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PennDOT Hopes Track Work for New Middletown Train Station Can Start Within the Next Six Months, Official Tells Borough Council

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Work on the new Amtrak station in Middletown should begin within six months, Jennie Granger, the official in charge of the project for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, said in an update to the new borough council on Tuesday, Feb. 2.

The last time Granger appeared before council in June 2015, she said she hoped that work on the station could begin in “early 2016.”

Granger said she is at the mercy of Amtrak, which must do the track relocation work before the rest of the train station project can get started.

Amtrak has “limited forces and we are competing to get those,” Granger said. “This is like painting your way out of a room. The track work must happen first and then we work our way out” to build the station, the parking, and eventually the extending of West Emaus Street to West Main Street.

Assuming the track work can begin within six months from now, it will take about two years to complete the entire project - including the Emaus Street extension and building a pedestrian bridge across Route 230 to connect Penn State Harrisburg with the station, and to provide a safe way for students and others to cross the busy highway.

The project completion time frame could be longer—up to two and one-half years, Granger estimated—if the project runs into a lot of bad weather or other obstacles, Granger noted. But once the track work is done, she expects the project to move quickly once it is in the hands of contractors.

The designs for the train station are done, Granger said. PennDOT is in the process of working with Penn State Harrisburg and owners of the student housing along Route 230 regarding the location of the pedestrian bridge.

In just about all other respects the station plans are the same as what Granger presented back in June 2015. A bicycle/pedestrian path on the Penn State Harrisburg campus is to be extended across the street onto the train station property.

Among its other features, the station will have pull-off and pick-up areas for Capital Area Transit buses and will also be able to handle large charter buses. A shuttle will run to take passengers back and forth between the train station and Harrisburg International Airport.

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