



Review of the FY2020 Capital Budget Proposal
An Official Report by the SEPTA Youth Advisory Council

The SEPTA Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is pleased to deliver its comments on SEPTA's Proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Operating Budget. The YAC was pleased with the recommendations, and we present additional comments and suggestions for the board and management in the enclosed pages.

The suggestions in this report reflect the views of the entire council, comprised of young transit users ages 16-23; the combination of City of Philadelphia residents and members residing in each of the four suburban Philadelphia (PA) counties provides diverse and valuable insight on millennials' visions of transit across our region. Furthermore, the YAC took special attention to ensure that our comments were representative of the youth of our region as a whole. As such, we remind readers that we'll inherit their decisions, consequences, and the implications of operational and capital spending for the next several decades. We write in support of the future we wish to see, and we are excited to support the Authority in ensuring the collective success of our region.

In Service,

SEPTA Youth Advisory Council

Prepared and Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Herzog'.

Will Herzog
Executive Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evan Wise'.

Evan Wise
Executive Vice-Chair

Support for Projects Targeting High-Traffic Stations

The YAC is excited by investment in stations surrounding colleges and universities, particularly in the 30th Street Station (MFL) - Phase B project. We are also excited by the investment in Villanova Station (RR and NHSL) and Ardmore Transportation Center. However, we are confused about the prioritization of Wynnewood Station in Lower Merion Township for investment over Bryn Mawr Station. While the station is located on a prominent interlocking and may pose ADA-compliance concerns, the aging infrastructure needs immediate attention to continue to attract young passengers from surrounding colleges. There is a belief that creative solutions may be employed, including partial high-level platforms, to achieve optimal results.

Overspending on Parking Improvements

The YAC understands the importance of parking in areas where pedestrian and transit connections are insufficient as the primary first mile-last mile connections. However, scholarship around induced demand from building more parking, coupled with the sheer expense of this endeavor suggests that the expense is greatly out-of-line with the benefit. The YAC unanimously and wholeheartedly believes that we should avoid making a car-dependent transit system. SEPTA should consider employing its vast parking lot real estate for development, which could provide new bases of riders and real estate revenue for the agency.

Purchase Lifecycle and Carbon Neutrality

The YAC is concerned about the externalities of the boiler replacement project and the lack of spending to-date on sustainability initiatives beyond external sources, like the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emission Program for emissions-free busses, or public/private partnerships for solar power purchasing. The YAC believes that SEPTA needs to spend as well in advancing these initiatives. The YAC believes that SEPTA needs to plan for an all-electric or hybrid fleet, discontinuing investment in fossil fuel systems and fully phasing out nonelectric vehicles. We are also interested in the exclusion of relevance to financial obligations in sustainability objectives (in Capital Programs vs Strategic Business Plan Objectives), Sustainability initiatives are often seen as an either/or to economic feasibility and efficiency, which ignores the short and long-term economic damage done by emissions and climate change. These are challenges that we, as young Philadelphians, will face in our lifetimes. Sustainability is an economic efficiency, and a false dichotomy misrepresents initiatives and how we prioritize them.

Spending on Paratransit Vehicle Replacement

The YAC believes that new thinking is needed on paratransit vehicle purchases, in partnership with disability advocacy groups and the SAC. Research shows that under 40% of paratransit trips are typically shared trips, and this problem is greater in suburbs, where sprawl is most prevalent. The YAC believes that SEPTA should consider adding sedans and wheelchair-accessible SUVs (MV1) to its fleet to save fuel costs from operating larger vehicles,

and acquisition costs from buying vehicles that are too large. The authority may also consider private operators providing vehicles if this is believed to provide cost efficiency. The benefit of a standardized vehicle across all counties is believed to simply not be worth the extra spending if cost efficiencies can be realized and the spending reinvested in the paratransit passenger experience.