

DOWNTOWN

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el centro

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Transfer Terminal Moves Forward

New hub expected to be complete by September '09

A new era of transportation is starting to take shape in Downtown El Paso. A new, state-of-the-art Sun Metro Transfer Terminal is set to be located at the corner of Santa Fe and Third streets.

"It is only the beginning of a transformation in how El Paso approaches mass transit," said Jane Shang, Deputy City Manager for Mobility Services. "Our goal is to make transit accessible, attractive and a viable travel option."

The new Downtown Transfer Terminal will allow for future service expansion, including the Bus

Shopping District.

More transit improvements are scheduled in the near future. For example, SMART 101, limited express bus service, is set to start in March. It will start at the Paso del Norte Bridge and end at the new Glory Road Transit Terminal, which will be located next to the UTEP campus.

SMART 101 will offer improved speed, convenience, and comfort through minimal stops and added passenger amenities. The first BRT corridor is planned along Mesa Street. The future Westside Transit Terminal is near final design.



Sign of Incentives

The sign on the new Doubletree Hotel was one of the first in Downtown to go up through the City incentive program allowed various reduced fees.



Rapid Transit (BRT) system intended to have greater appeal to motorists. BRT combines the quality of rail transit and the flexibility of buses.

The new terminal will include a 6,000 square foot customer service building with the latest amenities such as shelters, air conditioning inside the terminal, Wi-Fi Internet access and real-time bus information. There will also be a hot food concessionaire and a small amount of retail space.

The Downtown Transfer Terminal represents a multimillion dollar investment by the City in the area. Clearing work has already started at the site and the new facility is scheduled for completion in September 2009. The location is only two blocks north of the International Bridge crossing and only one block from the Golden Horseshoe

Sun Metro's ridership has surpassed 1 million passengers per month and is expected to continue to increase as service becomes more efficient, reliable and widespread. Since 2006, more than \$40 million has been committed to new buses, the acquisition of which has lowered the average age of the bus fleet from approximately 17 years to approximately three years. The investment by Sun Metro contributes to the ongoing greater Downtown revitalization effort.

This is just one of several major projects currently underway in Downtown El Paso, including renovation of the Mills Building, construction of a new federal courthouse and the development of the new Doubletree Hotel.

Online: www.elpasotexas.gov/sunmetro



Current View



Artist's Rendering

January Events

Musical — Kids-N-Co. presents the musical adaptation of "Little Red Riding Hood."

Where: 1301 Texas

When: Jan. 24-Feb. 15 @ 7:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, 2:30 p.m. on Sundays

Cost: \$5-\$7

Info: (915) 351-1445 or www.kidsnco.org

Young People's Concert — The El Paso Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Maestra Sarah Ioannides, presents its annual free concerts for area 5th graders.

Where: Abraham Chavez Theatre

When: Jan. 28-30 @ 10:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.

Info: (915) 532-3776

Celebrity Chef Dinner — Creations from some of the region's most celebrated chefs.

Where: Judson F. Williams Convention Center

When: Jan. 30 @ 6 p.m.

Info: (915) 544-2582

Business Spotlight: Vanilla Bar

Vanilla Bar was one of the first to make up what is now known as The Place at Union Plaza — and there is no sign of slowing down.

The lounge-style bar actually has a vanilla scent in the air and features high ceilings with veils throughout the entire bar. In addition, multicolored lights and chandeliers

in the exclusive VIP area provide an atmosphere like no other in Downtown El Paso.

"We want Vanilla to be multi-faceted, not only a bar," said owners Rafael Arellano and Octavio Gomez in *The El Pasoan*. "We will be having beautiful art exhibitions from local talent and will also bring the top DJs of the country to this place." In fact, Vanilla often features Esteban Carrasco, considered one of the best DJs in El Paso.

The bar can also host a variety of private functions, from birthday parties to large corporate

Events, such as Dos Lunas Tequila's first annual birthday blow-out in 2007. Birthday parties include complimentary champagne for you and your friends. Every Saturday, Vanilla features Al Munzo and DJ Julian V.

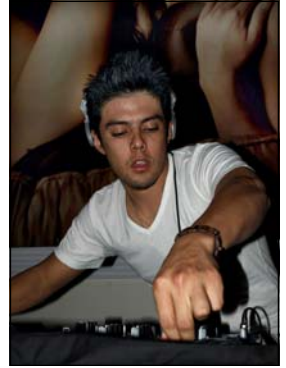
During the holidays, Vanilla was also part of a joint effort with other bars in The Place — 1914, Brick & Mortar and Shadow Lounge — in a food and clothing drive for those less fortunate in our community through the West Texas Food Bank.

Where: 115 S. Durango, Suite B

When: Friday-Saturday, 9 p.m.-2 a.m.

Phone: (915) 351-2000 or 630-6769

Online: www.myspace.com/vanillabar



TIRZ Board of Directors

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Property Highlight: 300 S. Florence

With two units already pre-sold, six exclusive loft units remain available in this mixed-use development (known as Fst Avenue Lofts) in the "SoGov" district in Downtown. In addition, 3,600 square feet of retail space is available for immediate pre-leasing. For more information, call (915) 204-0095 or email info@theelpasoproject.com.

To feature a Downtown building in *el centro*, send an email to rosalesv@elpasotexas.gov or call (915) 541-4670.



Meet the Board



Jesse Alvarez, TIRZ Board Member

Founder and Owner, Expert Refrigeration

Jesse Alvarez has a long history of community service. He is a former President of the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Past Chair Government Affairs Committee for the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce and Past Chair of Leadership El Paso. He also served on numerous boards, including the Del Sol Medical Center, Paso Del Norte Health Foundation and Norwest Bank. He is currently Chairman of the Board of United Bank and a member of the Paso Del Norte Group.

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