

CHATSWORTH PAST & PRESENT

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The Story of Today's Chatsworth Depot

Chatsworth has a rich history of Train Depots. The original Chatsworth Depot was built in 1893 near the intersection of Marilla and Topanga. Chatsworth's second depot was built around 1910, located south of Devonshire Street on the west side



Chatsworth Depot 1893

of the tracks. The 1893 and 1910 depots coexisted until fire destroyed the first depot in 1917.

Depot #2 was torn down in 1962, and Amtrak used a concrete platform on DeSoto Ave. as the Chatsworth Stop until the new Depot was built.



Chatsworth Depot 1917-1962

This article is the story of Depot #3, the 1996 Chatsworth Transportation Center....

After Depot #2 was dismantled in 1962, the 13 acre lot owned by Southern Pacific sat vacant until 1990. In February 1990 Southern Pacific received permits to build a lumber transfer station. The plan was to ship lumber by rail to the site and then transport the material by truck to its final destination. The lumber terminal would route 70 heavy lumber transport trucks per day in a loop off the 118 at Topanga Canyon to Devonshire and then to DeSoto back to the 118.

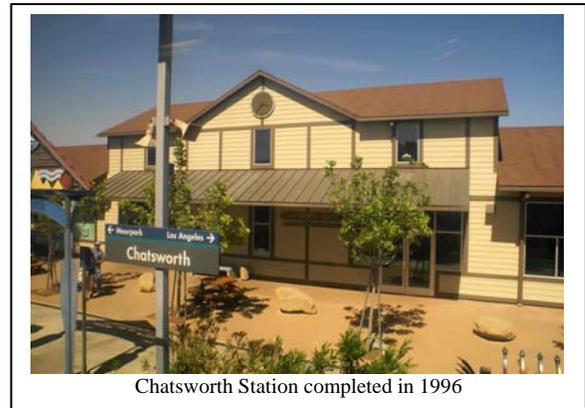
In July of that year, citizens became aware of the project and its ramifications. Residents quickly rallied to stop the lumber terminal, printing 3,000 flyers and distributing them to households and businesses. Susan Amerikaner and Michele DeGaetano organized the first community meeting held August 16th. It was a united front with citizens, homeowners associations, the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce and the LA School Board to encourage and support Councilman Bernson in his efforts to stop the project. Los Angeles city officials immediately issued an order halting construction of the 70% completed facility.

On August 21st, 150 people attended a meeting downtown, and in a unanimous vote, the City Building and Safety Commission agreed that they had erred in not first studying the effect the facility would have on nearby residents. The City Planning Commission voted 5-0 to implement a one-year building moratorium.

In October 1990, the County agreed to buy the 13 acres with plans for the site to become a transportation center. The community group Citizens for Chatsworth took the lead at this point, as Bernson joined civic and business leaders in calling for construction of a railroad station "that reflects the cultural and architectural heritage of Chatsworth". At a community planning meeting on October 25th, citizens were encouraged to express their views on the proposed new commuter rail station. The letter on the next page from Roy Rogers Jr. (Dusty Rogers) was read to the group.

In 1992, Metrolink service to Chatsworth was initiated with a platform and a few open-air shelters; soon thereafter, Amtrak relocated its stop there from the crossing of De Soto Avenue and the tracks further south.

The Chatsworth Transportation Center, completed in 1996, was designed to resemble the community's first depot. Local celebrity residents Roy Rogers and Dale Evans attended the station dedication that April. The goal of the committee charged with planning the facility was to have a hub of activity



Chatsworth Station completed in 1996

surrounding the Transportation Center. A child care facility and Chamber of Commerce offices occupy the building. The train lobby/waiting area provides a convenience store/snack bar surrounded by local history of the Chatsworth area on display. Additional shops include a local travel agent and during the few years while displaced by renovation, our local Chatsworth Library occupied a small section of the depot to keep library access open to the Chatsworth Community.

In June 2012, the Los Angeles Metro Orange Line was extended from Canoga to the Chatsworth Transportation Center. The dedicated busway has an accompanying bikeway alongside it. Amtrak, Metrolink, Orange Line, City bus routes, bicycle and pedestrian walk ways...Chatsworth has it all!

Chatsworth Historical Society