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Union Station's East Public Transit Plaza To Be Transformed

Renovation Will Enhance Visitor Experience in Conjunction with the KC Streetcar

KANSAS CITY, MO (August 18, 2016) — Today, Union Station officials announced plans and timelines to transform the Station's outdoor East Public Transit area. The East Plaza represents a key connection to area public transit, with particular importance to the recently opened KC Streetcar.

As one of only three stops on the Streetcar route to also provide pickups/drop-offs for RideKC Bus™ and RideKC Bike™ – and the only stop for Amtrak access – this East Plaza transformation will include both functional and aesthetic upgrades as it welcomes visitors who enter and exit the historic monument from the East Entrance, facing Main Street and the front of the building.

Changes to the East Plaza Terminal area will include single-level platform modifications to make the area even more ADA-friendly, additional seating areas for waiting riders, a lighted pathway to and from the Station and enhanced landscaping with public art elements, among other features. The project is expected to be completed early November 2016.

"We are excited for the renovations planned for Union Station's Public Transit Terminal," said Tom Gerend, Executive Director of the Kansas City Streetcar Authority. "We see 45% of our streetcar boarding at the Union Station stop and the improvements planned for this stop will aide in our riders being able to easily access the streetcar from multiple locations and provide added ADA-access as well."

Construction of the new Public Transit Plaza will begin on Monday, August 22nd. The area immediately adjacent to the streetcar platform will be completed first, with continuous access to the Union Station Streetcar stop open at all times during construction. The work will then progress to the north with completion of the project in eight to ten weeks, weather permitting. Clearly marked pedestrian re-routes will help guide guests to and from the Union Station Streetcar stop, with a focus on maximum maintained convenience for visitors and Station tenants alike.

"Since opening, the Streetcar ridership has exceeded projections, with more than 650,000 passengers and an impressive daily average of 6,800," George Guastello, president and CEO of Union Station said. "Union Station, being the most popular stop along the route and a primary gathering place for riders, has enjoyed this surge of pedestrian activity. As well, with the expectation of an increased visitor influx, a magnificent new Carriage Pavilion Bridge was built to connect our West Yards garage to our historic front – a now favored location for Streetcar riders. The Station was KC's transportation hub when we opened our doors in 1914, and so it is again today. These upgrades will create a wonderful new welcoming area for all mass transit and Station visitors."

The project will also include a permanent aluminum and bronze sculpture – as part of Kansas City's One-Percent for Art Program – to serve as one of several focal points in the new area. Inspired by murals of hometown artist Thomas Hart Benton, artists Gail Simpson and Aris Georgiades created *Transporters* – a sculptural blend of multiple forms of transportation – to publically share history in the new East Plaza garden. One such sculpture is already located on top of the Union Station Streetcar terminal.

“The opportunity to place artwork at historic Union Station inspired us to think about Kansas City as a transportation hub, and as a confluence of old and new,” Gail Simpson, a partner of the artist team of Actual Size Artworks, said. “The new streetcar system is one layer of many that trace the history of travel, with its aura of excitement and confidence. Because Kansas City was strategically located and played a major role in the westward expansion of the United States, it grew and developed along with advances in transportation. Trains and riverboats played a significant role, as did the former airline giant TWA and of course, automobiles. In these sculptures, several transportation forms have been combined into a ‘whole’. Wings, wheels, doors, rudders . . . the formal logic to convey such compelling history at such an iconic building is a privilege.”



Above: Courtesy of Roy Inman Photographs©



Above: Courtesy of City of Kansas City, MO

Customers are encouraged to visit unionstation.org for construction timeline and project updates.

“Union Station is Kansas City’s celebrated gathering place for events and occasions of all varieties,” Bob Regnier, Union Station Board Chairman, said. “It’s exciting and affirming to watch our community embrace every aspect of our ongoing commitment to outstanding visitor experience. This investment in our East Public Transit Plaza will be no exception. These enhancements to our historic home provide immediate returns in guest convenience and satisfaction. Record attendance this summer to our many Union Station venues and attractions is that proof point we love to see. Our relationship with RideKC™ and the hundreds of thousands of Streetcar riders has been nothing but positive and will continue to build with our transformation.”

The East Public Transit Plaza construction timeline includes:

Monday, August 22nd – Construction safety fencing will be installed along the East Public Transit Plaza/Main Street sidewalk and extend around the South side of the East Public Transit Plaza footprint. At this point, the East Entrance Doors to the Station will remain open and accessible.

Tuesday, August 23rd – Construction begins.

Immediately Following Labor Day (Tuesday, September 6th) – Construction safety fencing will be adjusted to encompass the North side of the East Public Transit Plaza footprint. At this point, the East Entrance Doors will be blocked. Those guests who would normally use the Station’s East Entrance and Exit doors will be re-routed thru the historic front doors, followed by a short route along the Station’s front sidewalk. (See attached diagram for specific pedestrian routes).

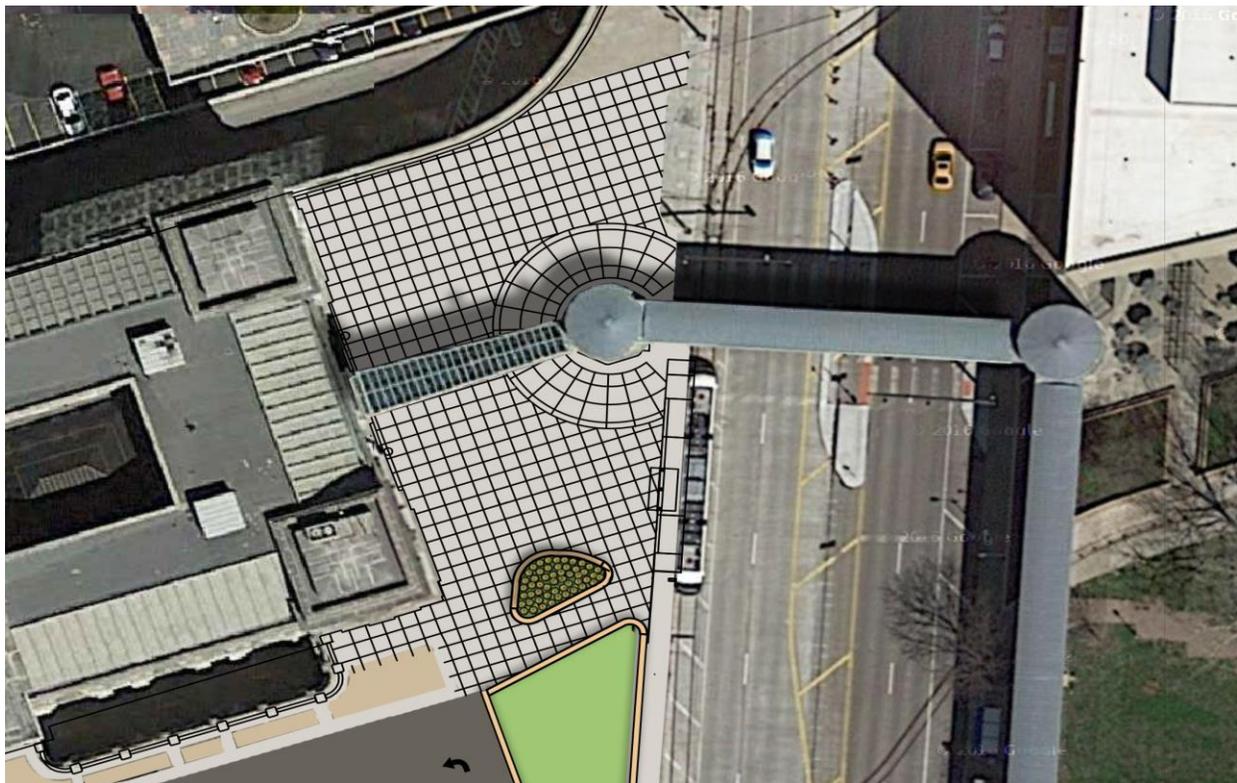
The Union Station South Plaza parking lot will remain open during construction with only a small portion fenced for construction access. Parking attendants will be available for specific questions and directions.

Those who have parked in our West Yards Garage – equipped with ADA-compliant elevators – should follow the same pattern or continue traveling alongside the front of the building toward the pedestrian walkway of the Carriage Pavilion Bridge.

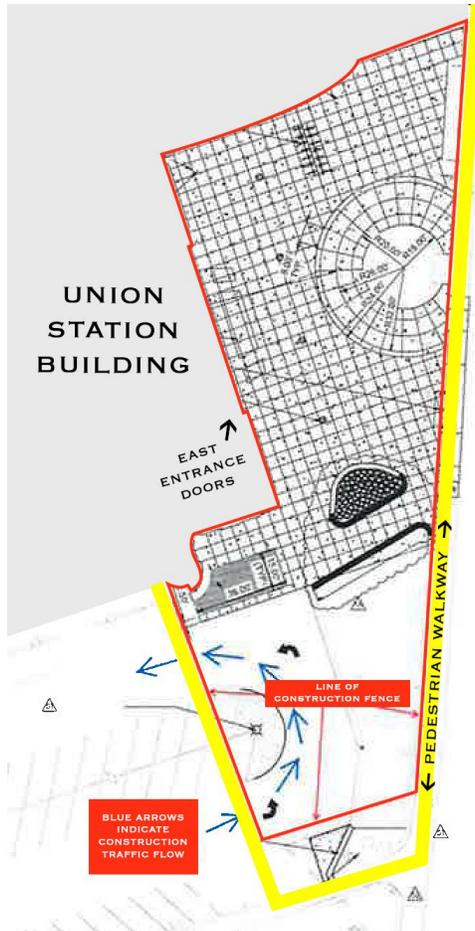
Visitors arriving to Union Station via The Link which connects to both the Westin Crown Center and Sheraton Hotel – and headed to the Streetcar – are asked to either 1) take The Link staircase or elevator (near Blue Cross Blue Shield building) to the Main Street level and follow traffic signals to cross, or 2) take The Link across Main Street to Union Station, follow the reroute signs to Grand Hall, then back out thru the Station’s front doors to the marked path back to the Streetcar stop.

“Although construction will be underway, so will daily operations of the Station with little to no visitor disruption,” Guastello said. “This is a wonderfully vibrant Kansas City icon and our priority is to provide a terrific guest experience and maintain the beauty and functionality of this Kansas City treasure . . . Union Station. The positive outcomes of these important investments will be enjoyed by our community for many, many years to come.”

Please see reference diagrams below. Also, visit unionstation.org for complete up-to-date information.



Above: Pictured is a bird's eye view of the new East Public Transit Plaza area adjacent to the Union Station Streetcar terminal. Image Courtesy: Burns & McDonnell Design Team.



Above: Vehicle and pedestrian re-routes will begin Monday, August 22nd. Visit unionstation.org for progress updates. Image Courtesy: Burns & McDonnell Design Team.



Above: Provided is a view looking west across Main Street toward the Union Station Streetcar terminal and the re-envisioned East Public Transit Plaza. Image Courtesy: Burns & McDonnell Design Team.

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About Union Station Kansas City, Inc.

Union Station Kansas City -- a 501(c)3 non-profit organization -- is a 100-year-old historical landmark and celebrated civic asset renovated and reopened to the public in 1999. The organization -- dedicated to science education, celebration of community and preservation of history -- is home to Kansas City's internationally-awarded Science Center; the popular Model Railroad Experience; the Arvin Gottlieb Planetarium; the Regnier Extreme Screen Theatre, H&R Block City Stage featuring live theater, and a selection of unique shops and restaurants. Union Station is also home to prominent area civic organizations and businesses, and regularly hosts world-class traveling exhibitions. Awarded "Top Banquet Facilities in KC" by KC Business Journal, the facility regularly hosts community events and private celebrations of all sizes. Visit www.unionstation.org for details. Also, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

About the KC Streetcar

The two-mile, north-south Downtown Streetcar travels along Main Street and connects the River Market to Crown Center and Union Station, serving the Central Business District, the Power and Light District, and the Crossroads Art District as well as numerous businesses, restaurants, art galleries, educational facilities and residents.

About the KC Streetcar Authority

The Kansas City Streetcar Authority (KCSA) is a not-for-profit organization formed for the purpose of managing, operating, and maintaining the streetcar once it is operational. In addition to overseeing streetcar operations, the KCSA supports system branding, marketing, safety oversight, public communication, and community engagement. While the KCSA is a separate entity, it works closely with the City of Kansas City, Missouri and the downtown Transportation Development District (TDD) to coordinate service development and long-term management of the streetcar.

For more information, contact Donna Mandelbaum with the KC Streetcar Authority at 816.627.2526 (office), 816.877.3219 (cell) or email at dmandelbaum@kcstreetcar.org. The KC Streetcar is also online at kcstreetcar.org and on [Twitter](#) (@kcstreetcar), [Facebook](#) (@kcstreetcar) and [Instagram](#).