



A Memo from the SEPTA Youth Advisory Council

September 10th 2026

YAC Statement on Phase 1 of the New Bus Network

The SEPTA YAC is thrilled to see SEPTA move ahead with overhauling its bus network with the recent implementation of Phase 1 of the New Bus Network (NBN). SEPTA is a legacy system that inherited many of its districts and routes from disconnected private operators over 50 years ago. There has been a continuous need for the agency to address route inefficiencies and the travel needs of Philadelphians today are not the same as they were decades ago. The agency has also taken the opportunity to revamp its bus signage, making it more cohesive and improving visibility at night. SEPTA should be applauded for working to implement these critical efficiencies and enhancements to maximize its limited resources.

The YAC, however, encourages SEPTA to improve communication of the necessity and value of these changes to riders. Many riders in the first days of the Phase 1 changes [mistook](#) many of these changes as an overall service cut. Much of the at-a-glance messaging highlighted the 7 bus routes being discontinued, as opposed to just 2 new routes being added. The usage of the term 'Frequency Changes' also seemed to spawn confusion, and many riders assumed they were service reductions rather than, in many cases, service improvements. This is a result of a revenue neutral change being situated within a decade of decreased bus service. Increased traffic and operating costs without additional operating budget has caused bus revenue miles to decrease from 39.8 million in 2016 to 37.3 in 2024.

There was also general confusion around the fact that NBN is not new. Many of the changes are modified route tariffs approved under the Bus Revolution plan in 2022. Bus Revolution was an ambitious plan to overhaul the bus system from top to bottom, an overall increase in frequency across the system and the implementation of bus stop rebalancing. In contrast, NBN is not actually changing the vast majority of riders' journeys and we believe this should be clearly communicated. The YAC understands that SEPTA is in a difficult position funding new capital improvements, and NBN demonstrates SEPTA using its resources as efficiently as possible as the authority faces its upcoming budget battle. **We strongly encourage SEPTA to revisit its already approved Bus Revolution plans as an option for when the agency is fully funded in the near future.**