



**FORWARD >>>**

## Summarizing Engagement





# SEPTA FORWARD

**SEPTA Forward, our strategic plan, is the framework to transform our organization and services to meet the changing needs of our riders.**

## OUR VISION

**The Southeastern Pennsylvania region places transit at the core of a resilient, prosperous, and equitable community for everyone.**

SEPTA is more than transit; it is the way we connect to each other.

## WE HEARD YOU

SEPTA Forward sets a clear vision of a unified lifestyle network that can be easily used for any sort of trip—whether that be traditional 9-to-5 commutes, reverse commuting, heading to school, shift work, everyday errands, or leisure activities. To figure out how to bring this to life, we have embarked on a mission to hear from as many people and perspectives as possible.

Over the last year, SEPTA has been out in the communities we serve to better understand how we can make transit more useful to more people. We've held pop-up events, joined community meetings, and created new tools for virtual and in-person engagement all to make sure we are hearing from people across our region.

Each project is taking different a approach based on specific needs, but they are all guided by the same principle of inclusive engagement that meets people where they are.



Over the last year...

**200,000+ WEB VIEWS**

**26,718 SURVEY RESPONSES**

**10,000+ PEOPLE TALKED TO**

**56 IN-PERSON MEETINGS**

**36 VIRTUAL MEETINGS**



# Project METRO



Over the years, we have heard a lot about how difficult it can be to get around our stations and understand some of our services. That's the main reason we started the Wayfinding Master Plan process. Over the last 18 months, we have been out talking with riders and stakeholders across our region to better understand what makes navigating it so challenging so that we can create a solution together. We used traditional **online surveys, setup focus groups, held pop-up events at stations, and even held a two-hour "town hall" on Reddit that garnered over 30,000 views.**

Through a partnership with the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Safe Mobility, we used an innovative approach to study how people with a diverse range of mobility, sensory, cognitive, language, and other experiences navigate our transit network with eye-tracking glasses. These **advanced glasses track the eye movements of participants, providing data on where people**

look for information and measuring stress levels. We were able to use this information to better understand pain points and gaps in our current system.



Data from the eye-tracking glasses show where people looked for information and what type of signage elements they struggled to understand.



We used space within stations to get feedback to better understand how people use existing signage.



SEPTA relies on icons to identify many services, but less than half of participants recognized the MFL, our highest ridership line, without color.

Correctly Recognized  
B+W Pictogram

Correctly Recognized  
Color Pictogram

Improvement of  
Recognition Due to Color



46.4%

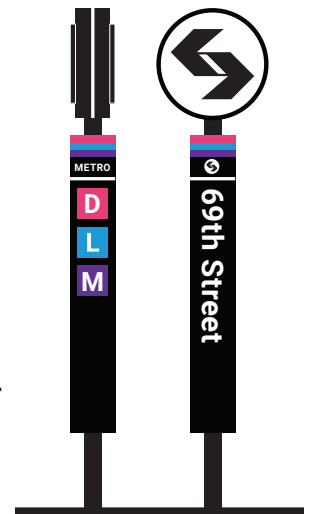


84.9%

+38.5%

Our research found that the icons were too complicated and that using simple letters along with colors can make the system accessible for all kinds of riders, including those who do not speak English.

In the fall of 2021, we released initial concepts based on the lessons we learned through outreach. We asked for feedback through a variety of tools, including **in-person events at stations, posters and signs with QR codes in station facilities, and even an innovative web tool with interactive map and renderings.** We received thousands of comments and adjusted the proposal based on what we heard to make it clearer—particularly making it explicit that we are not changing the SEPTA name. We’re reorganizing our subways and trolley lines into one umbrella system called SEPTA Metro. Over the next few months, you’ll hear more about the timing to roll out new signage at stations and digital tools to support the new system.



## PROJECT METRO STRUCTURE

### EXISTING STRUCTURE



Regional Rail   Bus System   Market-Frankford Line   Broad Street Line   Norristown High Speed Line   Trolleys



### NEW STRUCTURE



REGIONAL RAIL   BUS   METRO



L

B

M

T

G

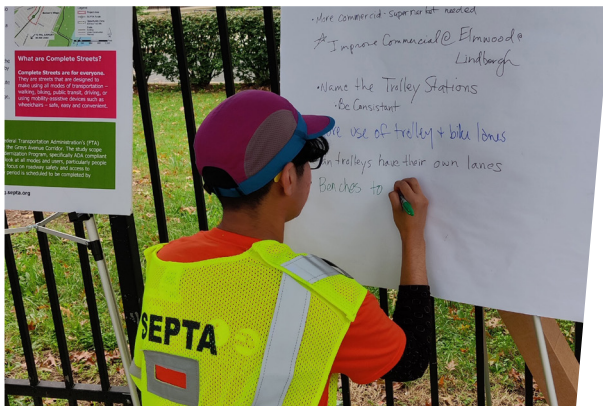
D



# Trolley Modernization

Trolleys have played a critical role in our region since the early 1900s. The current vehicles have served communities since the 1980s, but need to be replaced with modern, accessible vehicles and stations. As SEPTA transforms trolleys to meet the needs of riders today and tomorrow—we are starting by asking riders and communities about how they want to see that happen.

What should stations look like? What types of amenities should be there? What types of seating do you want to see on vehicles? These are the types of questions we've been out asking at **pop-up events** across the trolley system. We've joined **community events** in neighborhoods around the region like Juneteenth at Malcolm X Park and the Upper Darby Pride Festival at the high school, **launched online surveys to get more feedback, and even held a "clean up" event** as a part of the Blossom at Bartram! Plan. As the project continues over the years, we'll be building on this feedback and coming back for more.



We met people where they were, listened, and took action, even organizing a street clean-up.



# King of Prussia Rail

The King of Prussia Rail Project (KOP Rail) will extend the existing Norristown High Speed Line (NHSL) 4 miles into King of Prussia, connecting the region's three largest employment centers— Center City, University City, and King of Prussia—with frequent and reliable transit service that reduces a typical trip on transit from 75 minutes to 45 minutes. Over the years, SEPTA has hosted **more than 100 community meetings** to gain feedback on the project.

We have continued this engagement effort as design has progressed, including a design **open house in the December** and a **three-part open house series this spring** looking at connections to and around the stations. The spring open house series helped us better understand the future land use and potential connections at and around King of Prussia Rail's (KOP Rail) five planned stations, including sidewalks and trails. We will take this information and incorporate it into the design of the project as design progresses.



Understanding how this project impacts the KOP community is at the core.

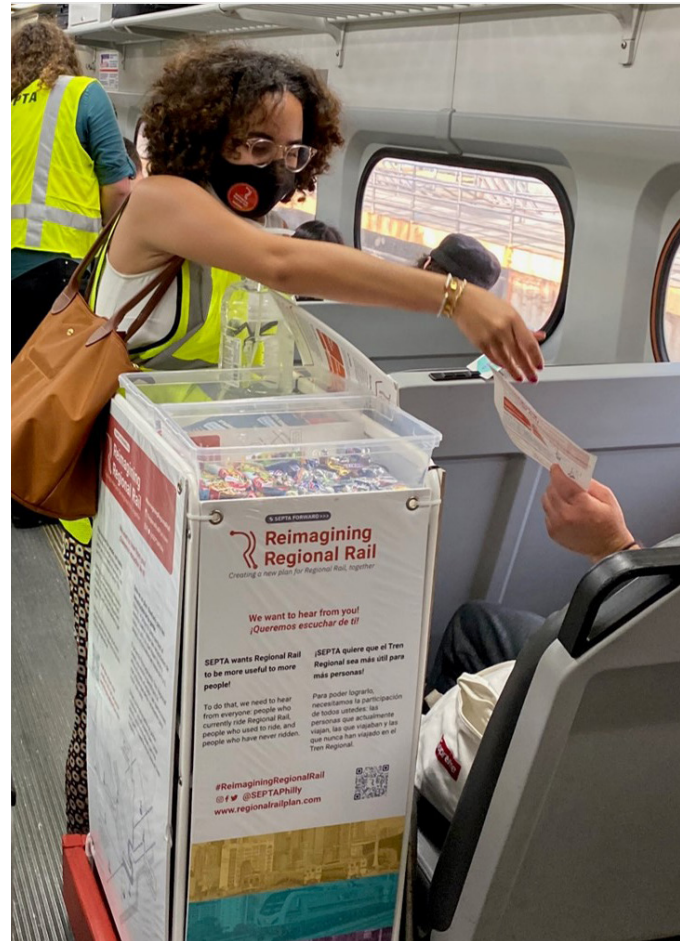


We've incorporated thousands of comments throughout the years.

# Reimagining Regional Rail

Thanks to our region's legacy of investments in rail infrastructure, including the Center City Commuter Tunnel which linked together two iconic railroads, Philadelphia has the best regional rail infrastructure in North America. As a part of our efforts to create a unified lifestyle transit network, we are reimagining our system based on the region's changing and diverse travel needs—not just 9-to-5 commutes to work. We're asking people to imagine a Regional Rail service that is more useful to more people.

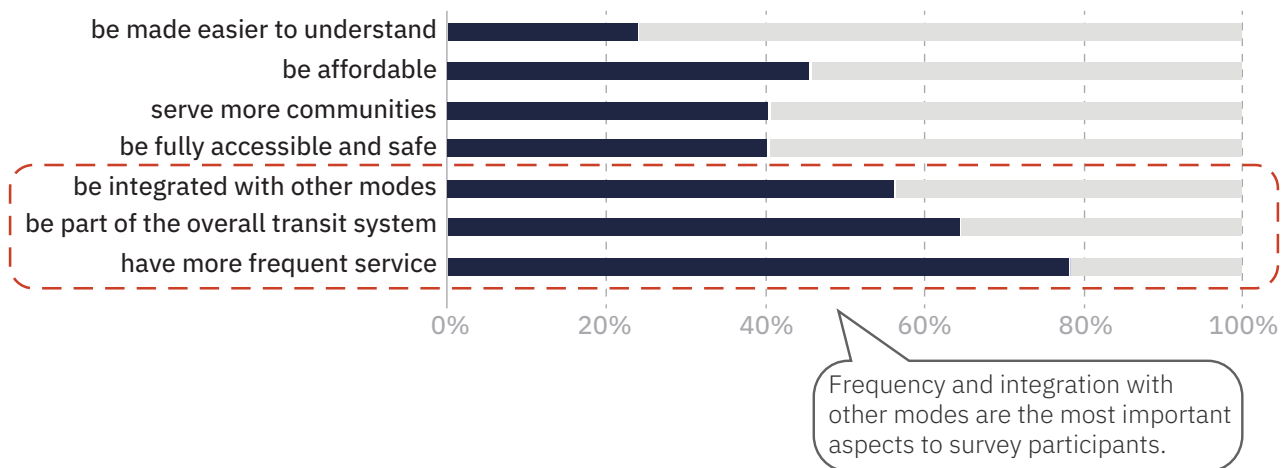
Over the last year, we held two distinct outreach efforts: one to create goals based on what people felt worked well and what could be improved; and a second to get feedback on potential scenarios developed from those goals. We held **pop-up events in stations, created focus groups, and even built a cart to take on trains and in stations** to share information. In the spring, we created a special **online tool that asks a series of questions then recommends which scenario might serve their need best**. Together, these efforts have helped us understand how improvements could change the way people travel and create a vision for the future.



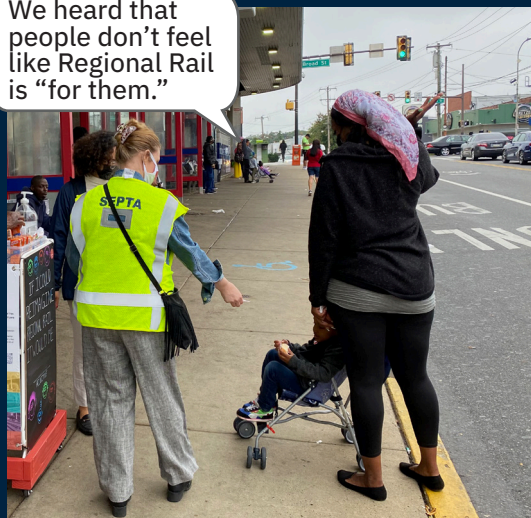
We set up on and off the Regional Rail system to hear why people do or don't ride.



## What is most important for the future of Regional Rail?



We heard that people don't feel like Regional Rail is "for them."



## REGIONAL RAIL IS "NOT FOR ME"

While the first round of survey responds were coming in, we noticed that we were not hearing from certain communities. The participants largely reflected the current Regional Rail Ridership—white and higher income—but we knew we needed to hear from others too. We quickly **created a series of pop-up events at stations and in communities surrounding stations where participation was low** so that we could reach current and potential riders—and it worked. It resulted more women and BIPOC filling out the survey.

To make sure that we proactively reached out to these groups in the following phases, we **added in-depth focus groups to foster incisive discussions with people who currently**

**do not ride regional rail, but could benefit from its service.** We heard similar themes, particularly that affordability, integration with other services, and frequency of service were the biggest barriers to ridership. We also heard a consistent perception that Regional Rail is "not for me," particularly from people of lower income and BIPOC residents. As we move forward with the project, we are focused on creating system that is welcoming for all.

We are taking the feedback we have heard to date across all phases of outreach and are developing a cohesive vision that makes Regional Rail more useful to more people. From what we heard, that vision includes a focus on service that is more frequent, easier-to-use, and better integrated with other SEPTA services. We will be releasing an updated concept this fall.

# Bus Revolution

While the bus system has been shaped by historic routes, the way we travel has changed a lot over the years. From simplifying routes to improving service speed and reliability, the Bus Revolution takes your input and puts it into motion. Since the start of this project in 2020, we've gathered your opinions on how to create a more equitable bus system for all of our riders.

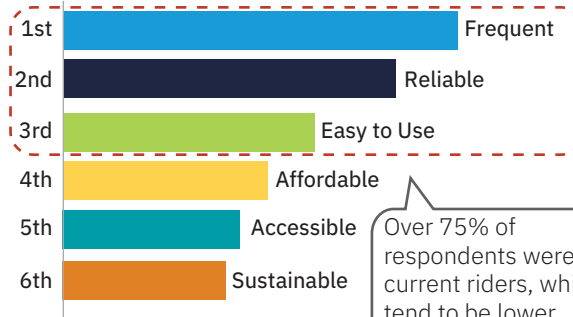
We have gone out to meet people where they are through pop-ups at eighteen locations and accommodated access by hosting fourteen virtual conversations. We **surveyed 7,000 people in person, online, and over the phone** to really understand what tradeoffs people prefer as we work to create a more frequent, reliable, and easy to use system. This combination of **pop-ups, community-based conversations, and online, telephone, and hardcopy surveying** helps us combat gaps that often occur in outreach efforts, such as limited internet access. Together, this provides SEPTA with the information we need to make create a bus system that works better for our region.



The project team spent months going to dozens of events and met the community where they were to get input.



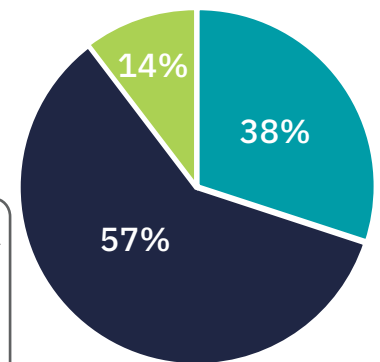
## What is most important to you about SEPTA's bus network?



Over 75% of respondents were current riders, which tend to be lower income or BIPOC.

The majority of participants prefer a longer walk to a faster bus. However, this skewed towards white, higher income men. BIPOC and older participants are much more likely to prefer a shorter walk to a slower bus. To design a better network, we need to more clearly understand why that is.

## Do you prefer a shorter walk to a longer bus or a slightly longer walk to a faster bus?



Prefer a shorter walk to a slower bus

Prefer a slightly longer walk to a faster bus

Not sure



Based on the information we've heard about the two scenarios released this spring, we are creating a preferred network option that we will release this fall for more feedback. As this project continues towards the implementation of an improved network, we will continue this inclusive engagement process.



We used fun and easy ways to vote on tradeoffs.

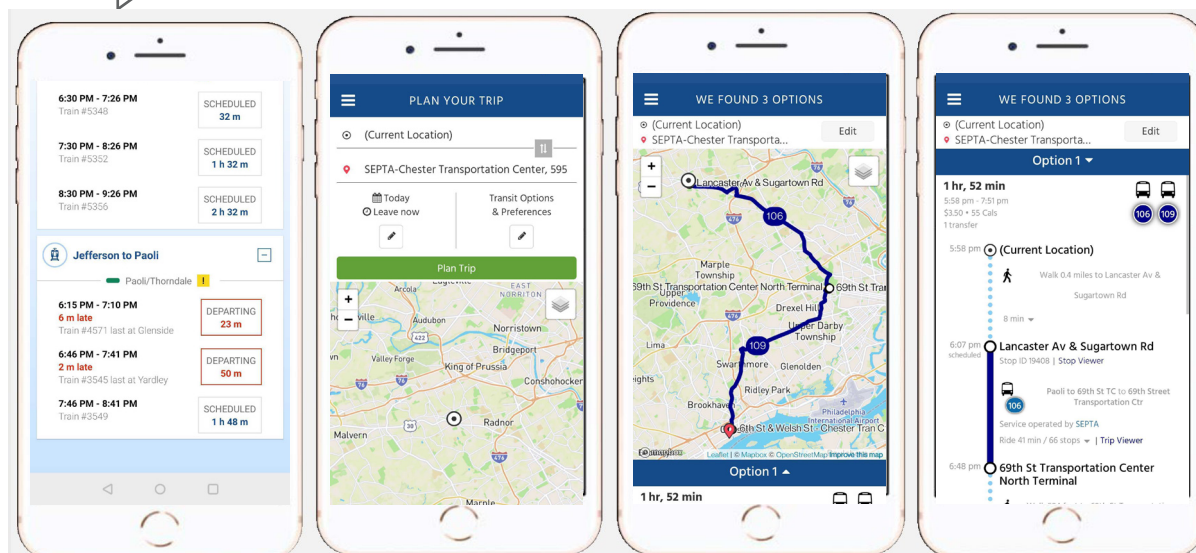
# Web & Mobile App

As we spoke to riders, we learned that one of the most integral parts of the rider experience is the quality of our digital products. Customers rely on web and mobile tools to access information about our services, and it was clear that we could be doing better. Because of this feedback, we put out a **survey** that thousands of people responded to and are redesigning our website and mobile apps using what we heard alongside best practice research and with the principles from the Wayfinding Master Plan's research and engagement.

To understand where people were struggling to use our tools, we asked a **focus group** to try and plan a trip, find the next train to arrive, and favorite a route. When they did this with our current app, only 64% were able to complete the tasks. When we asked them to do the same on a new prototype, 93% of participants were able to do it. Participants explicitly shared that the prototype is easier to use and are eager for the formal release of the update.

SEPTA's current app can make it difficult to complete some basic functions, but the SEPTA's prototype increased success rate from 63% to 93% with a new design based on user feedback.

**45% Increase**  
In Average Success Rate



Current SEPTA Mobile App

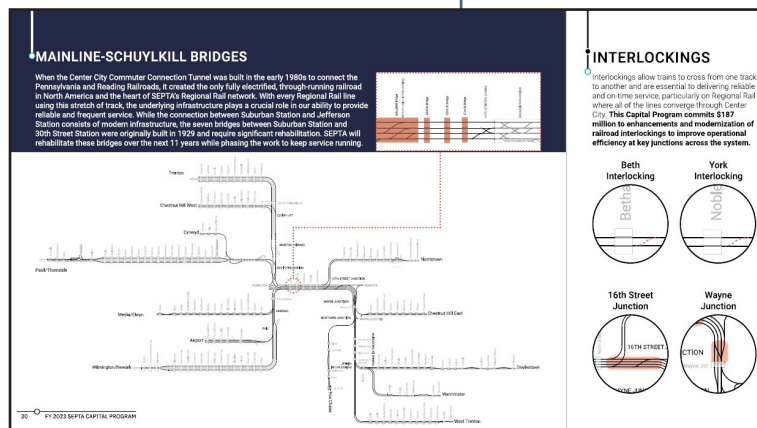


# SEPTA Key 2.0

Along with our digital services, we heard that our fare payment systems and policies can make it complicated to plan and pay for trips. We've **talked to hundreds of riders, advocacy groups, and operators** to understand exactly where the pain points are and how we can improve. We're pushing SEPTA Key forward by prioritizing improvements, adding smartphone and contactless credit card capabilities, and improving mobile app options.



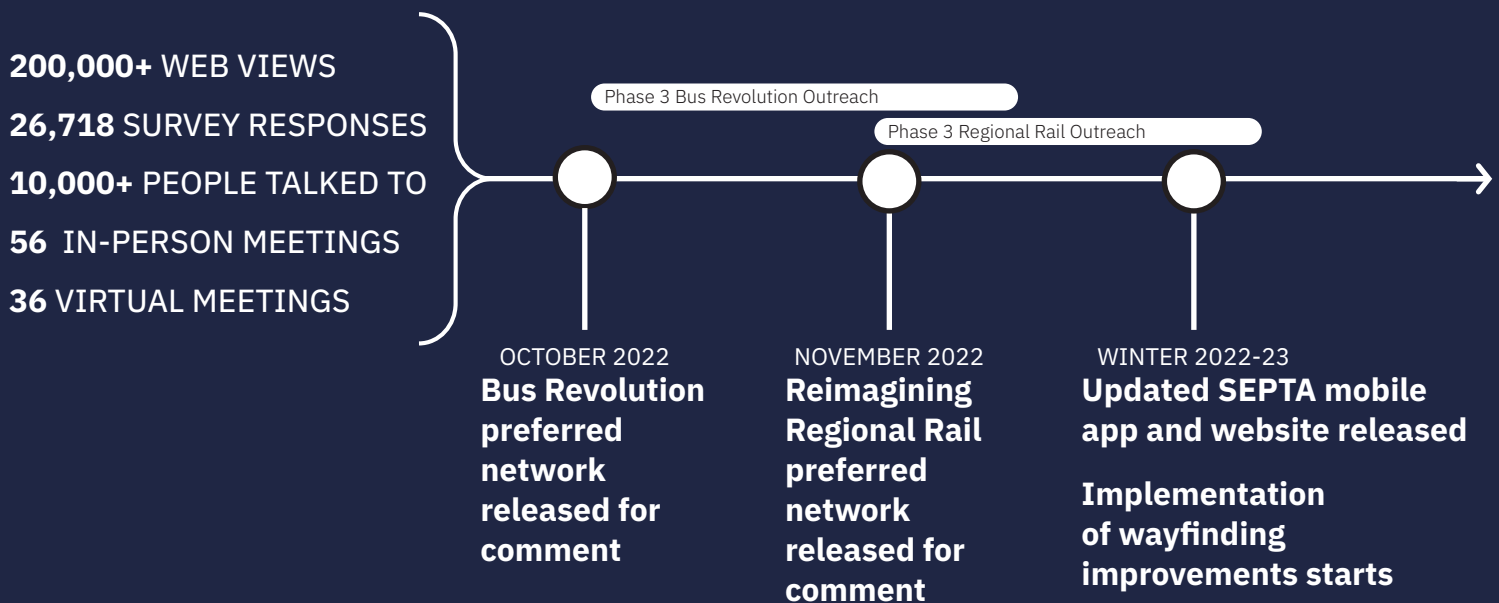
efforts to create lifestyle transit network across all modes. Together, these steps support efforts to be more transparent with our priorities and progress.



## WHAT'S NEXT

SEPTA is putting outreach and public engagement at the core of the work we are doing. While we have learned a lot, there are still some questions we need answered. Through our outreach, we learned about some differences across gender, race, and income. As we move forward, we need to better understand the “why” behind these differences to make sure that they projects serve everyone. We will continue to include purposeful, in-depth conversation with various groups as a part of our outreach.

This fall, SEPTA will be releasing preferred networks for both Bus Revolution and Reimagining Regional Rail that incorporate this feedback. At the same time, work will continue towards implementation of the new SEPTA Metro system and releasing a new website and mobile app this winter. As always, we will continue to listen to your feedback and find ways to make transit more useful to more people.









Join the

**SEPTA FORWARD >>>**

Movement!

**Visit [planning.septa.org](https://planning.septa.org)**

to learn more about these  
initiatives, sign up for updates, and  
find opportunities to contribute.



**SEPTA**