



News from
DEL-MAR-VA
and
Southern N.J.

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RAILPACE NEWS

Save the Dinky

Princeton University grad and Railroad Development Corp. Chairman Henry Posner has objected to a plan stripping 460 feet from New Jersey Transit's "Princeton Dinky" branch line. Posner has written to NJ Transit, offering to manage the line. Posner has suggested Pittsburgh-based RDC might consider buying the line outright, but it is unclear if NJ Transit could, or would, entertain such an option. The branch, already shortened more than once in the past, runs roughly three miles from the Princeton University campus to NJ Transit's Princeton Junction Station on the Northeast Corridor. In conjunction with two other investment partners, RDC operates the Hamburg-Koln Express in Germany, a passenger service which began operations last July, linking the two cities and other intermediate points.

Princeton University has bullied NJ Transit and both Princeton Borough and Princeton Township councils to allow for the removal of rail right-of-way in order to develop the existing station into a restaurant and cafe. The university claims that as the owner of the Princeton Station (acquired in 1984), it has a contractual right to move the terminus. NJ Transit lamely concurred with that opinion. But the stance has been challenged by numerous grassroots groups, including Save the Dinky and the New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers (NJ-ARP), which claim the move makes rail service less convenient and runs counter to nationwide trends to extend passenger rail, not truncate it. Save the Dinky President Anita Garoniak said, "We would welcome any proposal that aims to preserve our historic train station as an operating train station in its current location and certainly would be thrilled if a company like Henry Posner's were to take over the service. This would be a win-win for everyone—taxpayers, the community, and the university."

RDC Proposes Dinky Takeover: Railroad Development Corporation (RDC) Chairman Henry Possner has offered to manage the commuter agency's three mile Princeton to Princeton Junction Branch, often referred to as the Princeton Dinky. *Railway Age* Magazine also noted Posner might consider RDC's outright purchase of the line. The magazine noted that Posner, a graduate of Princeton University, stresses the company's interest in the rail line is based on sound business principles. He told *Railway Age* that "We're approaching this as a standalone business opportunity." No word from NJ Transit concerning this proposal.