



DRPA Board Takes First Step Toward Reopening Franklin Square Station

The Delaware River Port Authority Commissioners have approved spending up to \$500,000 to hire a professional design consultant to begin work to reopen the PATCO Franklin Square Station in Philadelphia.

First opened in 1936 as one of two Philadelphia stations on the Camden Bridge Line, the station has opened and closed several times over the years. A refurbished Franklin Square Station opened to cater to bi-centennial traffic on May 14, 1976 and on July 4, 1976, 23,000 people exited the Franklin Square Station en route to bi-centennial events.

The Franklin Square Station was closed in 1979 because of low patronage and has remained closed since then.

DRPA Chairman, John Estey, says "substantial economic and demographic changes near Franklin Square have increased the viability of the station." Estey adds "PATCO riders could use Franklin Square to visit the National Constitution Center and the African American Museum as well as the planned President's House and National Museum of Jewish American History. In addition, further enhancements and amenities are being added within the park to make Franklin Square a destination in itself."

According to DRPA Vice-Chair, Jeff Nash, "reopening the Franklin Square Station should increase ridership among intra-city and reverse commuting customers. The station is also expected to result in increased weekend ridership." Franklin Square, itself, now attracts 750,000 visitors a year.

An online survey on PATCO'S website, www.ridepatco.org, asked riders their thoughts about reopening the Franklin Square Station. 588 customers have responded so far. 455 people, or 77.3%, believe reopening Franklin Square is a good idea. In addition, 297 riders, or 50.5%, said if Franklin Square were to reopen they would use PATCO more frequently for recreational travel.

DRPA CEO & PATCO President, John J. Matheussen, says "the design work should be done by the end of the year and then a decision will be made on how best to proceed with the project."

Matheussen also points out a refurbished Franklin Square Station will keep with the Authority's Green Initiative by incorporating low energy and very minimal maintenance L.E.D. decorative light fixtures.

It's expected the concourse areas will be similar to other PATCO concourse improvements slated to begin soon at the four subway stations in Philadelphia and two in Camden.

The Delaware River Port Authority is a regional transportation agency. DRPA owns and operates the Benjamin Franklin, Walt Whitman, Commodore Barry and Betsy Ross Bridges, PATCO and the Philadelphia Cruise Terminal. The DRPA also owns the RiverLink Ferry.

