

## Testimony for SEPTA operating budget public comment

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. The Council is also a member of Transit Forward Philadelphia.

Today I am speaking in support of items in the operating budget that make transit more affordable and convenient for all riders. In Philadelphia, transportation is the largest source of the air pollution that we breathe in every day. Making public transit more affordable and easier to use means fewer single occupancy vehicles on the road, improved air quality, and less emissions, all of which help to improve public health in the region and lessen the impacts of climate change.

For this reason I support the proposed addition of a second free transfer within two hours for SEPTA Key users. This change will allow riders to travel further on public transit, and is particularly important with the Bus Revolution proposing to increase transfers for some riders. While this proposed change will help SEPTA Key users, riders paying in cash still have to pay additional fares every time they transfer. SEPTA needs a fare card system which allows riders paying in cash to get the same free transfer benefit that those paying with a card would have, and reverses the current system where cash paying riders are penalized for not being able to pay with a card.

A similar issue is that riders currently pay a new fare when transferring between regional rail and other SEPTA vehicles like buses, trolleys, and the El. This creates a disconnect between SEPTA's system, because riders are not incentivized to continue to use local transit after taking regional rail. By eliminating the transfer penalty for riders changing from regional rail to "local transit" SEPTA can create better system cohesion while making trips that include regional rail less expensive for riders. This will allow more riders to take advantage of the full transit system, which will help to raise ridership numbers overall.

As someone who relies on SEPTA to travel and often needs to transfer multiple times, I hope that you will adopt these improvements to the fare structure that help to make transit more affordable, connected, and convenient to ride. Thank you for your time.