

## Officials hope to have new Wawa completed by March

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middletown

The new store on Bristol Oxford Valley Road near the Business Route 1 intersection would replace a smaller Wawa just a few hundred feet away.

A new 24-hour Wawa with gas pumps is coming soon to a spot near the Oxford Valley Mall in Middletown.

June Spring, senior real estate manager for the convenience store chain, told the township supervisors at their Tuesday night meeting she hoped the store would be open by March if bad weather doesn't slow down construction too much. An agreement approved by the supervisors Tuesday night gives Wawa until June 30 to open the new store.

The store would be on Bristol Oxford Valley Road near its intersection with Business Route 1, across Bristol Oxford Valley Road from the vacant Fuddrucker's. Similar in size to the Bristol Township Wawa on Route 13 near the turnpike entrance, the new 4,600 square-foot Middletown store would replace a much smaller Wawa a few hundred feet south on Bristol Oxford Valley Road.

"One of our managers gave our new stores the name super Wawas a couple of years ago, but they are really just the prototype of what we're building now," said Spring. "We offer gas to make it easier on our customers and give them one less stop."

Tom Hecker, the attorney representing Wawa on this project, said the new store would give people another place to get gas in the area immediately surrounding the Oxford Valley Mall, where there aren't many gas stations.

Wawa will lease the new store from local developers John McGrath Jr. and Patrick Flanagan, who own the land and got the initial approvals. The project was first approved by the township supervisors in 2001, but the developers and Wawa officials kept waiting on a PennDOT improvement project at the intersection of Bristol Oxford Valley Road and Business Route 1.

The down economy further delayed the project. Wawa now has its funding in place and is moving full speed ahead on the new store, Spring said.

The \$5.5 million project to reconfigure the busy intersection of Oxford Valley Road, Bristol Oxford Valley Road and Business Route 1 remains in doubt.

After years of litigation on a right-of-way access at the former Fuddrucker's property, PennDOT removed the intersection project from its 12-year transportation improvement project list.

"So much time has elapsed that we have allocated funds for other projects," Metzger said Wednesday.

Spring said she didn't know what will happen to the current store on Bristol Oxford Valley Road when Wawa moves out. That building is also leased, she said.

Wawa has 572 stores in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

Chris English can be reached at 215-949-4193 or [cenglish@phillyBurbs.com](mailto:cenglish@phillyBurbs.com).

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