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L.A. Metro Restores Historic Lankershim Depot in North Hollywood

Thursday October 30, 2014

Valley Transit Landmark Gets 'Extreme Makeover' The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today announced that it has completed a \$3.6 million restoration phase for the historic Lankershim Depot near the Metro Orange and Red Lines in North Hollywood.

The train depot, originally built in 1896 and historically known as Toluca Southern Pacific Train Depot, has undergone a major transformation. Approximately 70 percent of the original structure has been completely rehabilitated. Metro restoration work over the last year has breathed new life into the depot, with contractors completing a new building foundation and roof, electric and plumbing systems, platforms, signage and seismic upgrades. Metro contractors have also rehabilitated sidings, eaves, windows and doors.

"Metro has given the Lankershim Depot a Hollywood-style makeover," said L.A. Metro Board Chair Eric Garcetti. "The depot has played a prominent role in the history of North Hollywood and will play a supporting role in its rebirth as the Valley's preeminent transit hub."

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The three-room depot with outside platform area now has its original paint colors of mustard yellow and brown, and features a sign on the roof that reads "Southern Pacific-Pacific Electric Station" that harkens back to the days when the depot primarily served as a passenger and freight rail stop during the early to mid-19th century.

"It's been a long time coming, but today we celebrate the revival of this historic train depot," said LA County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky. "Now seismically upgraded, fully repaired and revitalized to its original luster with an authentic period paint scheme, the Lankershim Depot is a striking visual beacon that reflects the San Fernando Valley's rich transportation legacy."

The depot will remain unoccupied until Metro determines the best use for the property and procures a future tenant. The chosen tenant will then make its required renovations to the interior, as well as plant landscaping around the depot's perimeter. Additional work upon occupancy will include the restoration of the corner historic park and railroad tracks adjacent to the station which will help restore the historic context of the site.

When the depot becomes available for occupancy is dependent upon the construction schedule for Metro's North Hollywood Underpass Project that will provide a safe, convenient underground connection between Metro's Red Line and Orange Line stations. Construction activities are now underway and the project is scheduled for completion in 2016.

The project now requires a portion of the depot property be used for construction staging as well as safe pedestrian access for transit riders walking between the Metro Orange and Red Lines. Metro may be able to get a tenant to occupy the depot earlier than 2016 by either clearing construction staging areas as soon as they are no longer needed, or by re-sequencing the planned restoration of a public park on the corner of the property.

Initial concepts for the re-use of the property include a bike hub, museum, coffee shop, restaurant or combination of those elements that provide the greatest public benefit.

"The newly renovated Lankershim Depot is a community jewel," said LA City Councilmember and Metro Board Member Paul Krekorian. "It highlights the historic role played by rail transportation in North Hollywood, and symbolizes the neighborhood's resurgence as a center of art and commerce. This and other Metro projects are making a big difference in the San Fernando Valley."

Metro began its first phase of restoration work in 2010 with the removal of contaminated soil, roofing and lead-based paint throughout the structure, along with the stabilization of the historic exterior woodwork.

This latest phase of restoration for the depot's exterior and foundation began in November 2013. Metro utilized \$2.5 million in Prop. C half cent sales tax monies and \$1 million from the City of Los Angeles. Restoration work was conducted by West Covina-based National

Incorporated under contract to Metro.

The Lankershim Depot is also part of 15.6-acre site in North Hollywood that is planned for future joint development. Within the next several months, Metro plans to submit a formal request to the development community seeking information and qualifications to build a large mixed-use development on Metro-owned parcels in the area. The depot itself is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Any future developer will be required to accommodate the depot's protected historic status in its development plans.

Other Metro transportation improvements are also planned for this area of the San Fernando Valley. Besides the North Hollywood Underpass Project, Metro's Universal City Station Pedestrian Bridge Project just one subway stop away has completed design and is headed into construction. The pedestrian bridge at the intersection of Lankershim Boulevard and Universal Hollywood Drive will provide a safe and convenient pedestrian crossing between the Metro Red Line Universal City Station and the Universal Studios Shuttle Stop. The bridge will also help alleviate traffic congestion in the area. Both projects are scheduled to be complete in 2016.

Restoration of the Lankershim Depot as well as underpass and bridge projects coincide with the ninth anniversary of the Metro Orange Line. The nation's premiere Bus Rapid Transit Line officially opened to the public on October 29, 2005.

Depot History

The Lankershim Depot was brought to its present-day site on rail cars and assembled by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1896, as the railroad built the first rail line through Toluca (North Hollywood). It is one of the few remaining wood frame, 19th century railroad stations in Southern California. The depot started out as a high platform station for loading trains from a local packing plant and cannery industries and farms. In 1911 the Pacific Electric Company opened its line through North Hollywood and the station was incorporated into dual service by Southern Pacific and the Pacific Electric Red Car until the demise of the Pacific Electric in 1952.

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Dozens of transit, highway and other mobility projects largely funded by Measure 501 are under construction or in the planning stages. These include five new rail lines, the I-5 widening and other major projects.

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