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This construction zone will soon be the new operator window and transit operations supervisor area. Venice Division 6's 107-year-old building is receiving a facelift.

Photo by Jimmy Stroup



Elderly Venice Division 6 Building Receiving New Life

- Multi-phase construction to make space more functional

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 13, 2008) When you're 107 years old, you probably won't look as good as the olive green transportation and maintenance building at Venice Division 6.

Metro believes, however, the building can look better and has begun a massive overhaul. The operation is meant to breathe functionality and life into the old building's bones.

"They've needed to make some changes here for more than 30 years, but there has always been the idea that our location would move," Transportation Manager Alva Carrasco said. "Since that doesn't look like that's going to happen after all, they've decided to redo it."

Well, not all of the building is pre-dates World War I. The transportation portion of the building – the two story part – only dates back to 1951, said Metro Historian Jim Walker. But the whole division, 57 or 107 years old, is getting some attention.

The building will be upgraded in phases. The present phase will gut and replace all the ceiling tiling, lighting, air conditioning and flooring in the management area.

The operator training room has been enlarged, and the window and transportation operations supervisor area have been redesigned to function better in its small space. The steno area is also being redone, as is the manager's office.

Space is limited at the division, so the work can't be done simultaneously. Construction personnel work mostly after hours so the bus operations are disrupted as little as possible.

Break room and locker room next

Next to be improved are the bus operator break room and the locker rooms. The women's locker room is getting a complete redesign to give women a real space to change into their uniforms – something they have little of now. Those areas will get the full treatment, too: new flooring, lighting, air conditioning and even plumbing.

The plans also include using a small part of the break room to put in a proper kitchen so the operators and maintainers have a place to cook.

"It's amazing how motivating it is with this progress," Carrasco said. "The morale has improved markedly with people at the division seeing that the agency is working to improve their conditions."

And in keeping with Metro's push for sustainability and environmentally conscious practices, the lighting will all be energy saving. They're even reusing furniture where that's feasible.

"Only in spaces where it can't fit with the new layout are we replacing the furniture," she said.

Construction is on schedule and Carrasco said the work is supposed to be finished by summer.