

Princeton University alumnus' railroad company expresses interest in Dinky train

By Jon Offredo / [The Times of Trenton](#)
January 04, 2013

PRINCETON — As Princeton University prepares to begin a redevelopment project that would controversially move the terminus of Princeton's beloved Dinky line, a university alumnus who heads a railway company said his firm has offered to take a management role in the Dinky's operation.

Henry Posner III said he sent a letter to NJ Transit and municipal officials last fall expressing his company's interest in the 2.7-mile commuter train line.

"It was a general expression of interest," he said yesterday. "Railways are a very complex business and there are any numbers of ways that this could be done."

Posner declined to say if the company was interested in managing or actually owning the Dinky line.

His company, Railroad Development Corp. of Pittsburgh, is involved in railroad transit worldwide and runs a line from Hamburg to Köln in Germany.

"If we can run 500 kilometers in Germany, than we can probably run five kilometers in New Jersey," he said.

Posner said that in the 1970s he helped market the Dinky when he was an undergraduate at Princeton University. He said in 2011 he expressed an interest in partnering with the borough to purchase the Dinky station from the University, but no deal was made.

Posner is also a member of the Save the Dinky group, which has fought to keep the Dinky station and terminus in its current location and not moved 460 feet south, as called for by the university's arts and transit project. The Princeton planning board approved the university development last month, but opponents have said they will appeal the decision.

Posner said his involvement with the citizens group is entirely separate from his company's interest in the Dinky station.

"As far as the location of the station, my only comment is that whenever you move transportation away from the market, you are going to lose riders," he said. "That's between NJ Transit and the University."

NJ Transit spokeswoman Nancy Snyder said Posner's letter was not the first expression of interest in the Dinky that the agency has received.

"We plan to meet with the officials regarding their interest. No date has been set and we'll hear what they have to say," she said.

She stressed though that there are no plans to change the Dinky service.



A file photo of the Dinky train station in Princeton.
Martin Griff/The Times

Princeton University vice president Robert Durkee said it was his understanding that NJ Transit was not interested in having the Dinky run privately.

“NJ Transit, in all of the settings where I’ve seen them, have sent a fairly clear signal that this is not something they’d be interested in exploring,” he said.

Even if Railroad Development Corp. were to gain a role, such a change would not affect the 1984 agreement in place between the University and NJ Transit, which says the university has a right to move the terminus, Durkee said.

“Even if it involved ownership, it wouldn’t change the plan because the agreement we have with NJ Transit would apply to any subsequent owner of the Dinky,” Durkee said.

Construction of the arts and transit project is scheduled to begin in late February or early March. Durkee said the university hopes to have the new Dinky terminus built by late fall of this year, with the new station to be completed by fall of 2014.

The project as a whole is scheduled for completion in 2017, Durkee said.

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