



State Representative

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & JOB CREATION UPDATE FOR THE 175TH DISTRICT

Dear Friends,

In Tom Wolf, Pennsylvania has a governor who understands Philadelphia's importance to the state's economy.

I have been delighted to partner with Gov. Wolf to improve the vibrancy of our city and our public education system. We've made great strides in both areas and we continue to look for ways to do even better for our children and local taxpayers.

This newsletter contains information on economic development projects being funded in the 175th District by state grants, as well as how the state government is investing in people in other ways. I hope you are as excited by these new developments as I have been.

As always, I appreciate your ideas and feedback. Please contact me if you need help or have something to discuss regarding any state-related issue or program.

Happy fall and winter!

Viaduct Trail Project gets \$3.5 million boost from state

I joined Gov. Tom Wolf and Mayor Jim Kenney in late October for a groundbreaking ceremony and to announce a \$3.5 million state grant for the first phase of the transformation of the former elevated Reading Railroad Viaduct into a public amenity and park for residents.



This project continues William Penn's vision of urban green space while being mindful of Philadelphia's industrial past. I agree with Gov. Wolf's assessment of the project as transformational for a neighborhood that is now completely lacking public amenities and green space. The state investment will support the expansion of both the Callowhill and Chinatown neighborhoods, as well as promote growth and stimulate commercial and housing investment north of downtown.

As you may know, the viaduct was built at the end of the 19th century to transport passengers to the northern and western suburbs. It was rendered obsolete through the completion of the Center City commuter tunnel, and carried its last train in 1984. The portion south of Vine Street was demolished to accommodate the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Though some areas were improved, it has largely remained a blighted eyesore over the last three decades.

Beginning in 2010, with support from the William Penn Foundation and the Poor Richard's Charitable Trusts, the Center City District began working in partnership with the community-based Reading Viaduct Project, the city's Commerce Department, and the Department of Parks and Recreation to evaluate options for the abandoned viaduct.



The \$3.5 million state grant will be allocated toward Phase 1 of the project, allowing CCD to finally break ground. Other financial support has been provided by the City of Philadelphia, the William Penn Foundation, the Knight Foundation and a large number of individual and business donors.

This \$10 million project is expected to be completed in early 2018.

State commits \$1.3 million for new Chinatown community center and housing units

I was delighted to help secure and announce with Gov. Tom Wolf in October a \$1.3 million state grant to help fund the construction of the new Philadelphia Chinatown Eastern Tower Community Center.

Affordable housing is much needed in this historic cultural community. The creation of the community center serves to unite this community that was cut in half by the Vine Street Expressway and provide needed services and economic benefits to those who live and work in the community.

In addition to being Chinatown's first community center with a Keystone Star 4 early childhood learning center, the mixed-use tower, which will be located at the northwest corner of 10th and Vine streets, will consist of 21,000 square feet of office space, 8,700 square feet of retail space, 17,000 square feet of recreation and event space, and 150 high-rise residential units.

The \$1.3 million in state funds will go toward construction of the commercial and community center portion of the \$76 million overall project.

It has been a pleasure to work with local residents and members of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation to see this project through. The project will create 500 construction jobs, 480 spin-off jobs during construction, 159 full-time created and retained jobs, and 148 additional indirect full-time jobs, according to PCDC.

Construction is expected to begin before the end of this year, with an estimated completion date in the fall of 2017.



Excited to break ground for the Chinatown Eastern Tower Community Center.



Chinatown's first community center will include a Keystone Star 4 early childhood learning center for the kids.

Jefferson receives \$1.5 million to combat opioid abuse epidemic, named Center of Excellence

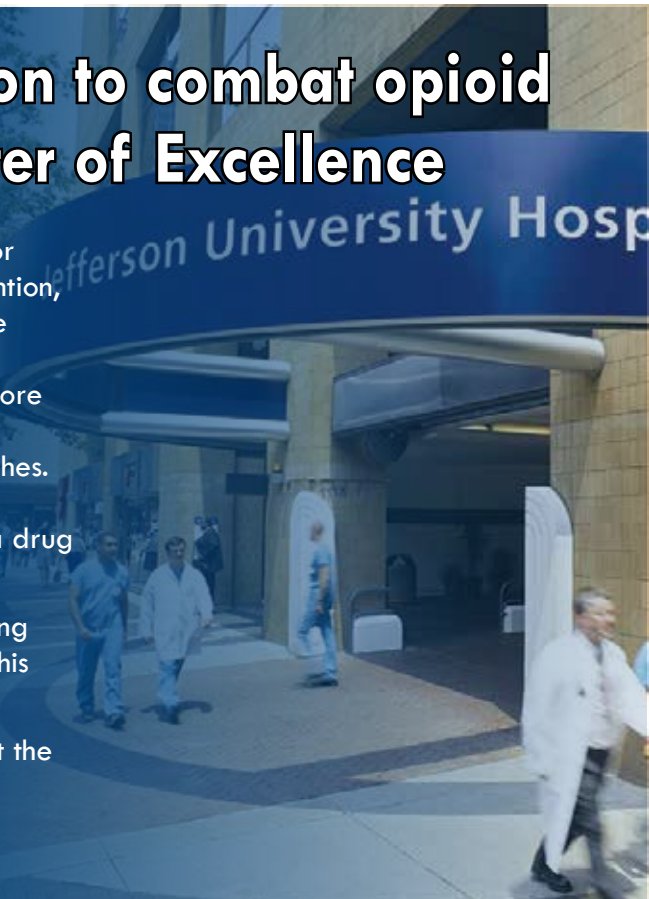
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital was awarded a \$1.5 million grant in August to help combat the heroin and opioid abuse epidemic in Pennsylvania. The Thomas Jefferson Narcotic Addiction Treatment/Maternal Addiction Treatment facility at the hospital is one of 45 addiction treatment centers designated as Centers of Excellence throughout the state.

This grant is part of more than \$15 million in funding I voted for in the 2016-17 state budget to address drug addiction.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heroin and opioid overdose are the leading causes of accidental deaths, killing more Pennsylvanians than those involved in deadly car crashes. In 2015, more than 3,300 Pennsylvanians died from a drug overdose.

I continue to work for funding and legislation to combat this epidemic.

For more information about the Centers of Excellence, visit www.dhs.pa.gov.



Fashion and jobs will move forward with \$10 million from state

In September, I partnered with Gov. Tom Wolf and Mayor Jim Kenney to announce a \$10 million state grant to aid in the redevelopment of the former Gallery into the new Fashion Outlets of Philadelphia, a 730,000-square-foot retail space expected to open in 2018.

The \$10 million from the state was the final piece to close the final funding gap and allow the \$575 million project to move forward.

The grant will be used to improve exterior facades that connect the street to public transportation, interior renovations including the installation of new mechanical systems, the replacement of escalators and elevators, and a greatly enhanced pedestrian connection between City Hall, the Independence Mall historic area, and the recently expanded Pennsylvania Convention Center and the Avenue of the Arts.

More than 2,100 jobs are expected to be created throughout the construction period. Once the Fashion Outlets of Philadelphia has opened, approximately



Gov. Wolf, Mayor Kenney and I are ready to shop 'til we drop thanks in part to a \$10 million grant from the state.

2,300 direct and indirect permanent jobs will be created, including over 1,000 retail jobs and nearly 300 office jobs.

In addition to the more than \$1 billion in economic impact the construction phase project will provide for the state and city, the overall project is expected to provide a yearly economic impact of \$300 million.

Grace Townhomes...from blight to bright

I continue to be a strong advocate to address the growing need for affordable housing throughout Philadelphia. It's always a pleasure to partner with organizations and other local officials who share that goal.

In September, I helped to cut the ribbon for 36 units of affordable housing in Kensington. The development of Grace Townhomes and the work of everyone involved is an excellent example of how people can work together to turn formerly blighted lots into vibrant communities.

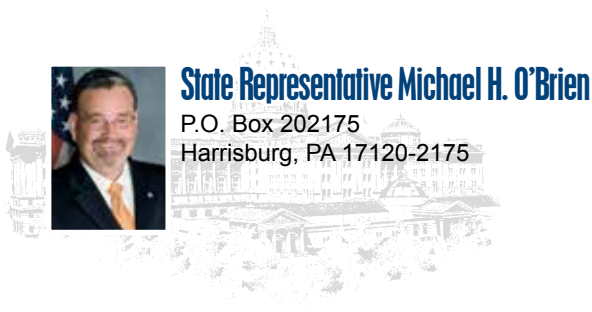
The two-, three- and four-bedroom townhomes are now rental units with options for eventual ownership. They are the first homes to be built on the land owned by the Community Justice Land Trust, which is working to make sure all homes remain permanently affordable.



The ribbon is cut for Grace Townhomes! A great project to be involved with.



It was a pleasure to work with Women's Community Revitalization Project Executive Director Nora Lichtash (far right) and others to see the Grace Townhomes project reach fruition.



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Thomas Jefferson Hospital will upgrade rehabilitation unit with \$1.3 million state grant

A new, state-of-the-art NeuroGym to aid in the rehabilitation of patients will be among several upgrades made as a result of \$1.3 million in state grant funding I sought and recently awarded by Gov. Tom Wolf to Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

This funding will significantly enhance the hospital's ability to update its Comprehensive Acute Rehabilitation Unit. In addition to the NeuroGym, the grant money will be used to install additional private rooms, ADA-compliant bathrooms for patients, a centrally located nurses station, a remodeled patient activity area, renovated flooring and fixtures and HVAC upgrades.

Ride sharing permanent in Philly, plus more money for schools

As I noted on Twitter (follow me [@RepMikeOBrien](https://twitter.com/RepMikeOBrien)) when the legislature voted to formally legalize the widely popular UberX and Lyft in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania finally entered the 20th century.

I was happy to vote to make ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft legal and permanent in Philadelphia for the convenience of residents. A temporary authorization for this ride-sharing service was set to expire at the end of this year.

Two-thirds of revenue derived from a 1.4 percent tax per ride will go to the Philadelphia School District to aid in the education of our children.

The new law was signed by Gov. Tom Wolf on Nov. 4.

More tools to fight blight

Blight is one of the top concerns of public officials across the state. Philadelphia is no exception, and I was happy to vote in late October for a new law that gives local officials a new tool to rid their neighborhoods of blighted and neglected properties.

The law reduces from 18 months to 12 months the time a purchaser of a building has to correct known code violations or demolish the structure. The reduced time was determined reasonable and appropriate through public hearings conducted by a joint House and Senate Blight Task Force.

There is no reason neighbors of a blighted property should have to put up with nuisances longer than necessary. I continue to work to see legislation like this become law.

