City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, November 17, 2026

1:00 PM

Room 400, City Hall

Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities

12 Items for Discussion

260892 An Ordinance Amending Title 21 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Miscellaneous," to add a new chapter creating the Philadelphia Transit Access Fund, to establish the purposes for which appropriations to the Transit Access Fund may be used, and to establish public reporting requirements related to the Fund.

Attachments: Bill No. 26089200

City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

BILL NO. 260892

Introduced October 22, 2026

Councilmember O'Rourke

**Referred to the
Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities**

AN ORDINANCE

Amending Title 21 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Miscellaneous," to add a new chapter creating the Philadelphia Transit Access Fund, to establish the purposes for which appropriations to the Transit Access Fund may be used, and to establish public reporting requirements related to the Fund.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Legislative Findings. Council finds that:

(1) The City of Philadelphia has committed to significant investments in economic mobility, by way of the Zero Fare Program for low-income Philadelphians and SEPTA Key Advantage for city workers.

(2) The Zero Fare program, established in August 2023, provides free universal public transportation passes for 60,000 low-income Philadelphians and has become a national model for targeted economic mobility programs, creating a four dollar economic return for every dollar spent.

(3) The City of Philadelphia's SEPTA Key Advantage contract provides universal transit access as a pre-tax benefit to thousands of city workers.

(4) These two benefits create a bedrock for economic mobility by guaranteeing that low-income Philadelphians and municipal employees can travel to school, work, healthcare, and services without being limited by income.

(5) SEPTA relies on these increases in ridership rates to maintain critical services and improve safety across the system.

(6) As these programs have clearly proven their value, their funding should be expanded and made permanent by creating a special fund dedicated to promoting economic mobility and accessibility to public transit for Philadelphians.

SECTION 2. Title 21 of The Philadelphia Code is amended by adding a new Chapter 21-3*** as follows:

TITLE 21. MISCELLANEOUS.

* * *

*CHAPTER 21-3***. TRANSIT ACCESS FUND.*

*§21-3**1. Definitions.*

(1) "SEPTA Key Advantage" means the employer- or organization-based transit benefit program administered by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority through which participating employers or organizations provide eligible individuals with access to SEPTA transit services at no cost to such individuals, or any successor program providing substantially similar benefits.

(2) "SEPTA Key Partner Programs" means employer- or organization-based transit benefit programs administered by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority through which participating employers or organizations provide eligible individuals with subsidized access to SEPTA transit services, or any successor program providing substantially similar benefits.

(3) "Transit Access Plan" means a plan developed by the City to expand access to public transportation by providing financial assistance for participation in SEPTA Key Advantage and the Zero Fare Program, and by supporting other programs or activities authorized under this Chapter.

(4) "Zero Fare Program" means the City-funded transit benefit program through which the City subsidizes the cost of SEPTA transit services for eligible Philadelphia residents, permitting such residents to access SEPTA transit services at no cost, or any successor program providing substantially similar benefits.

*§21-3**2. Establishment of the Philadelphia Transit Access Fund*

(1) The Philadelphia Transit Access Fund ("Transit Access Fund") shall be created by the Finance Director as a separate Fund held by the City of Philadelphia.

(2) The Transit Access Fund shall be used for the purposes of this Ordinance. Therefore, any assets remaining in the Transit Access Fund at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried into the next fiscal year, including all interest and income earned, as well as any repayments or forfeitures of grants.

*§21-3**3. Creation, Distribution and Use of the Transit Access Fund's Assets.*

(1) Funds appropriated from the Transit Access Fund shall and shall only be used to fund programs and projects that increase access to public transit for Philadelphia residents, limited to the following:

(a) The Zero Fare Program, or any successor program that provides free public transit access to Philadelphians living near or below the poverty level.

(b) The City of Philadelphia's free transit benefit through the SEPTA Key Advantage program, or any successor program that provides a free transit benefit to city employees.

(c) Grant funding to provide financial assistance to Philadelphia employers, housing providers, and educational institutions to subsidize the cost of participation in SEPTA Key Partner Programs for the purpose of providing employees, tenants, or students with free or subsidized access to public transportation.

*§21-3**4. Reporting Requirements.*

(1) The Managing Director's Office, or such other agency as designated by the Mayor, shall prepare and make publicly available an annual Transit Access Plan. The Transit Access Plan shall be submitted to the Chief Clerk and made publicly available concurrently with the Mayor's submission of the annual operating budget and Five Year Financial Plan.

(2) The Transit Access Plan shall describe the City's five (5) year plan for improving access to and accessibility of public transportation for Philadelphia residents and shall include, at a minimum:

(a) a list and description of all programs funded by the Transit Access Fund, including the amount appropriated, encumbered, and expended for each program during the preceding fiscal year and the amount proposed to be appropriated for each program during each year covered by the Five Year Financial Plan;

(b) an assessment of the utilization and impact of each program funded by the Transit Access Fund, including the number of persons served, the geographic distribution of participants, and such other information as is appropriate to evaluate whether such programs are improving access to public transportation;

(c) a description of the City's goals for improving transit access and accessibility during each year covered by the Five Year Financial Plan, including measurable objectives where practicable, the estimated cost of achieving such objectives, and the amount of City funding proposed for such purposes;

(d) the number of persons participating in the Zero Fare Program, including the number of participants newly enrolled during the preceding fiscal year, the number of Zero Fare passes distributed through community-based organizations, and the number and percentage of Zero Fare participants who are enrolled in or eligible for SEPTA Access or any successor ADA paratransit program;

(e) the number of City employees eligible to participate in the City of Philadelphia's SEPTA Key Advantage program, the number of such employees participating in the program, and, if eligibility does not extend to all full-time City employees, an explanation of the basis for limiting eligibility, including any legal, contractual, administrative, or fiscal considerations underlying such limitation;

(f) a list and description of all City programs, expenditures, projects, and planning efforts undertaken during the preceding fiscal year to improve the accessibility of public transportation for persons with disabilities, including investments in accessible transit infrastructure, pedestrian infrastructure serving transit facilities, accessible transit stops and stations, and accessibility planning; and

(g) a description of all grants or other financial assistance provided to employers or other organizations to support participation in SEPTA Key Advantage or other SEPTA Key Partner Programs, including the number of participating employers or organizations, the number of employees or other individuals receiving transit benefits, and the total amount of City financial assistance provided.

Explanation:
Italics indicate new matter added.