

Avenida de America finally gets a facelift

After being delayed for a year-and-a-half, the transportation hub is updating its heating and cooling system

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->Multi-phase improvements

->First phase: May 2011, improving passenger security systems, enlarging the Underground hall, new escalators, and improvements in ventilation and heating/cooling systems

->Second phase: 2012, screening off bus platforms, separating the passenger wait zones from the bus wait zones, soundproofing as well as building insulation

The over 200,000 people and 1,000 buses that pass through Avenida de América on a daily basis deserve a decent transportation hub. As a result, the regional government is beginning today the general improvements that were promised over eighteen months ago. Updated escalators, better connections with the Underground, and enhanced ventilation and heating and cooling systems are included in this massive remodeling project that is expected to cost upwards of 50 million euros between now and 2012.

Employees and users of the Avenida de América transportation hub have been asking for improvements for some time now, saying that it was an insufferable place to have to be. In fact, construction on the updates was supposed to begin a little over eighteen months ago but problems with the concessioner kept putting it off.

Transport minister Jose Ignacio Echeverría confirmed this statement in yesterday's visit. "This <transportation hub> has become obsolete. We want something similar to <the transport hub> Moncloa, but better and more modern. We're thinking about making "small airports" of the regional bus hubs.

The first phase, which will be carried out through May 2011, includes the following changes: improving the smoke extraction system in order to provide better conditions for neighboring buildings surrounding the hub, replacing seven escalators (including several emergency ones), remodeling the first and second-level commercial zones, and expanding the Underground lobby by moving the main control headquarters.

The project, which was first conceived by Madrid's Regional Transport Consortium, includes a second phase- which should be completed by 2012- in which all the corresponding architecture will be remodeled in order to screen off each individual bus waiting areas. This strategy copies the style of the existing transportation hubs throughout the rest of Madrid, and also serves to create a physical separation between the passenger waiting area and the bus waiting area in order to reduce noise and heat loss as much as possible.

Second phase, even more invasive

According to Minister Echeverría, the second phase is supposed to be more intensive than the first in that passenger and bus mobility will be affected. In fact, passenger vehicles will have to wait on the ground level and this requires strict planning in order to maintain the current available bus parking space. "We're aware of the upcoming problems, and I mean problems. The most important thing is to realize that we will have an amazing first-class transportation hub just as the workers and passengers deserve to have."

The Avenida de América transportation hub includes 36 bus platforms and a surface area of 47,850 square meters. More than 215,000 passengers who use its services on a daily basis travel by the 13 regional bus lines, 12 urban bus lines, 4 Underground lines, and long-distance trains that pass through the hub. In addition, the transportation hub includes a public parking lot with 392 spots for residents and 253 for the general public.