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SEPTA MODERNIZES VILLANOVA TRAIN STATION INCLUDES STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS

A \$30.6 million project that will modernize Villanova Station on the Paoli/Thorndale Regional Rail Line is making steady progress in Villanova, Pa. Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is overseeing construction of the work, which should be completed by December.

SEPTA Senior Program Manager, Natalia Bobak noted that the project was split into phases due to financial constraints. Funding was received from federal grants initially; however, once Act 89 was enacted, further funding came from the state.

Phase I will improve station accessibility and will include construction of a new, wider pedestrian tunnel with access ramps and stairs, additional parking spaces, storm water management improvements, new signage, lighting and passenger amenities. The first phase addresses accessibility throughout the site from inbound and outbound platforms, while Phase II includes the high-level platforms, new canopies, station building improvements and canopy rehabilitation. Phase II also addresses accessibility to and within the station building. Ultimately, improvements also will be made to the station house itself.

Storm water improvements and the parking lot expansion have already been completed. The tunnel subcontractor completed installation of the tunnel liners and installation of support of excavation for the ramp system. The biggest challenges on the job involve working in close proximity to the railroad track, in addition to the time and distance restrictions for driving sheet piles.

Engineer Bob Morro, vice president of facilities, Villanova University, said students will benefit from the construction in two ways.



"The SEPTA station is between the west campus and the main campus, so we have students who have to cross the tracks back and forth to go to their classes. There's a road over the railroad racks and a tunnel underneath them. Most students go under because there are fewer physical steps. They take the tunnel a couple of times a day. The old tunnel is still fully operational, but it's dark, dingy and floods quite often. It's six feet wide, and I think the new one is 12 or 15 feet, so it will be easier to use.

"In addition, our students frequently take the SEPTA rail into the city of Philadelphia. If they are going out at night or on weekends, the station is super convenient, so the improvements will definitely be appreciated."

Villanova station is located at North Spring Mill Road (PA 320) near County Line Road and serves most Paoli/Thorndale Line trains. The building was constructed in 1890 by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and is within the campus of Villanova University. The eastbound and westbound platforms are ground-level and are connected by an underground non-handicapped accessible pedestrian tunnel running beneath the tracks. There are numerous parking spaces at the station, including SEPTA permit parking. The station is 12.0 track mi. from Philadelphia's Suburban Station. SEPTA serves Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

(By: Cindy Riley, CEG Correspondent)

(This story can be found on Construction Equipment Guide's website at www.constructionequipmentguide.com.)



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Bridgeport, NJ 08014
Phone: (856) 467-2276 / FAX: (856) 467-3476

Southwest Pennsylvania
591 East Maiden Street
Washington, PA 15301
Phone: (724) 206-0348 / FAX: (724) 206-0380

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510 Heron Drive
P.O. Box 521
Suite 306, Pureland Complex
Bridgeport, NJ 08014
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(856) 467-3476

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