

Year in Review: Coatesville's revitalization on the fast track

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Gov. Tom Wolf, center, along with state and local officials, toss dirt at the groundbreaking for the new Coatesville train station. (BILL RETTEW – MEDIANEWS GROUP)

COATESVILLE — While the world has continued to grapple with the ongoing pandemic over the past year, there have still been moments of hope and progress to celebrate.

Locally in Coatesville, the city has taken several significant steps forward in its revitalization efforts.

Perhaps most notably, work on Coatesville's new train station is getting off the ground and gaining steam.

Groundbreaking for Coatesville train station

On Oct. 22, Gov. Tom Wolf, along with several state and local officials, shoveled and tossed dirt to mark the groundbreaking for the new Coatesville train station.

Wolf noted that he is a long-term user of Amtrak's Keystone Corridor. He said that the Coatesville station will meet the needs of the 21st Century and improve equity as well as accessibility.

The governor had voiced support for President Joe Biden's bipartisan infrastructure bill – which Biden signed into law as the "Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act" on Nov. 15 – and its expected major impact on public transportation.

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The new law includes \$22 billion in direct funding for Amtrak, \$6 billion of which is expected to be used for improvements along the Northeast Corridor.

The target date for completion of Coatesville's new train station is the fall of 2025. The station will feature two platforms, at 536 feet each, and elevators. A pedestrian tunnel will connect one side to the other.



The Coatesville Train Station and the surrounding area are set to be renovated.
FRAN MAYE - MEDIA NEWS GROUP

State Rep. Dan Williams, D-74th of Sadsbury, joyfully anticipates the new station.

"It is not merely an investment in brick and mortar, but an investment in people," Williams said. "It gives hope and opportunity to change the narrative."

State Sen. Carolyn Comitta, D-19th of West Chester, told the

audience of about 120 well-wishers that partnerships are key.

"The station will be accessible to all, open to all and a catalyst for revitalization," Comitta said.

In early December, an additional \$2 million in state funding for the parking and transportation facility adjacent to the site of the new Coatesville train station was approved, giving a huge boost to the city's revitalization efforts.

The latest funding comes in addition to \$650,000 in state multimodal transportation grant funding she helped secure for the project in the spring and a \$1 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant she announced last year.

The funding was awarded to the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) of the City of Coatesville, which is working to construct the parking facility to support the train station, widely considered a lynchpin of the city's ongoing revitalization plans and strategic economic development vision.

Coatesville gets \$91,000 in funding to spur revitalization efforts

On Nov. 10, Coatesville 2nd Century Alliance was awarded \$80,000 in funding, and Habitat for Humanity Chester County was awarded \$11,250 through the state's Neighborhood Assistance Program.

The Coatesville 2nd Century Alliance will use the funding to continue its revitalization plan for the downtown commercial district of the city of Coatesville by awarding three façade improvement grants to

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enhance the existing building stock and entice new businesses to the district and establish a systemized, reliable and regular cleanup program to mitigate the weeds and litter that line the streets.

Habitat for Humanity Chester County will use the funding to complete an affordable housing development in the city of Coatesville.

County officials agree to continue support for Coatesville's revitalization

On Dec. 20, Chester County Commissioners Marian Moskowitz, Josh Maxwell and Michelle Kichline renewed the County's partnership with Coatesville 2nd Century Alliance, in support of the revitalization and economic development of the City of Coatesville.

The Board of Commissioners extended a contract through the Department of Community Development at its final public meeting of 2021, providing funding in support of two full-time positions dedicated to working with the City of Coatesville, the County of Chester, and private and public organizations for the overall advancement of the city. Specifically, the funding maintains the partnership with Coatesville's 2nd Century Alliance, and extends the contracts of Sonia Huntzinger as Economic Development Administrator, and Urias Cole as Community Coordinator for the City of Coatesville.

Chester County Commissioners' Chair Marian Moskowitz said, "We are pleased to extend our partnership with Coatesville's 2nd Century Alliance, ensuring that Sonia and Urias can continue the excellent work they have been doing, and the inroads that they have been making to help facilitate the economic and community resurgence in Coatesville. Their work is ensuring that the Coatesville community is getting stronger through efforts from within and without."



Development for Coatesville's revitalization is on the fast track, as the city received a new round of funding.(JUSTIN CHAN- Valley Creek Productions)

Sonia Huntzinger was appointed as Economic Development Administrator by the Chester County Board

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of Commissioners and representatives for Coatesville's 2nd Century Alliance in March 2016. Since that time, the 2nd Century Alliance has secured a Wells Fargo regional grant for a neighborhood strengthening initiative that focuses on improving homeownership rates and public safety for the city's residents.

"This funding has been valuable to ensure that the people of Coatesville are able to participate in, and benefit from the economic growth, rather than be displaced by it," noted Huntzinger.

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