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Workmen place a temporary steel plate in the busway of Patsaouras Plaza.



PHOTOS: BILL HEARD

Plaza Reconstruction Begins; Project May Last Into October

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 13, 2004) Workers have begun the first phase of extensive repairs to the surface of Patsaouras Plaza, a project that is expected to last into mid-October.

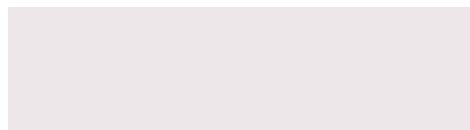
As the repairs progress, buses will have to be rerouted through the Plaza to avoid the restoration work. Signs will be placed along the Plaza to alert customers to the new locations for boarding and discharging passengers.

Since the Transit Plaza was opened in 1995, the constant passage of heavy buses has displaced and cracked the brick pavers in certain locations and has broken the granite blocks that define the pedestrian crosswalks.

The bricks are seated on bedding sand which was poured over a waterproof membrane on top of the reinforced concrete deck. Over the years, a large portion of the sand and the membrane have eroded.

Water seeped in

At the south turn of the busway, water seeping from the landscaped park undermined the layer of sand supporting the bricks, and the weight and movement of the buses caused them to buckle. Workmen have stripped the area of bricks in preparation for further repairs.



Colored brick pavers will replace the granite slabs that have defined the pedestrian walkways on the Transit Plaza.



One of the areas that suffered the greatest wear is just west of the south turn where an emergency hatch provided access to a DWP transformer that supplies power to the Metro Red Line. The installation of a steel plate over the hatch area added to the wear and tear of the brick pavers.

After consultation with Rail Operations staff, it was determined that the hatchway would be closed permanently, giving the roadway better support.

The area at the top of the Vignes Street ramp also was damaged by bus movement. New bedding sand will be placed and the pavers will be reinstalled.



Workmen have stripped the paver bricks from the deck of the south end of the roadway in the first phase of repairs to the Transit Plaza.

"The ideal option would be to close the whole Plaza down and permit the construction work to go forward and get the work done as quickly as possible," says Velma Marshall, director of Real Estate, "but, we can't keep that many buses off the Plaza for such an extended period of time. The impact to the surrounding streets would create a traffic jam of major proportions for the number of buses that use the Plaza."

Two-phase repair plan

The two-phase repair plan calls for minimizing inconvenience to passengers by bringing buses onto the Plaza from the El Monte Busway, then rerouting them around the repair sites to open bus berths before exiting via the east ramp.

Marshall expects the repairs to begin around the last week of July or the first week of August and continue for about 10 weeks.

Workers will take care during reconstruction to duplicate the unique tri-color pattern of the brickwork that defines the pedestrian, automobile and bus areas of the roadway. They also will remove the damaged granite and replace it with colored brick to mark the pedestrian

walkways.

The Plaza repair work is being performed by Charles Pankow Builders, the original builders of Gateway Center, and managed by Catellus Urban Development Corp., which provides property management services for the Union Station complex. Nakada + Associates, Inc. is responsible for the repair work design.

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