

# Transformations: King of Prussia train project inches forward

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Greater Philadelphia is on a roll.

After two consecutive years in the national spotlight – for the pope’s visit in 2105 and the Democratic National Convention last year – the city and surrounding suburbs are poised for a period of advancement.

There are signs all across the region. In Center City, the cranes are in the air as new buildings, including the much-anticipated second [Comcast](#) tower, are taking shape. The western suburbs, including regional star King of Prussia, continue to be transformed into perhaps the most important business center. And long-battered Camden is becoming a major employment center and is starting to draw comparisons to Brooklyn’s now decade-old renaissance.

But severe challenges remain. While on an upswing, Greater Philadelphia’s economy has not grown as fast as its East Coast competitors – Washington, Baltimore, New York and Boston. Taxes and regulations continue to hamper job growth in the city and in New Jersey. Delaware is waking up to an economic earthquake as the state’s signature company – DuPont – merges with Dow Chemical.

Infrastructure remains a concern, as bridges and highways continue to age. One of the region’s best assets – the SEPTA transit system – has been beset by delays, a strike and a shortage of rail cars because of a structural problem.

And poverty and crime – as well as our undeserved reputation as a tough and unwelcoming place – continue to be major challenges.

In short, we are at a crossroads. Philadelphia’s potential as a city and a metropolitan region is boundless – if we take our problems seriously and implement solutions. Boston did it in the early 1980s. New York did it in the 1990s.

We can excel, in 2017 and beyond – if we dare to dream of the possibilities. What we published on our Jan. 20 print edition are dozens of short, concise stories about the projects, events, innovations and people reshaping Greater Philadelphia. On this site we will post the stories as premium content. We hope you enjoy it.

**KING OF PRUSSIA RAIL PROJECT**

SEPTA continues to study a proposed rail extension that would run four to five miles from Norristown to King of Prussia and have eight to 10 stops. The estimated \$1 billion to \$1.2 billion project remains in the planning stages but is gaining momentum and interest. SEPTA is in the middle of a draft environmental impact statement as well as looking at different alignments for the rail line and their impact on the environment. Funding is also being pursued.

**Why it's transformational:** The addition of rail into King of Prussia could add an estimated \$540 million to \$946 million to the assessed value of existing real estate in that section of Upper Merion over two decades and encourage developers to construct upwards of 8 million square feet of new space valued at \$840 million, according to a study of the proposed project. The rail line could also alleviate long, frustrating hours spent slogging slowly along the Schuylkill Expressway where rush hour is seemingly every hour these days. For that, there is no number, but it's sure to be of tremendous, unquantifiable value.

**The players:** SEPTA, King of Prussia District, Upper Merion, state and federal funding sources