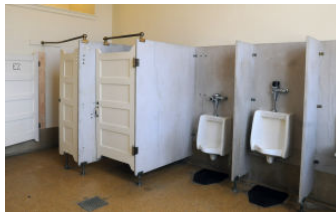


## Initial restroom renovation plan for Lancaster Amtrak station flushed

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Richard Hertzler/Staff  
The men's restroom at the Lancaster Amtrak station Tuesday, still not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which took effect in 1992.

An inside track to renovating the restrooms at the Lancaster Amtrak station has been closed.

But the destination — renovated and possibly expanded restrooms — remains in sight.

"I think maybe we can get something done here," Matthew Leonard, regional manager in Sen. Bob Casey's office, said after Amtrak's Marilyn Jamison promised to seek capital funds for the project in the next federal budget.

The original plan — using money designated to make Amtrak stations accessible to people with disabilities — fell through. Now Amtrak, with the help of Casey's office, hopes to find the money elsewhere.

Renovations would cost about \$100,000 while renovations and expansion would cost about \$300,000, according to Jamison, senior director of major project partnerships for Amtrak.

"I have a good shot at getting the capital funding in fiscal year 2015," which begins Oct. 1, Jamison told the Lancaster Train Station Advisory Committee at its final meeting held Wednesday at the station.

The station has passenger numbers on its side in asking for the funds, Jamison said. Its 578,731 riders in fiscal year 2013 made it the second busiest in Pennsylvania and the 20th overall in Amtrak's 484-station system.

And then there's the contrast, noted by Leonard and Lancaster County Transportation Authority Chairman Terry Kauffman, between the restrooms and the renovated station.

"No one can say that bathroom is befitting of the rest of the station," Leonard said.

Kauffman noted the duct tape on one of the mirrors in the men's room.

After 10 years of planning and five years of work, the station saw \$17.7 million in renovations — including a new roof, new plumbing and wiring, asbestos removal, upgraded heating, ventilation and air conditioning, painting of walls and ceilings and sprucing up of its skylights, benches and concourses.

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The restrooms were not part of the project because they were, at one point, considered non-compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

That made them eligible for funding under a \$200 million pot of money to bring Amtrak stations up to the 1990 law's requirements.

When that pot of money shrunk by 75 percent to \$50 million for a list of about 100 stations, the Lancaster station's restrooms got another look.

Gary Talbot, director of Amtrak's ADA program, who uses a wheelchair himself, visited and found no trouble with the restrooms' accessibility, Jamison said.

The Lancaster Train Station Advisory Committee is a group of public officials, business leaders, Amtrak personnel and transportation consultants set up to discuss and review ongoing work at the station.

It was formed in January 2012 after local officials got frustrated by a lack of progress on the project, particularly interior work.

*source: LancasterOnline.com*