

## Lancaster Amtrak station called complete, awaits restrooms accessible to disabled people

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Richard Hertzler/Staff  
The main waiting room of the 85-year-old Lancaster Amtrak Station.

After 15 years, upgrades to Lancaster's 85-year-old Amtrak station are ... almost finished.

What still needs to be done?

The restrooms are not considered accessible to people with disabilities.

As it was in October, November and December, Amtrak is still "actively working to secure the funding necessary" to get the restrooms into full compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, spokesman Craig Schulz said Tuesday.

It's possible but far from certain that work will be completed by October, Schulz said.

Melissa Hawkins, executive director of the Disability Empowerment Center, which serves people in Lancaster and Lebanon counties, would like to see that work done as soon as possible.

"Retrofitting the Amtrak bathroom, and all public buildings for that matter," she said, "whether adding wheelchair ramps and elevators, expanding door widths and bathroom stalls to accommodate the people with disabilities, is extremely important to allow for complete access."

The ADA took effect in 1992, so what's the holdup?

The short answer is funding.

The longer answer is that there are other Amtrak stations that are out of compliance as well, and some of them are worse.

"There are some stations where, if you are in a wheelchair, you literally cannot get there (to the restroom)," Schulz said.

At the Lancaster station, Schulz said, the restrooms are accessible, "even if it's not to the letter of the law."

So, he said, it's a matter of setting priorities with the limited funds Amtrak has available.

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By the way, work on the second of two projects totaling \$17.7 million at the Lancaster Amtrak station are officially complete.

Infrastructure repairs planned since 1999 — including the removal of asbestos, the installation of a new roof, new wiring, plumbing, and a sprinkler system — began in the summer of 2009 and were mostly completed by autumn 2011.

The infrastructure repairs cost \$14.2 million.

Then came the Capstone project. Begun in 2012 and completed in January, it added \$3.5 million in interior fixes after county leaders complained about them not being part of the original work.

Those repairs, to what Amtrak calls the station's "customer-facing elements," included work on the main waiting room and, finally, the concourse leading to the tracks, the heating/ventilation/and air conditioning system on that concourse and the painting of which were among the last things to be completed.

Other Capstone work included:

- Extensive plaster repairs to the walls and ceiling of the main waiting room and the concourse leading to the tracks;
- Other upgrades to the tracks concourse, such as new windows and skylights;
- Restoration and refinishing of the 14 historic wooden benches in the main waiting room and the track concourse;
- Painting of the main entrance and foyer area in historically accurate colors; and
- Restoring the station's historic clocks and hanging light fixtures in the main waiting room.

*source: LancasterOnline.com*