

## Amtrak station in Middletown likely to open by 2022

by Dan Miller  
Posted Wednesday, January 8, 2020 1:13 pm



The location of the new Amtrak train station along West Main Street in Middletown has been fenced off, in preparation for PennDOT to award a contract for construction of the station in March.

The new Amtrak station in Middletown could be open to the public by late 2021 or early 2022.

The contract for construction of the new station on West Main Street is expected to be awarded in March by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, PennDOT spokeswoman Ashley Schoch told the Press & Journal on Monday.

The project was publicly advertised for bids by PennDOT on Dec. 19.

Amtrak has started its track-moving work, and that work is expected to be completed in early summer, Schoch said.

PennDOT is moving forward with building the station without having a private developer partner in place. PennDOT had hoped to contract with a private entity to develop around the station, such as building a restaurant or hotel.

In early 2017, PennDOT announced a tentative deal with Keystone Connections, a private development group that had formed for the project.

## **Amtrak station in Middletown likely to open by 2022**

Press and Journal, January 8, 2020

*page 2*

But Keystone Connections withdrew from the station plan in late 2018, saying according to a PennDOT spokesman that “revenues generated by potential commercial development and parking fees” at the station would not be enough to support private development costs and to cover ongoing operating and maintenance expenses.

“As the P3 (public-private partnership) team (Keystone Connections) withdrew their interest, there is no P3 initiative,” she said. “Currently, there are no development plans on the station property.”

Plans could have included anything from retail establishments to a new hotel, as long as the station property provided at least 400 parking spaces.

PennDOT also had originally proposed building an overhead bridge across West Main Street from Penn State Harrisburg to make it safer for college students and pedestrians in general to cross the road and get to the new train station.

PennDOT ultimately rejected the overhead bridge as too expensive, with an estimated construction cost of \$7 million. Instead, PennDOT has said it will improve pedestrian safety with improvements at the street level.

Current plans to improve pedestrian safety include a pedestrian crosswalk to cross West Main Street, Schoch said. That crosswalk is to be completed on or before opening of the station, she added.

The \$32 million PennDOT has budgeted for the new train station also includes extending West Emaus Street to West Main, a project sought by Middletown officials to increase the flow of Penn State Harrisburg students and pedestrians in general into the borough’s core downtown at Union and Emaus streets.

Late last year, Middletown Borough Council applied for a state grant to fund \$704,200 in proposed improvements to West Emaus Street.

Improvements would upgrade lighting, curbs and sidewalks, and trees as part of extending West Emaus to West Main Street.

*source: [www.pressandjournal.com](http://www.pressandjournal.com)*