

Dinniman seeks to build career training center in Coatesville

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State Senator Andy Dinniman announced Thursday that he is working with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to build a career training and education center as part of the redevelopment of the new Coatesville Train Station.

"We are moving forward on a concept that will put a job skills, career training and education center right alongside Coatesville Train Station," Dinniman said. "This will be a major boost not only for the city's redevelopment, but also and more importantly, for the people of Coatesville who are patiently awaiting the restoration of rail service to their city and deserve direct access to the many opportunities associated with its redevelopment."

PennDOT officials plan to redesign, rebuild and restore frequent service to Coatesville Train Station. Dinniman said he has been pushing PennDOT with the idea of constructing a building that will have a dual purpose – a waiting area on one hand and a center for education and job training, with workspace for new entrepreneurs similar to the center at Walnut Street Labs in West Chester, on the other.



State Sen. Andrew Dinniman

In a December 8 letter to Dinniman, Toby L. Fauver, PennDOT's Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation, affirmed the department's "continued commitment to pursuing the development and construction of the updated station" and has "committed monies on the Transportation Improvement Program for this project."

In addition, Fauver wrote, "the proposal to construct a building on-site, to serve as a train station/waiting area and the remaining area/floors to be developed as an education center was introduced. The Department encourages the development of this concept."

The tentative site for the station building and training center is set for the 300 block of Fleetwood Street where an entire block of row homes were destroyed by arson fire in 2008.

Dinniman, who serves as Minority Chair of the Senate Education Committee, was tapped to lead the effort due to his involvement with institutions of higher education in the region and his ongoing efforts to engage Coatesville residents and community members in the redevelopment of the city's downtown.

"Last winter, I worked with City Council and the Coatesville Ministers' Alliance to bring together residents and community members to discuss what they thought the redevelopment of their city should aim to achieve," Dinniman said. "One of the top priorities on everyone's list was job training programs, educational opportunities and support for hiring local residents and increasing entrepreneurship."

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"I am fully committed to the success of this project and to forming the partnerships necessary to make to make it a reality," he added.

Dinniman said that the next step will be to form a committee of community leaders to guide the project, apply for additional state and foundation funding and attract private investment.

"There is still plenty of track to lay before we get rolling, but this is a tremendous opportunity for Coatesville," Dinniman said. "The new train station will be the front door to Coatesville and right alongside it, we are committed to putting a job and education training center – a pathway for the community to access all the opportunities the city's revitalization has to offer."

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