

Downingtown train station improvements facing delays

By smfernandez@dailylocal.com">Sara Mosqueda-Fernandez,smfernandez@gmail.com
POSTED: 06/11/12, 7:47 AM EST

DOWNTOWN — The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation wants to consider a fourth site for a new train station, further delaying a decision on the project.

The state transportation department wants to add what it calls a River Station Combination — a combined alternative site of river station parcels east and west that will be evaluated from an “environmental clearance, railroad optimization (and) access perspective.”

This proposed site includes a combination of two existing parcels. The first is the “east” proposal of 15 acres on the east side of Brandywine Avenue. The second is the “west” proposal of 80 acres on the west side of Brandywine Avenue.

The combination of 95 acres would use both sides of Brandywine Avenue and the railroad back West Boot Road. It is part of the former Sonoco property.

The fourth proposal would be in Keystone Opportunity Zone on 16 acres adjacent to the existing station on the south side of the tracks. The area is a vacant rail yard.

The existing station is not under consideration. It has problems with handicapped access and parking, among other issues.

The combined concept would offer about 733 parking spaces for the train station as well as residential, retail or commercial development.

This would provide the most parking of any proposal currently being studied.

A memo explaining PennDOT’s position was presented during Borough Council’s monthly meeting Wednesday.

PennDOT said the environmental analysis is expected to help in selecting which site would be best overall for the new station.

The study is expected to take at least six to 18 months. Land acquisition will not begin until then.

The current station does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and needs repairs. The renovations of stations along the line are a part of a joint federal, state and local initiative that will allow for its trains to run faster, make the train stations more accessible and increase parking.

The new station is part of the Plan the Keystone project and is aimed at faster train travel and station improvements for communities served by the Keystone Line, which serves about 1.4 million riders a year.

The project’s website, www.planthekeystone.com, lists other recommended improvements, such as security systems, a ticket office or waiting facility with restrooms, as well as further details on making the

Downingtown train station improvements facing delays

Daily Local, June 11, 2012

page 2

station compliant with the American with Disabilities Act, and overall improvement of pedestrian accessibility.

source: www.dailylocal.com