

Amtrak, SEPTA chug toward full wheelchair access with Paoli upgrades

Updated: FEBRUARY 28, 2017 — 4:59 PM EST
By Michaelle Bond, Staff Writer



Federal, state and local officials celebrate the start of construction on improvements to Paoli Station on Tues., Feb. 28, 2017. Photo-Michaelle Bond, Staff Writer

Plans for major upgrades at a key SEPTA and Amtrak station on the Main Line were stuck in their tracks for more than two decades, but on Tuesday, a row of golden shovels in a box of dirt sparkled in the sun during a groundbreaking ceremony symbolizing that the work finally was underway.

PennDOT official Toby Fauver thanked local, state, and federal officials for their help in getting the project going, but he had a special thank-you for advocates for people with disabilities, who sued Amtrak over lack of wheelchair accessibility at the [Paoli station](#) in 2012.

They “really helped put a point on the pencil to get everybody to the table to really get the station moving effectively,” said Fauver, deputy secretary for multimodal transportation.

Of SEPTA's 154 Regional Rail stations, 67 are either accessible to people with disabilities or undergoing accessibility upgrades, including the 63-year-old, one-story brick building and facilities at Paoli.

SEPTA and Amtrak say they are working to bring all their stations into compliance with the [Americans With Disabilities Act](#).

[Disability Rights Pennsylvania](#) reached an agreement with Amtrak in 2014 to accelerate plans for the Paoli upgrades, including a new center high-level platform, elevators, ramps, a pedestrian bridge, and parking lot improvements.

About a million Amtrak and SEPTA riders each year come through Paoli, which transportation officials call a key stop in the 104-mile-long Keystone Corridor between Harrisburg and Philadelphia. Paoli's station is one of the busiest transit hubs outside of Philadelphia, according to SEPTA.

A [\\$36 million project](#) to make the station fully accessible is the first phase in transforming it into a transportation hub with a new waiting area, ticket offices, better bus facilities, a commuter parking garage, and retail space. Amtrak and SEPTA plan to complete the project's first phase by early next year.

Amtrak, SEPTA chug toward full wheelchair access with Paoli upgrades

Philly.com, February 28, 2017

page 2

“This is the beginning of a renaissance for Paoli,” said Trip Lukens, chair of Tredyffrin Township’s board of supervisors.

Government and transportation officials hope transportation upgrades in Paoli, and also in Coatesville, Parkesburg, and elsewhere on the Keystone Corridor, can support and spur economic growth.

Even before the groundbreaking Tuesday, preliminary construction had begun with plans to move overhead wires to make room for a pedestrian bridge and remove sections of track.

Amtrak hired Neshaminy Constructors Inc. of Feasterville to complete most of the construction.

source: www.philly.com