use neighborhood, and this is a key part of it," Mosher said. "Denver Union Station is the ultimate transit-oriented development, and it should be the most sought-after area."