

## Middletown gets details on new Amtrak Station

By Barbara Miller  
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Amtrak riders in Middletown won't be heading to a new station until 2018, according to the latest status update given the borough by Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.



Proposed Middletown Amtrak station (PennDOT)

Middletown's planning committee recently got an update on the new train station project, which will relocate the current station on Mill Street to one near Ann Street and Route 230.

PennDOT is planning to solicit bids for the station later this year, said Jennie Granger, project manager.

But the first work that will need to be done is shifting the railroad tracks, which is up to Amtrak and Norfolk Southern, she said.

"It's like painting yourself out of the room. That has to be the first piece," she said. The rail work is expected to be done in 2016, but Granger said she doesn't have a firm timetable yet. "They're my wild card," she said of the rail partners. Still, she doesn't believe the May 12 Philadelphia Amtrak crash isn't expected to cause delays in this project.

Final plan drawings are expected to be finalized in coming months, Granger said.

PennDOT will have bids for the station construction ready to go once the rail work is completed. The goal is to have the new station open in two years, Granger said.

The new station platform will be located between the tracks off Ann Street. Elevators and stairs will provide access to the platform, which will be about 500 feet long. It will be covered, but won't have rest rooms or any commercial space.

PennDOT has acquired several acres of land at the site of a former warehouse that will be used for a new parking lot and for access to the new station, which is just west of the Westport shopping center.

There will be parking for several hundred vehicles, Granger said, but there will be a charge, unlike the Mill Street lot, which has free parking for about 75 vehicles.

There will also be room for a CAT bus pull-off and shelter, and airport shuttle to provide connection for travelers to Harrisburg International Airport, Granger said.



Current Middletown Amtrak station on Mill Street (Barbara Miller)

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A covered pedestrian bridge will also be built over Route 230 between Ann and Lawrence Street, providing access to Penn State Harrisburg.

While the pedestrian bridge wasn't in original project estimates, Granger said savings in other areas may allow the total to remain about \$32 million.

"It will ensure a safe connection not only into the train station but will allow people to continue downtown to the business development area the borough is working on," she said.

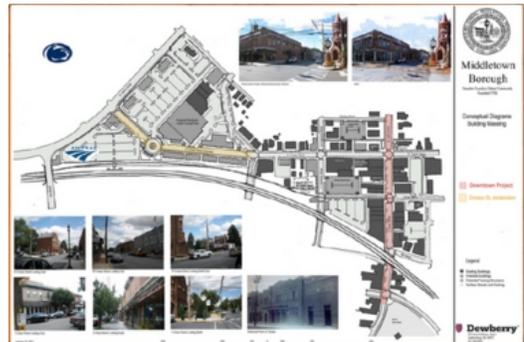
There is still a parcel of land that has to be acquired for the Emaus Street extension planned to link the station and downtown, Granger said. About an acre is needed, and bike and pedestrian paths are also planned along it.

The extension will provide a four-point intersection with Lawrence Street and Route 230. It will be built in the final stages of the project, since that area is needed for construction staging, she said.

The project has been in the works for at least six years. It is needed because the current station is not accessible to those with disabilities. Since it is located on a curve, it would be too expensive to modify the rail lines at that site.

"I think it's a great project," Granger said, with cooperation coming from not only rail, air and bus partners but the borough, property owners and Penn State Harrisburg.

source: [www.pennlive.com](http://www.pennlive.com)



A 2013 engineer's drawing of the proposed Middletown train station. (submitted photo)