

## Plan the Keystone FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is the Keystone Corridor?

The Keystone Corridor is the rail line across Pennsylvania from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia. It was developed in the late 1800s by the Pennsylvania Railroad and continues to carry both passenger and freight traffic. The western portion between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg is known as Keystone West, and the track is owned by Norfolk Southern Corporation. The eastern portion between Harrisburg and Philadelphia is Keystone East, owned by Amtrak. This 104-mile-long segment is often referred to as the Keystone Corridor because Amtrak's *Keystone Service* operates on it.

### What is Plan the Keystone?

Plan the Keystone is an initiative launched in 2009 to improve conditions for rail passengers at the 12 Keystone Corridor train stations from Harrisburg to Philadelphia. Broadly, the goals are to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, to refurbish or (where necessary) replace the historic station buildings along the line, and to ensure that station improvements complement local revitalization efforts.

When the initiative was originally launched, planning outreach was conducted in each of the 12 communities, with the public and local leaders closely involved. Today, many of those envisioned improvements have been completed, and numerous projects continue to advance from planning through design to construction, as described on this site.

### What is Access the Keystone?

Access the Keystone is an initiative launched in coordination with Plan the Keystone in 2009. While Plan the Keystone focuses on station and rail improvements on the Keystone Corridor between Harrisburg and Philadelphia, Access the Keystone aimed to improve the ways passengers access those stations. Access the Keystone data collection and analysis between 2009 and 2017 is documented and archived at [AccesstheKeystone.com](http://AccesstheKeystone.com). Subsequent efforts to improve access to Keystone Corridor stations are highlighted on this website ([PlantheKeystone.com](http://PlantheKeystone.com)). Click a station name and look under the blue "Project Status" section to view access and parking projects.

### What types of station improvements are being made?

**ADA Accessibility:** Each station is being made fully accessible and compliant with the 2006 U.S. Department of Transportation Accessibility Standards. In addition to providing access to persons with disabilities, improvements such as high-level platforms, ramps, and elevators make rail travel easier for all passengers.

**State-of-Good-Repair Projects:** Each station has different needs, from better parking, to a new roof, to enhanced signage, to safer pedestrian connections, and more. PennDOT is working closely with local communities to develop station facilities that are in good repair, support growing ridership, and anchor station-area redevelopment.

### Are public-private partnerships (P3s) used on Plan the Keystone Projects?

Yes. Where appropriate PennDOT is advancing certain projects through P3 agreements. Please see [PennDOT's Public-Private Partnership website](#) for more information.

### **Why do projects take so long?**

PennDOT, Amtrak, SEPTA, and our local partners are advancing projects at the Keystone Corridor stations between Harrisburg and Philadelphia. Moving a project through planning, design, and construction—while engaging in proactive public involvement, coordinating with local redevelopment initiatives, obtaining environmental approvals, meeting federal and state requirements, securing funding, coordinating agreements, developing maintenance and operations agreements, and sustaining maintenance and operations—does take time. [Learn more about the project development process.](#)

### **Why are improvements focused on Keystone East?**

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides funding for capital improvements on Keystone East, which must be spent in the Harrisburg, Lancaster, and Philadelphia regions.

### **How can I find train schedule and ticket information?**

Please contact the service provider for schedule and pricing information. On the Keystone Corridor, intercity passenger rail is operated by [Amtrak](#), and Philadelphia regional commuter rail is operated between Downingtown and Philadelphia by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority ([SEPTA](#)).

Most stations are also served by local and intercity buses. Please contact the bus company directly for service details. Links are provided on the station pages of this site.

### **Which stations are served by SEPTA trains?**

All stations between Downingtown and Philadelphia are served by SEPTA commuter rail in addition to Amtrak passenger rail: Downingtown – Exton – Paoli – Ardmore – Philadelphia.

For SEPTA schedule information, please visit [www.SEPTA.org](http://www.SEPTA.org).

### **How can I find station parking information?**

Click on [Stations](#) and navigate to the desired station page. Below the photo and map of the station, look for “Features.” The approximate number of short-term (one day or less), long-term (longer than one day/overnight), and nearby parking spaces is provided.

### **Will there be additional service on Keystone West?**

At this time PennDOT does not have plans to increase service between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. Keystone West was the subject of a [2011 study](#) by PennDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration and Norfolk Southern (owner of the Keystone West rail line). The conceptual study identified and evaluated the feasibility of options to reduce passenger travel times and increase trip frequency between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg.

In 2019, PennDOT conducted the [Altoona–Pittsburgh Passenger Rail Study](#) to explore the feasibility of commuter rail service between Altoona and Pittsburgh.

### **Will there be additional service on Keystone East?**

At this time PennDOT does not have plans to increase service between Harrisburg and Philadelphia. PennDOT's first priority is to utilize available funding to sustain the existing Amtrak passenger service, which has been possible due to the increase in state funding provided through Act 89 of 2013. PennDOT continues to explore options to improve and expand passenger rail service within available funding.

### **What locomotives and other equipment are used on the Keystone Corridor?**

In October 2014, Amtrak placed into service new Amtrak Cities Sprinter (ACS-64) electric locomotives. For its *Keystone Service* (Harrisburg – Philadelphia – New York), Amtrak uses train sets comprised of an electric locomotive, four coaches, and a cab car. Amtrak's *Pennsylvanian* service (Pittsburgh – Harrisburg – Philadelphia – New York) uses train sets with a diesel locomotive, five coaches, and a café car.

### **What is the average operating speed on the Keystone Corridor?**

Currently, trains between Harrisburg and Philadelphia operate at an average speed of 60 mph. Average speed on Keystone West between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg is 45 mph.

Infrastructure improvements permit a maximum operating speed of 110 mph on Keystone East.

### **Whom do I contact to discuss business opportunities at or near the stations?**

Some resources include the [Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development](#), [USDA Rural Development](#), and [PennDOT's Public Private Partnerships Office](#), as well as the local municipality and chamber of commerce.

### **Who is the press contact for the Keystone Corridor?**

Members of the press may reach the PennDOT Press Office by telephone at 717-783-8800 or by e-mail at [RA-PennDOTPress@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PennDOTPress@pa.gov).