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**Application for Project  
Authorization Under the New Jersey  
Register of Historic Places Act**

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

**Princeton Branch Track Removal Project**

**Borough of Princeton  
Mercer County, New Jersey**



PREPARED BY NJ TRANSIT  
JANUARY 20, 2012

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# Application for Project Authorization Under the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act

**NJ Department of Environmental Protection · Natural & Historic Resources · Historic Preservation Office**

**Date** January 20, 2012

**Applicant** NJ TRANSIT

State, County or Municipal agency or instrumentality thereof, applying for authorization.

**Note:** If an application is being submitted by an authorized representative on behalf of a public agency, written authorization from the public agency must be submitted with the application.

**Project Name** Princeton Branch Track Removal Project

**Contact Person(s)** Dara Callender

**Address** One Penn Plaza East, Newark, New Jersey 07105

**Telephone** (973) 491-7205 **FAX** (973) 863-4538 **E-mail** DCallender@njtransit.com

**(FOR HPO USE ONLY)** Technically and Professionally Complete Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## New Jersey Register Listed Property Affected by Project

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**Name of listed Property or Historic District** Princeton Railroad Station

**Address of listed Property** University Place

**Block #** Section 45.01 **Lot #** 4 and 39

**Municipality** Princeton **County** Mercer



## Required Documentation

Please enclose the documentation listed below as required by N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.1(d). The required documentation, taken with the project description, must be sufficient to completely describe the proposed undertaking. When using attachments, please label using the letters and numbers (e.g., A.1.c) as listed herein.

1. Complete lists (include addresses) of:
  - a. Local historical societies  
Erin Dougherty, Executive Director, Historical Society of Princeton, 158 Nassau Street,  
Princeton, NJ 08542
  - b. Local historic preservation commissions  
Nora Kerr, Chair, Princeton Historic Preservation Review Committee, PO Box 390,  
One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08542

- b. Local historic preservation commissions, continued  
**Idamis Perez-Margicin, Chief, Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission,  
County of Mercer Division of Culture and Heritage, McDade Administration Building,  
640 South Broad Street, Room 417, PO Box 8068, Trenton, NJ 08650-0068**
- c. All public and private property owners of registered property directly affected by the project. N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.1(d) stipulates that this list shall be the list of all private and public property owners (including right-of-way owners) named in the official municipal tax records and maps as of the date of the application's submission and shall be notarized by the appropriate municipal official. This list is not the list of property owners within 200 feet of the project; (although submission of that list would be acceptable) it is the list of owners of registered properties which are directly physically impacted by the project.  
**Trustees of Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544**
- d. All affected local government units, any agencies or instrumentalities thereof concerned with historic preservation, and any statewide organization and local organization specifically concerned with historic preservation in the area of the undertaking's potential impact.  
**Robert W. Bruschi, Princeton Borough Administrator, PO Box 390, One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08542**  
Applications which do not include these four lists are not complete and cannot be reviewed until this information is received.

- 2. Maps **See Attachment A**
- 3. Photographs, both of the overall project area and of specific project work areas. Photographs should be labeled as to location and keyed to a plan sheet. (Although optional, slides may augment the application and facilitate the presentation to the Historic Sites Council of a project that is an encroachment.) Photographs should be labeled (identifying site location and keyed to architectural or engineering plans. **See attached**
- 4. Complete architectural or engineering plans – including a site plan (2 sets) **Not applicable**
- 5. Specifications (1 set) **Not applicable**
- 6. Proposed agreements (easements, lease, deed, covenant, etc.) applicable to the undertaking. **See Attachments C, D and E**
- 7. If the application proposes demolition of all or a substantial portion of a property, the application shall include a structural assessment and an evaluation of whether the property could be reasonably repaired, to be prepared by an architect or engineer with demonstrated experience with historic properties.
- 8. If the application proposes relocation of a New Jersey Register listed property, information and documentation required in N.J.A.C. 7:4-3.2(c) must also be submitted.

## **B. Project Description**

Please describe the proposed undertaking in full detail. Where functional or programmatic constraints call for changes to historic configurations, those constraints should be explained very clearly. (Use lettered attachments when necessary.)

**See Attachment B**

## **C. Statement of Purpose**

Please state the need and/or purpose for the proposed undertaking. Address public benefit of the proposed project. (Use lettered attachments when necessary.)

**See Attachment B**

## **D. Alternatives/Mitigation**

Please describe alternatives (or actions taken) that would avoid, reduce, or mitigate any encroachment of the project on the affected New Jersey Register listed property. Discuss feasibility and prudence of alternatives. (Use lettered attachments when necessary.)

**See Attachment B**

## **E. Project Funding**

Please list sources of funding, including federal funds.

**The project will be executed using private funds.**

## **F. Permits**

Please list permits needed for the proposed project, including any necessary federal permits, licenses or approvals.

**No permits are required for the execution of the project.**

## **Other Information**

The following information may also be needed depending on the nature of the project: **Not required**

**Archaeology:** If an archaeological survey or other pertinent survey has been undertaken for this project, it must be included with the application. In all cases, when a professional archaeological survey is not included with (or proposed in) the application and the project will include ground disturbance, the rationale for not conducting survey must be enclosed. This rationale for all areas of potential ground disturbance should include detailed documentation of known prior uses (both modern and historic) and prior disturbances. Areas of potential ground disturbance include construction staging areas, areas of grading, etc. on the New Jersey Register listed property.

**Civil Engineering**  
(particularly road & bridge projects): Data which informs the basis of the project's design such as existing road limitations, traffic counts/studies, road classification, design speeds, design hourly volume, and predicted levels of service. Please provide specific references to the relevant AASHTO design tables. May include an Alternatives Analysis Report.

**Code:** Where a code requirement affects the treatment of historic features or spaces, please provide specific references to the section of the code involved and indicate if flexible application of the code for historic buildings as allowed by the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code has been sought or granted.

**Economics:** If economic factors affect an aspect of the project or the design of a project as a whole, a detailed and documented breakdown of the costs involved should be attached to the application.

**Engineering:** If engineering concerns such as structural stability or load bearing capacity, etc. affect the project's impact on the historic property, engineering reports, prepared by an engineer with demonstrated experience working with similar historic resources, should be attached to the application.

## List of all Documents

Please provide a complete listing of all documents including title. In all cases, when a professional archaeological survey is not included with (or proposed in) the application and the project will include ground disturbance, the rationale for not conducting survey must be enclosed.

### Attachments:

**A –Maps**

**B - Sections B, C and D Narrative and Illustrations**

**C - Agreement of Sale (1984)**

**D - Deed (1985)**

**E - Amendment to Agreement of Sale (1996)**

**F - Princeton Community Master Plan Historic Preservation Element (1996)**

## Review Process

Applications are submitted to the Historic Preservation Office (HPO). Within 30 days, the HPO will evaluate the application for technical and professional completeness. Faxed copies of applications do not formally initiate project review. Within 45 days of receipt of a technically complete application, HPO will determine if the project constitutes an encroachment and notify the applicant accordingly. If the HPO determines that a project does not constitute an encroachment (that the project is in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties), an application is approved administratively by the HPO and does not require review before the Historic Sites Council. A project which constitutes an encroachment is scheduled for an upcoming Historic Sites Council meeting, and the applicant is notified. The Historic Sites Council makes a recommendation in the form of a formal resolution to the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. The Commissioner must act within 120 days of receipt of a technically complete application. When the applicant has tight project schedules and deadlines to meet, the HPO strongly encourages early submission of applications.



State of New Jersey  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Natural & Historic Resources  
**Historic Preservation Office**  
P.O. Box 404, Trenton, New Jersey 08615-0404  
TEL: (609) 292-2023 FAX: (609) 984-0578  
[www.nj.gov/dep/hpo](http://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo)

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Revised 8/04

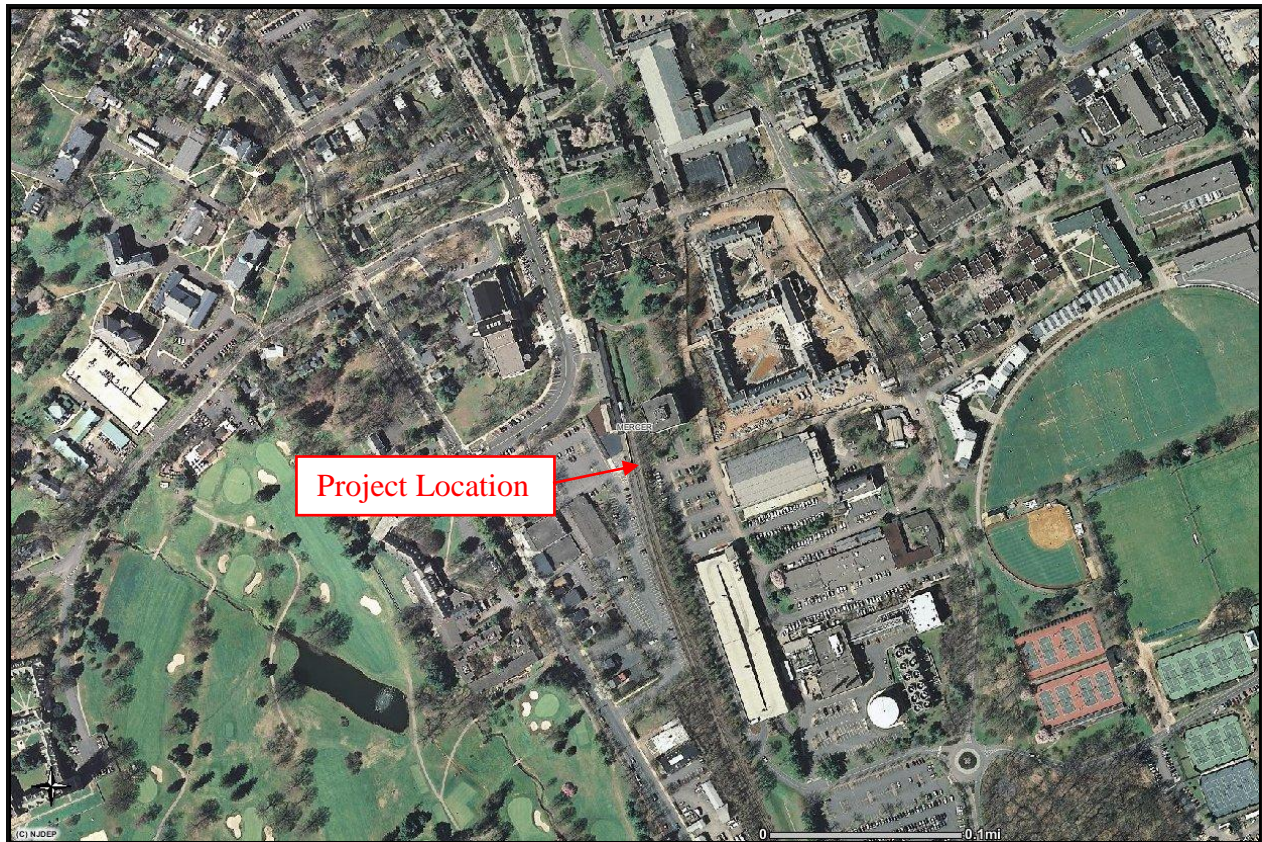


**Princeton Branch Track Removal Project**  
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# Attachment A

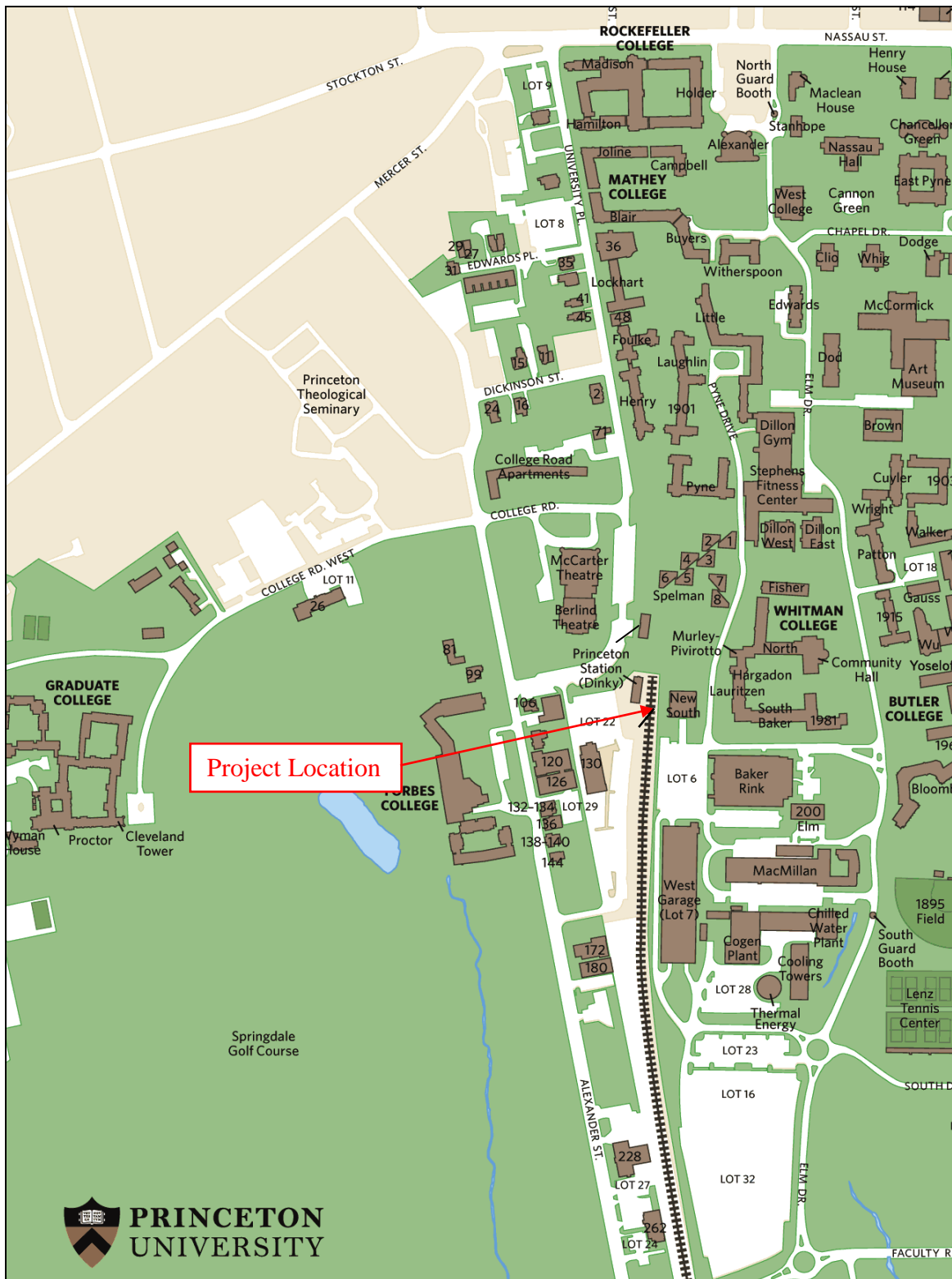
## Maps

### PROJECT LOCATION MAP



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**PROJECT STREET MAP**





**Princeton Branch Track Removal Project**

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## **Attachment B**

### **Sections B, C and D Narrative and Illustrations**

## **Princeton Branch Track Removal Project**

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## **B. Project Description**

### **Historic Information**

#### **The Railroad**

The Camden and Amboy (C&A) Railroad was chartered in 1831 and soon provided service between Camden, South Amboy, Trenton and New Brunswick. The original C&A line was located along the east bank of the Delaware and Raritan Canal, approximately one mile from downtown Princeton Borough. A branch line from the main line to Princeton was opened for service in 1865. The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) was chartered in 1846 and constructed and operated lines within the State of Pennsylvania and the surrounding region over the following decades. In 1871 the PRR leased the C&A (including the Princeton Branch) to add direct access to New York City to its already extensive national rail network. By the 1880s the company had begun a program of standardization for stations, trains, financial management and more, resulting in improved efficiency and increased profits and growth that gave it the name “the Standard Railroad of the World.” Between 1903 and 1938 the PRR electrified a number of its lines including the main line between Washington, DC and New York City in a massive program that resulted in the transformation of a total of 1,405 miles of track and was the greatest railroad electrification project in the world. By the time this effort was completed, the PRR owned 33 percent of the nation’s electrified track. It held the position as the country’s largest and most powerful railroad through the first two-thirds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



#### **The Station**

The Princeton Railroad Station is located in Princeton Borough on lands owned by Princeton University. The station is the terminus of the Princeton Branch rail line that intersects with the Northeast Corridor at Princeton Junction Station in West Windsor Township. Constructed in 1918, the complex was designed by architect Alexander C. Shand and erected by Matthews Construction Company. Both buildings (station and separate freight house) are consistent with many of the nearby university campus buildings in both form and materials.

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The erection of the station stop coincided with extensive early 20<sup>th</sup> century Collegiate Gothic construction designed by the University's supervising architect, Ralph Adams Cram, and undertaken following the 1896 decision by the school's trustees to utilize the English Gothic style in future building. The station building and freight house are constructed of coursed ashlar with limestone trim, tooled granite base courses, and gabled slate roofs. The complex is unusual for being constructed with high level platforms (HLPs) at a time when most PRR suburban stations did not receive HLPs until a later date. The station is also unusual as a terminal facility providing only shuttle service (locally known as the "Dinky") to the PPR's main line. The Princeton Railroad Station was listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places on March 17, 1984.



## **Princeton Branch Track Removal Project**

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#### **Background Information**

##### **Ownership History**

The Princeton Railroad Station and adjacent right-of-way (ROW) were owned and operated by the PRR until 1968. In that year the PRR merged with the New York Central Railroad to form the Penn Central; the Penn Central declared bankruptcy two years later. In 1971 the portion of the former PRR main line known as the Northeast Corridor became a part of the Amtrak system. The Princeton Branch came under the control of the New Jersey Department of Transportation, and, following the 1983 formation of NJ TRANSIT Rail Operations, became the NJ TRANSIT Princeton Branch. The Princeton Railroad Station has remained the terminus of the Princeton Branch line to this day.

In 1984, NJ TRANSIT sold the station and freight buildings, and the canopy-covered adjacent platform, to Princeton University, retaining an easement for public transportation purposes covering the right-of-way (ROW), the platform, and facilities within the two buildings for commuter and crew use. In addition the University covenanted to provide commuter parking spaces adjacent to the complex. The sales agreement also stated that the University would maintain the parking and buildings, and had the right to relocate the passenger station and related facilities to the freight house, and move the existing rail terminus southward on the condition that it provide a platform to accommodate train service at the relocated terminus. This relocation would include moving the bumper block, removal of rail, and cutting and resecurings of the catenary. The covenants attached to the sales agreement confirmed that the NJ TRANSIT easement would “terminate five (5) years after the abandonment and termination of passenger services to the property, unless passenger services are reinstituted during that five year period.” A 1996 amendment to the Agreement of Sale stated that NJ TRANSIT would vacate the station building and relocate its facilities to the freight house following improvements by the University, and that passenger and crew facilities would be available within the freight house. The passenger facilities were closed when ticket sales were automated. In December of 2011, Princeton University opened the station building for passenger waiting on a limited basis, Monday through Friday,

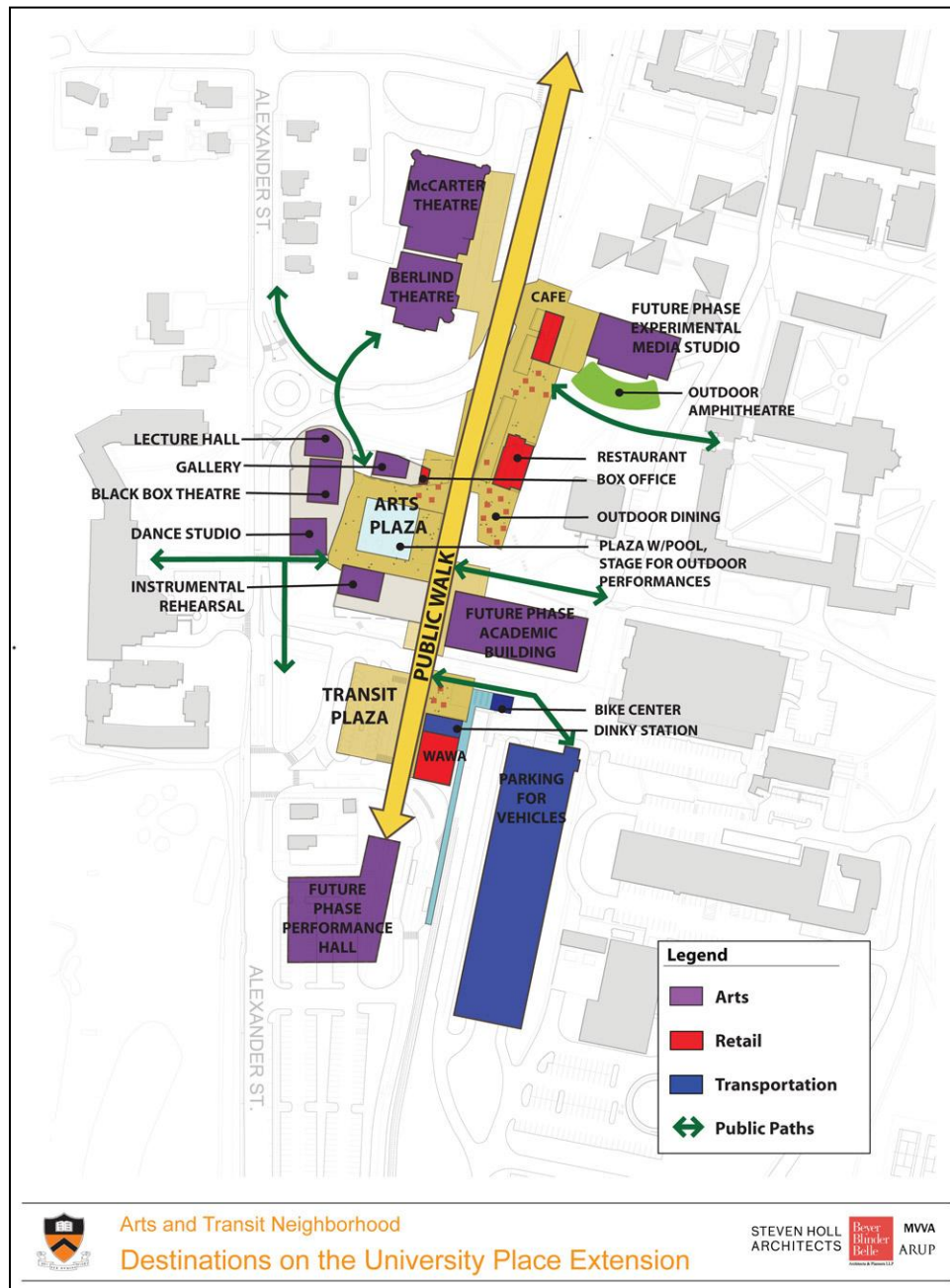
##### **University Planning**

Creative and performing arts are a key element of the educational mission of Princeton University. As an expansion and enhancement of its work in providing opportunities for student engagement with the arts, the University plans to construct an Arts and Transit Neighborhood offering facilities for teaching, rehearsal, performance and administrative activities. It is hoped that this new campus area will become an attractive cultural destination for not only students but residents of, and visitors to, the region. The area will include buildings for arts-related activities, including activities that will be open to the public, as well as retail activities and public amenities. The work will include public plazas and roadway improvements to improve traffic circulation, alleviate existing congestion, and provide access to an on-campus garage and a new railroad station that will be constructed by the University entirely at its expense.

To accommodate this campus expansion the Dinky terminus will be moved to a station stop 460 feet south of the present location. The new facility that will be constructed adjacent to the new corridor terminus will provide both a railroad waiting room and a retail food vendor. The existing station building and freight house will be adaptively reused, most likely as a café and a restaurant. The University will construct a new transit plaza that will offer direct access to commuter and daily parking, a parking garage, stops for the community jitney, campus shuttle and NJ TRANSIT buses, new bicycle routes, and bicycle rental and storage facilities. These amenities will promote the use of existing public transit, and offer flexibility for future public transportation options. All of this construction will be undertaken by Princeton University at its expense on property owned by the school.

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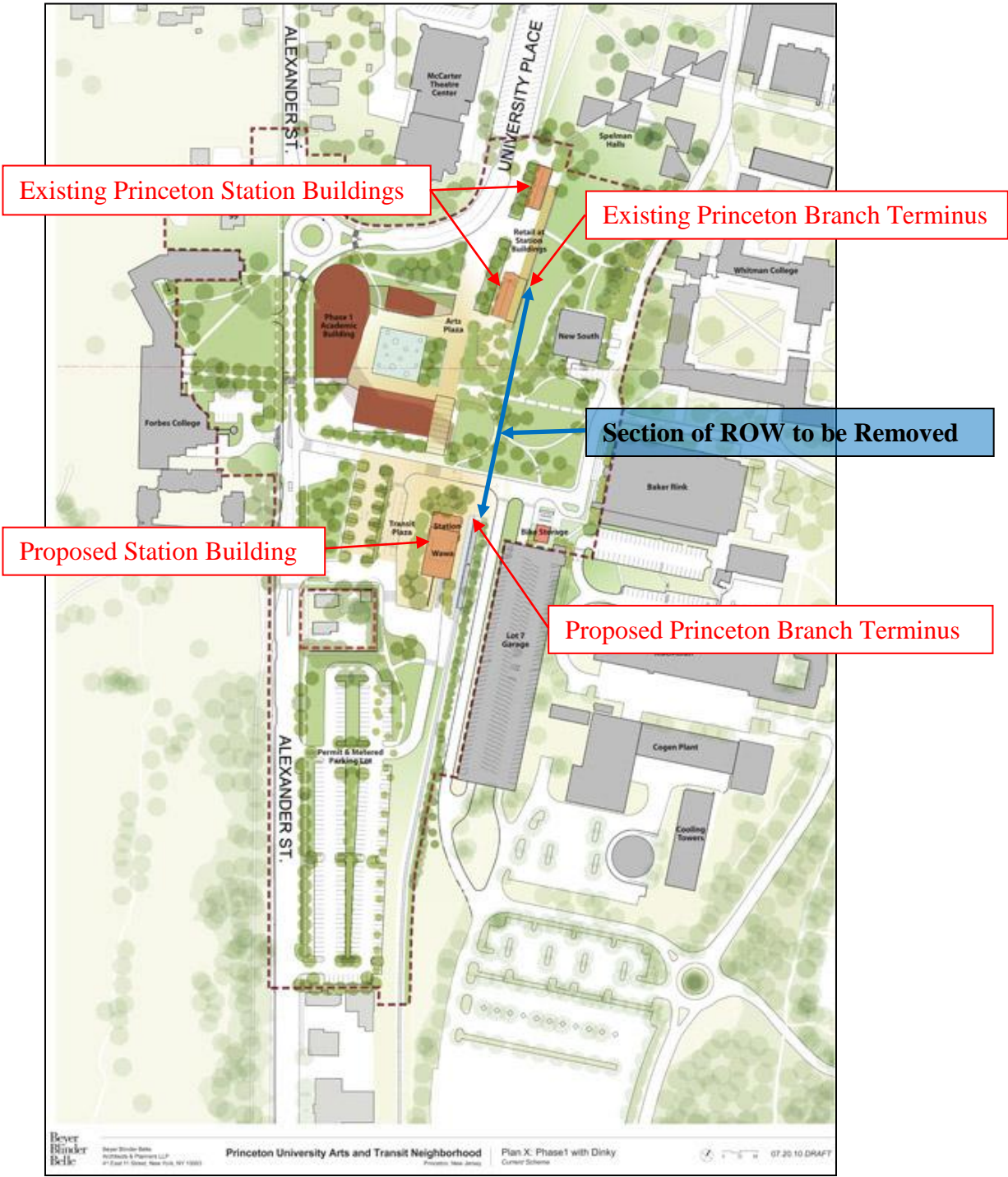
**PLAN ILLUSTRATING PROPOSED UNIVERSITY  
ARTS AND TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD ELEMENTS**





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PLAN ILLUSTRATING LOCATION OF PROPOSED  
INFRASTRUCTURE REMOVAL



## **Princeton Branch Track Removal Project**

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#### **Project Information**

The **Princeton Branch Track Removal Project** that is the focus of this Application consists of the abandonment of the current NJ TRANSIT easement at the Princeton University owned Princeton Railroad Station for the continuation of rail service, the removal of all railroad related infrastructure for a length of 460 feet, and the establishment of a new terminus for the Princeton Branch railroad corridor at a location south of the present site, along with a new easement to provide access to that site for public transportation purposes. Within the existing right-of-way (ROW) the following work is planned:

- The existing track, bumper block, catenary poles and wire, canopy, and portions of the platform will be removed.
- The existing vegetation and fencing adjacent to the track will be cleared and the area where these items and the track sit will be regraded to provide a continuous accessible path to the east.

In addition, west of the track, the surface parking and stairs will be removed, and the area will be regraded and replaced with landscaping and a north-south pedestrian walkway with an allee of trees. Following the removal of the infrastructure, as noted above, and the abandonment of the existing easement, the Princeton Branch corridor terminus will be re-established at a location approximately 460 feet south of the existing site. This work will involve some track, catenary and signal installations, and the construction of a new platform.

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Existing tracks looking south from rail terminus  
(Note tracks, platform, catenary, bumper block to be removed)



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Existing tracks looking north from south of station  
(Note tracks, fence, catenary to be removed)

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Existing tracks, parking lot and stairs south of station complex  
(Note tracks, canopy, stairs to be removed)



Existing tracks and parking lot south of station complex  
(Note tracks, canopy to be removed)



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Existing tracks, platform and canopy between station buildings  
(Note tracks, platform, canopy to be removed)



Existing tracks, platform and canopy between station buildings  
(Note tracks, platform, canopy, catenary to be removed)

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**Raised Platform, Canopy, Catenary, Bumper (Shown),  
and Track, Trackbed (Not Shown) to be Removed**

## **Princeton Branch Track Removal Project**

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## **Statement of Purpose**

Princeton University plans to construct an Arts and Transit Neighborhood on property owned by the school. This project will necessitate the relocation of the Princeton Branch station stop 460 feet south of the present location as is permitted by, and was anticipated in, the 1984 agreement governing the sale of the associated property to the University by NJ TRANSIT. This relocation will require the removal of all railroad right-of-way (ROW) elements (track, track bed, signals, catenary equipment, bumper block) and will result in the station buildings no longer being directly accessible to rail service. As is stated in the sales agreement covenants, NJ TRANSIT is obligated to relinquish its easement five years following the relocation of the station facilities and termination of passenger service. Therefore, the easement must be terminated following the completion of the planned construction. As the construction will certainly progress to completion there is no possibility that passenger services will be reinstituted during the designated five year period. To facilitate construction and staging for the implementation of the planned Arts and Transit Neighborhood, NJ TRANSIT and Princeton University have agreed that the easement shall be terminated prior to the five year timeframe. The construction of the Princeton University Arts and Transit Neighborhood will provide a new, attractive public space and arts-related resources for both students and the general public, offer greater access to pedestrian and bus transport, and significantly improve area traffic movements and reduce congestion. The Arts and Transit Neighborhood will also continue to provide access to the Princeton Branch in a new, improved station building, and with enhanced commuter facilities including additional short term parking, thereby promoting the continued and increased use of public transportation. Therefore, while the project that is the subject of this Application will result in the termination of a portion of the ROW and the existing easement retained by NJ TRANSIT for public transportation purposes, significant public benefit will result from the campus expansion that is directly associated with, and could not be accomplished in full without, that loss, and NJ TRANSIT will have all the necessary easements to continue to provide service to the newly constructed Princeton Station.



## **Alternatives/Mitigation**

No alternative exists to the proposed action under the terms of the 1984 Agreement of Sale between NJ TRANSIT and Princeton University. While the proposed expiration of the current easement could be delayed under the terms of the agreement, the expiration would still occur at a future date following the completion of the new station and the relocation of the rail terminus. The effect of delaying expiration of the easement would only be to delay the adaptive reuse of the existing buildings. Partial mitigation of the encroachment to the Princeton Railroad Station will consist of the ongoing retention and preservation, and planned sympathetic adaptive reuse of the facility by the University. The station buildings will be preserved and reused for food service venues (currently envisioned as a restaurant and café). The exterior facades will be rehabilitated where needed, and the station building interior will receive minor modifications for adaptation to its new use. The freight house will be reconfigured in the interior for the same purpose. A complementary addition will be added to the freight house to extend it to the south/east to better facilitate the station complex for reuse. The design of these activities has not yet been undertaken, however, the work will utilize materials that are sympathetic with the historic fabric. Paving and outdoor seating areas will also be provided. It should also be noted that Princeton University has maintained and preserved the station and freight house since purchasing the property in 1984 in accordance with historic preservation practice, and is both aware and proud of the historic resource of which it is a steward. In addition, as is noted above, NJ TRANSIT will have all the necessary easements to continue to provide rail service to Princeton.

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**Attachment C**

**Agreement of Sale**

**Princeton Branch Track Removal Project**

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# **Attachment D**

## **Deed**



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## **Attachment E**

### **Amendment to Agreement of Sale**

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## **Attachment F**

# **Princeton Community Master Plan Historic Preservation Element**