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## Facelifts, New Art and Rider Amenities for Historic El Monte Busway

By KIM UPTON

(April 28, 2006) Two El Monte Busway terminals and the historic El Monte Station – the busiest bus facility west of Chicago – are getting facelifts.

The Cal State LA and LA County-USC Medical Center stations have undergone \$2 million in modernization and security improvements and have been repainted and enhanced with beautiful tile murals. The project was spearheaded by Metro.

In addition, the El Monte Station has been landscaped, repainted and, of prime importance to riders, additional berths have been added to accommodate more buses. The El Monte Station project was spearheaded by Foothill Transit.

"We wanted to enhance the structures by making them safer, easier to use and more inviting for the thousands of people who travel through them every year," said Supervisor Gloria Molina, who headed the project fund drive. "At the same time we saw an opportunity to add art to make the areas – and our county – a little brighter."

"The two structures are essential to our system and they have served us and our patrons well," said Jack Gabig, San Gabriel Valley general manager. "It was time for a refurbishment, but we didn't want to replace them because they are structurally perfect for the job. The best answer was a makeover that would bring the stations up to today's standards."

## Preservation and modernization

Improvements at El Monte Station were the best way to preserve the distinctive site while modernizing it, according to Paula Lantz, Foothill Transit vice president.

"El Monte Station is perhaps the most vital transportation hub for Foothill Transit service," she said. "We anticipate these improvements will enhance the profile not just of the station, but of regional public transportation...."

Dedicated in July, 1973, El Monte Station was the nation's first bus terminal built exclusively for a mass rapid transit operation.

The circular structure, built for \$945,000, was designed to speed bus movement as well as passenger flow, according to a 1972 SCRTD publication.

The \$3 million station improvements just completed include six new bus berths, a new public address system, new lighting on the upper and lower levels and renovations of signage, shelters and benches.

In 1975, the El Monte Busway carried 12,000 passengers per day. Today it carries an estimated 40,000. The El Monte Station hosts an estimated 1,100 bus trips per day, making it the busiest station west of Chicago.

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