



## Statement on Proposed Fiscal 2011 SEPTA Annual Service Plan

June 21, 2010

The Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers supports the Annual Service Plan process and supports the extension of Route 12 to the Delaware Avenue waterfront. This will give residents of the Rittenhouse Square and Wash West neighborhoods direct access to shopping and entertainment destinations on the waterfront.

We support the creation of experimental Route 72, which is also serving emerging retail centers. In an appropriate nod to current economic conditions, SEPTA has been cautious about committing to any new routes at this time, and has designed the proposed Route 72 service to minimize its impact on the budget. SEPTA should closely monitor ridership performance on a trip-by-trip basis on both Route 12 and 72. If ridership develops as the routes' proponents hope, then service hours can be expanded. We also note that Route 72 will serve several large Asian markets on Cheltenham Ave. They should be identified on the route schematic. Targeted marketing of the new route to the Asian-American community should also be planned from the start of the service.

We commend the planners who recognized the opportunity to extend Route 97 and improve connections with city routes at little or no added cost to SEPTA. Schedulers should be careful to avoid making frequent or large changes in schedules of the extended trips while riders are getting used to the new service. We also caution SEPTA to not make hasty conclusions about the success or lack thereof for this service. Introduction of the service will coincide with another increase in transfer fares, bringing the transfer to one dollar. For a customer connecting from Route 23 to this new service, the additional mile or two of travel will cost nearly as much as the long ride to the transfer point. We also support the new Seven Stars alignment of this route: there is no need to double back on the Metroplex driveway to get back to Chemical Road.

We support the extension of Route 43 and establishment of a Route 52 spur to serve the West Parkside industrial park. This will maximize the number of people who can access new jobs in the industrial park. Availability of good transportation links will give these centers a competitive advantage in attracting employers.

The package of initiatives for routes serving Ardmore illustrates the interdependence of routes and the challenges of planning new services. In order to streamline Route 105, the West Overbrook segment of it is being shifted to Route 103. A short portion of Lynn Boulevard will lose service, but this is an acceptable trade-off for the other benefits of the change. We support the plan to increase service on Lancaster Avenue between Ardmore and Paoli. This is a good example of how rail and bus services complement each other: we stress to those who are skeptical of the need for this service that the buses and the train serve distinct travel markets including Center City commuters and college students on the train, reverse commuters taking the bus to jobs, and elderly and transit-dependent Main Line residents who use the bus every day for shopping and other personal business.

The alteration to Route 118 will improve the safety and efficiency of the route. It is to SEPTA's credit that the public notice and hearing rules are followed even for a one-block adjustment.

It is also to SEPTA's credit that they changed their plan for Route 139 since the initial public meeting on the Annual Service Plan and are working with stakeholders to improve the cost recovery of the route before making significant alterations. If ridership does not improve, we support elimination of the route segment serving the outlet mall and its replacement with a segment to the new shopping centers on Township Line Road.

Finally, we commend SEPTA for including succinct explanations of the history and reasons for each proposal in the Annual Service Plan announcement. The Annual Service Plan is a big and complicated process, and the only people who are likely to read the full plan are insiders and transit experts like those who attend these hearings. The summaries are much more accessible to the general public as well as to elected officials. In the coming debate over transportation funding, we will be using this document to explain to state officials how SEPTA adapts to changing market needs rather than stagnating.