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County of Berks – Press Release

Berks County Commissioners support committee for passenger rail service project

Reading, PA— 2/4/2021 — The Berks County Commissioners unanimously agreed this week to support and participate in a Tri-County Rail Committee to pursue the restoration of passenger rail service in Berks, Chester and Montgomery counties.

A July 2020 study by Transportation Economics and Management Systems, Inc., funded by Berks Alliance, identified a strong case for the return of passenger rail service from Berks County to New York City and Washington D.C. via Pottstown, Phoenixville and Philadelphia. The study, “Restoring Passenger Rail Service to Berks County, PA,” found that restoring rail service would produce substantial economic benefits for all the communities along the line, including jobs, income and property development opportunities. The project would also generate benefits for travelers and could be effectively integrated into the Northeast Corridor rail services to both New York and Washington D.C.

Commissioners from the three counties involved determined that a committee of representatives from each county should be formed to help begin implementing the next steps of the project. The Berks County Commissioners intend to name Berks’ three representatives in the next few weeks, along with their recommendations for technical partners.

“This committee represents the high level of cooperation and leadership that will be necessary to successfully drive this project towards the goal of restoring passenger rail service for Berks County,” Commissioners Chair Christian Y. Leinbach said. “We are pleased to work with officials who believe in the project and its positive local and regional economic benefits.”

The “Restoring Passenger Rail Service to Berks County, PA” study is available for review on the County of Berks website: <https://www.co.berks.pa.us/Documents/Berks-Alliance-Reading-Rail-Business-Plan-Final.pdf>. PennDOT also recently published an analysis on restoring passenger rail service between Reading and Philadelphia. That study can be found at www.planthekeystone.com.

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