

Testimony for SEPTA capital budget public comment

Hello, my name is Maya Frydman. I am a resident of Philadelphia, a transit rider, and I work for the Clean Air Council, an environmental advocacy organization, whose mission is to protect everyone's right to a healthy environment, including through promoting the use of sustainable transportation like public transit. The Council is also a member of Transit Forward Philadelphia.

I traveled here today on the 10 Trolley. Trolleys provide an essential part of the service to and from West and Southwest Philadelphia, but even 30 years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, SEPTA's trolleys continue to be inaccessible for many of the region's residents. That means that if I had a disability, was injured, or was using a mobility aid I would have had to find another way to get to this meeting. While I applaud SEPTA dedicating funds in this budget to the Trolley Modernization effort, which will - in time - make the system accessible, I urge SEPTA to dedicate more funds to accelerate the Trolley Modernization effort because it is unacceptable that a core component of the transit system is unusable by so many.

Similarly, the lack of accessibility at many BSL, MFL, Norristown High Speed Line, and Regional Rail stations cuts off the usefulness of the system to far too many people. While I am glad to see SEPTA is setting aside funding to make most stations accessible by 2035, 12 years is too long a time to wait for riders who currently cannot access service. In order to prioritize riders I urge SEPTA to increase its investment and speed up the long overdue process of making all stations accessible.

Accessible stations and vehicles are vital to SEPTA being an equitable and convenient way to get around the city and the region. So I hope that you will accelerate the process of making this system usable for all riders. Thank you for your time.