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The Wilshire Vermont Metro station now appears to stand on a cliff overlooking a yawning canyon.



Apartment Complex Going Up at Wilshire/Vermont Metro Station

- 449 apartments where subway station plaza once stood

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 25, 2005) There's a gaping hole in the ground where the Metro Red Line's Wilshire/Vermont plaza once stood. At the bottom, a bulldozer pushes dirt back and forth to level the ground.



A newly built ticket vending machine kiosk on the Wilshire/Vermont station plaza off Shatto Place.

But, look ahead 21 months to October 2006. A six-story complex called Wilshire Vermont Station, with 449 studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments, shops and restaurants – and a new subway entrance plaza – will dominate the busy corner.

Just north of the new development, LAUSD plans to build a middle school on Metro-owned property to be sold to the school district in the very near future.

In the nine months since ground breaking on April 23, 2004 the housing and retail project is only about 10 percent complete, due in part to delays caused by recent storms, says Dave Walker, Metro construction manager.



A construction worker checks a surveying instrument as a bulldozer works nearby leveling the floor of the construction site.

But, Walker notes that the main portion of the complex will be made of preformed steel-frame units that will be assembled on the site. "When the foundation and subterranean structure are completed, the building will go up real quick."

A complicated project

Wilshire Vermont Station will have two three-story underground garages flanking the subway station. The new plaza will be roughly the same size as the previous sunken plaza, but will be raised to street level, connecting with the existing plaza bordering Shatto Place.

Plans call for arching the apartment building over a new subway portal that will front on the Shatto Place entrance.

The existing station elevator shaft has been extended upward to the Shatto Place plaza to move patrons between ground level and the upper and lower train platforms. One elevator is currently operating and a second elevator is being added.

Three skylights will be converted to fresh air vents for the station, while continuing to bring light into the portal area. Ticket vending machines and information cases also have been added to the Shatto Place plaza.

PHOTOS: BILL HEARD



Construction machines provide a sense of the size of the construction site at Wilshire/Vermont.

Bus layover zone

The bus layover zone that originally spanned the station site has been shut and a new layover zone has been built on Metro-owned property across Shatto Place.

It will accommodate six 40- or 45-foot buses and five new Metro Liner articulated buses. The site includes a building housing an emergency generator and a smaller restroom building for bus operators.

Taisei Construction Corp, headquartered in Cypress, Calif., is building the project for a consortium of Wilshire Vermont Housing Partners, LLP, a limited partnership controlled by CalPers and MacFarlane Urban Realty Company. Urban Partners, LLC, is overseeing development of the project.

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