

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities to hold hearings to examine the approach and expected impacts of SEPTA's Bus Revolution service reconfiguration

WHEREAS, For the first time since SEPTA began operations in 1964, the transit agency is proposing systemwide changes to bus service in Philadelphia and its Pennsylvania suburbs; and

WHEREAS, Changes to the bus routes will affect residents across the region. Indeed, although there have been pandemic-related declines in recent years, buses still provide millions of trips a month and are rising quickly. For example, September 2022 saw a 14% increase for bus ridership, year-over-year; and

WHEREAS, While updating transit systems can be beneficial and improve system operations and efficiency, it is important to understand the impact that changes will have on those who utilize it; and

WHEREAS, There are large portions of Philadelphia that are not served by rail or any other means of mass transit, so buses are often only the only option that residents in those areas have to utilize. People need consistent access to buses at all times of the day and weekends both for work and other trips; and

WHEREAS, SEPTA's draft of the Bus Revolution network plan calls for a decrease in total bus routes from 125 to 99, but would increase the frequency of arterial routes. This would cause the elimination of some routes that provide critical access in and out of neighborhoods not otherwise well served by public transit; and

WHEREAS, The importance of access to public transportation is immense as it can improve health and health equity by reducing traffic crashes and air pollution, increasing physical activity, and improving access to medical care, healthy food, vital services, employment, and social connection; and

WHEREAS, Conversely, lack of access to public transportation disproportionately harms those who rely on it, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, young riders unable to drive, and those who cannot afford private transportation; and

WHEREAS, Given the scale of the impact on Philadelphians of a bus service reconfiguration, it is necessary and prudent to examine the potential impact of the reorganization; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities to hold hearings to examine the approach and expected impacts of SEPTA's Bus Revolution service reconfiguration.