

City breaks ground for Church Street Station intermodal center

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Hazleton Mayor Lou Barletta, joined by local, state and federal transportation officials, Sen. Raphael Musto and representatives from the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce and CAN DO, broke ground today on the \$12 million first phase of Church Street Station, the city's new intermodal center.

The transportation center, which will stretch from Church Street to Laurel Street, just one block south of center city's Broad Street (Route 93), will provide residents of Greater Hazleton a central hub for local, regional and long-distance bus transportation and help alleviate traffic congestion.

"We have worked hard for several years to secure funding and complete preliminary work to get us to this important event in our city's history," Barletta said. "This center will be a beautiful addition to our downtown and will be complemented soon by improvements and the beautification of our main downtown street once the Broad Street Corridor project begins."

Funding for Church Street Station has come from federal, state and county sources. To date, the City of Hazleton has procured \$12.2 million for the project, with 80 percent of the funding coming from federal sources and 20 percent from state and county entities.

"I want to thank all the people and agencies who have worked together to make this project a reality. It's wonderful to see plans for the intermodal facility come to fruition in the heart of our city's downtown," Barletta said.

Contractors have already begun work on the 10,000-square-foot first phase, and completion is expected by June 2009. Mine Street will remain closed between Church and Laurel streets until construction is completed.

Church Street Station will serve as the hub for Hazleton Public Transit buses that run throughout Hazleton and the surrounding areas. Regional and out-of-town busing companies, as well as taxi services, will also use the facility. The intermodal will include the offices of the Hazleton Parking Authority and Hazleton Public Transit and a retail space at the front of the building.

"PennDOT is looking forward to working with the City of Hazleton on this Transportation Enhancement Project. This project will not only improve the Public Transit amenities, but will also help to attract private investment in Hazleton's downtown," said Robert Sharp, chief of the Rural and Intercity Division for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Bureau of Public Transportation.

Chamber President Donna Palermo welcomed the announcement, saying, "We are very excited about this project. The intermodal, along with the upcoming Broad Street Corridor Project, will further revitalize downtown Hazleton. We are glad that these projects will help rejuvenate the downtown economy."

The intermodal has been designed to accommodate future phases, which would add five parking decks with enough parking for 250 vehicles, as well as additional offices.

Alfred Benesch and Company is the project manager for the intermodal and The Quandt Group, Inc., is the construction manager. The general contractor is Berger Construction Company. The design team for the project includes Highland Associates; Acker Associates, Inc.; O'Donnell and Naccarato, Inc.; and Renaissance Engineering, P.C.