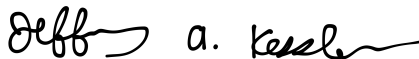

Review of the FY2016 Operating Budget
An Official Report by the SEPTA Youth Advisory Council

The SEPTA Youth Advisory Council is pleased to present this report detailing the council's observations and commentary with respect to SEPTA's Fiscal Year 2016 Operating Budget. Overall, the council commends SEPTA for continuing to develop balanced budgets that maximize the use of the agency's limited funds. This report does contain several opportunities for strengthening the Operating Budget, advice the council sincerely hopes SEPTA heeds.

In Service,
SEPTA Youth Advisory Council



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NON-FARE COMMENTARY

Subway-Elevated Funding

The SEPTA YAC is extremely pleased to see that Owl Operation of the Market-Frankford and Broad Street Lines will remain funded for the entirety of the 2016 Fiscal Year and indefinitely in subsequent operating budgets. Given that young individuals comprise of a disproportionate percentage of this late-night ridership (especially with respect to choice rides), we are excited by the exceptional news. Providing these services make both SEPTA and the City attractive to young individuals and will likely be pivotal to the creation of lifetime riders. This, combined with the extremely positive feedback we have received from these riders, has us very much looking forward to the program's continued success.

Amtrak Agreement

Although we are pleased to see a slight reduction in the Amtrak Trackage Right expense of approximately \$1 MM, the value is still more than \$5 MM greater than that of 2014 (approximately \$4.75 MM adjusting for inflation). Despite the increase, very little service stipulations were included in the previous contract. Moving forward with the expense for FY 2016, we encourage SEPTA to ensure the following provisions are included in the Amtrak expense for FY 2016:

- **Open Access to Real-Time Data Feeds:** SEPTA's TrainView system for tracking Regional Rail trains is one of the most robust in the nation with minute-specific predictions for most lines. Unfortunately, these predictions are far less accurate for riders of SEPTA's Paoli/Thorndale, Trenton, and Wilmington/Newark lines (which operate exclusively on Amtrak tracks). To solve the problem of inaccurate predictions, better access to real-time predictions is needed. Accordingly, SEPTA should include a provision requiring Amtrak to provide SEPTA with the raw data necessary to incorporate these lines into the TrainView algorithm with as much accuracy as one would find on SEPTA's other rail lines. As doing so would cost minimal to both agencies yet provide improved information for more than a third of SEPTA's rail ridership¹, we view this action as absolutely essential.

¹ See Figure 1

Rank	Line	Annual Pax	Rank	Line	Annual Pax
1	Paoli/Thorndale	6,156,844	10	Chestnut Hill East	1,566,286
2	Doylestown	4,657,647	11	Chestnut Hill West	1,555,748
3	West Trenton	3,494,288	12	Fox Chase	1,474,501
4	Trenton	3,491,548	13	Cynwyd	168,459
5	Norristown	3,016,610	Data from SEPTA 2015 Proposed Annual Service Plan; Prepared by SEPTA YAC. Yellow rows indicate lines operating entirely on Amtrak tracks. Orange rows indicate lines that connect to 30th Street via an Amtrak track.		
6	Elwyn	2,990,632			
7	Wilmington	2,700,254			
8	Warminster	2,501,832			
9	Airport	2,247,816			

Figure 1: Summary of Railroad Ridership by Line, Circa 2014

- Changing Amtrak Dispatcher Policy at Trenton, NJ:** SEPTA and NJ Transit should be a model for the nation in interagency cooperation. Many passengers conduct the “Trenton Shuffle,” effectively providing SEPTA Regional Rail access to Princeton, New Brunswick, Metropark, Newark, intermediate points in New Jersey, and New York Penn Station in Midtown Manhattan. Unfortunately, all too often Amtrak dispatchers require a SEPTA train to depart before an NJ Transit train arrives, greatly increasing the travel time for these transferring passengers. Ideally, schedules could be coordinated to allow for direct transfers between trains (with the published connection wait time ranging from 8 to 38 minutes). However, in the interim, having Amtrak dispatchers make all reasonable efforts to hold trains for connections would be ideal.

Police Text-Messaging System²

The SEPTA Youth Advisory Council published a report in February of last year emphasizing the need for a police text-messaging system. Despite having been told such a system was in development and nearing deployment, no such system has been made available. Further emphasizing the need for such a system, it has been brought to the YAC’s attention that a number of individuals have spoken at prior hearings regarding the infrequent policing of “No Smoking” at train stations and in subway tunnels. As detailed in the report³, a police text-messaging system would

² The council believes this would be an operational expense and therefore fall under the Operating Budget. However, should this not be the case, funds should be appropriated from the Capital Budget or other source.

³ A copy of the Police Text Message Plan report is available online at <http://septayac.com/documents/>

greatly enhance the transit police force's ability to identify instances of illicit activity and thereby reduce such illegal and unwanted actions.

FARE-RELATED COMMENTARY

Pass Limits

The YAC continues to reject the pass limits enacted with the 2013 tariff changes. One of the primary reasons for the change was a predicted increase in pass sharing upon the elimination of gender-identification stickers. Although unfortunately in many respects, but luckily in this instance, the delay of New Payment Technology ("NPT") implementation has afforded us the opportunity to directly test this hypothesis. The YAC continues to believe that an increase in pass sharing is not what one would observe; however, we welcome and encourage SEPTA to conduct an analysis to determine if this has indeed been the case. Should instances of pass sharing increases **not** be evident, we implore SEPTA to remove the pass limits entirely from the tariffs prior to their enactment with full NPT implementation. Alternatively, should SEPTA remain insistent that pass limits continue, the trip limit must be based on **linked rather than unlinked trips**. Keeping a provision that counts the two equally unfairly penalizes individuals who are already inconvenienced by having to transfer to reach their destination. Given the technological capabilities of this functionality do indeed exist, this is something that at the very least should be implemented prior to full NPT implementation.