

Work on new train station in Ardmore could begin early next year

By Richard Ilgenfritz
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Submitted Image of the new Ardmore train station. The new Ardmore train station will feature a parking garage.
Submitted image

LOWER MERION >> A new train station has been discussed for over a decade in Ardmore but early next year one could begin taking shape.

At an Economic Revitalization Committee meeting Wednesday, May 20, Lower Merion and SEPTA officials outlined the schedule and plans for a new train station.

“SEPTA has reached a point now where they are ready to go to bid for the train station project,” Lower Merion Township Manager Ernie McNeely said at the outset of the meeting.

This would, McNeely added, enable them to get started on the station and the foundations for a new parking garage. But that garage would come in as a later part of the project after funding is found.

Alex Coll, project manager for SEPTA, outlined the phases of the project.

According to Coll, the two-phase project will begin with the first phase being the construction of the new station, the garage foundations and stormwater management facilities.

“We have received final AMTRAK approval of that design,” Coll said. “It’s funded for that design and we are looking to start in the New Year with a duration of about 30 months.”

Coll said the second phase, the construction of the garage, has AMTRAK approval but since funding for it has yet to be found there is no schedule on when work would begin.

Under Phase 1, high-level platforms will be installed across Anderson Avenue to the township parking lot on both the inbound and outbound sides. The platforms will be served by new elevators on both sides and the existing tunnel will be refurbished. A new station building with the new SEPTA key system would also be a part of the first phase and a shelter on the outbound side. There will also be low-level platforms on the western end. The new facilities will also be ADA accessible.

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The phase 2 part would consist of the new garage which would be built on the current SEPTA lot and a portion of the township lot.

One of the issues that came up was parking in the area while construction is going on is parking in the area.

According to McNeely, since the Ardmore One project on Cricket Avenue began the township has been monitoring parking supply weekly.

“We keep counts of all of our facilities in Ardmore,” McNeely said. “There [has] not been a parking shortage. We have a parking surplus. We also do not sell out of Ardmore parking permits spaces. So there are actually still – even though we sell out in Bryn Mawr – we have not and do not sell out in Ardmore. So we have Ardmore parking spaces that some commuters may choose to buy a permit from the township.”

McNeely added that by the time SEPTA was about to begin, the One Ardmore Place and its new parking lot would about be finished.

David Scolnic, special counsel for Lower Merion, told the board in the agreement they are working out with SEPTA they have agreed the work at the train station could be delayed until as late as June 30. He said that would be four to five months after the Dranoff project is complete.

Commissioners gave their support for the project.

“What’s before us tonight is a remarkable investment in Ardmore on limited site,” Commissioner Scott Zelov said. “This is the much-anticipated brand new train station – it’s getting closer to construction. This is something that’s been underway with the staff, SEPTA, PennDOT, the county, and the commissioners and Amtrak since 2003 ... but to characterize this as improved access is just wrong. The high-level platforms that are going to be constructed here are going to make a huge difference in terms of how commuters can more quickly get on and off trains and is going to be an improvement in SEPTA service.”

According to Zelov, including having the foundations and the design for the garage it is more likely they can get funding for it.

“I am delighted this is going to start happening,” said Commissioner Anna Durbin. “It’s really important to have accessible platforms for elderly and disabled people. And it’s going to make it a lot easier for everybody to get on and off those trains and I’m hoping when we have this we will alleviate the traffic and parking problems in the long run. But of course, whenever we build something new there’s going to be problems – you know we are just going to have to keep dealing with them and I hope people will reach out with their problems and we’ll try and find solutions.”

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