

# Public Hearings

September 2023

# Background



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# Why Now?

Most routes remain largely the same as they were well before SEPTA started operating them in 1964.

**Land use and the way that people live and get around has changed greatly in the last 60 years.**

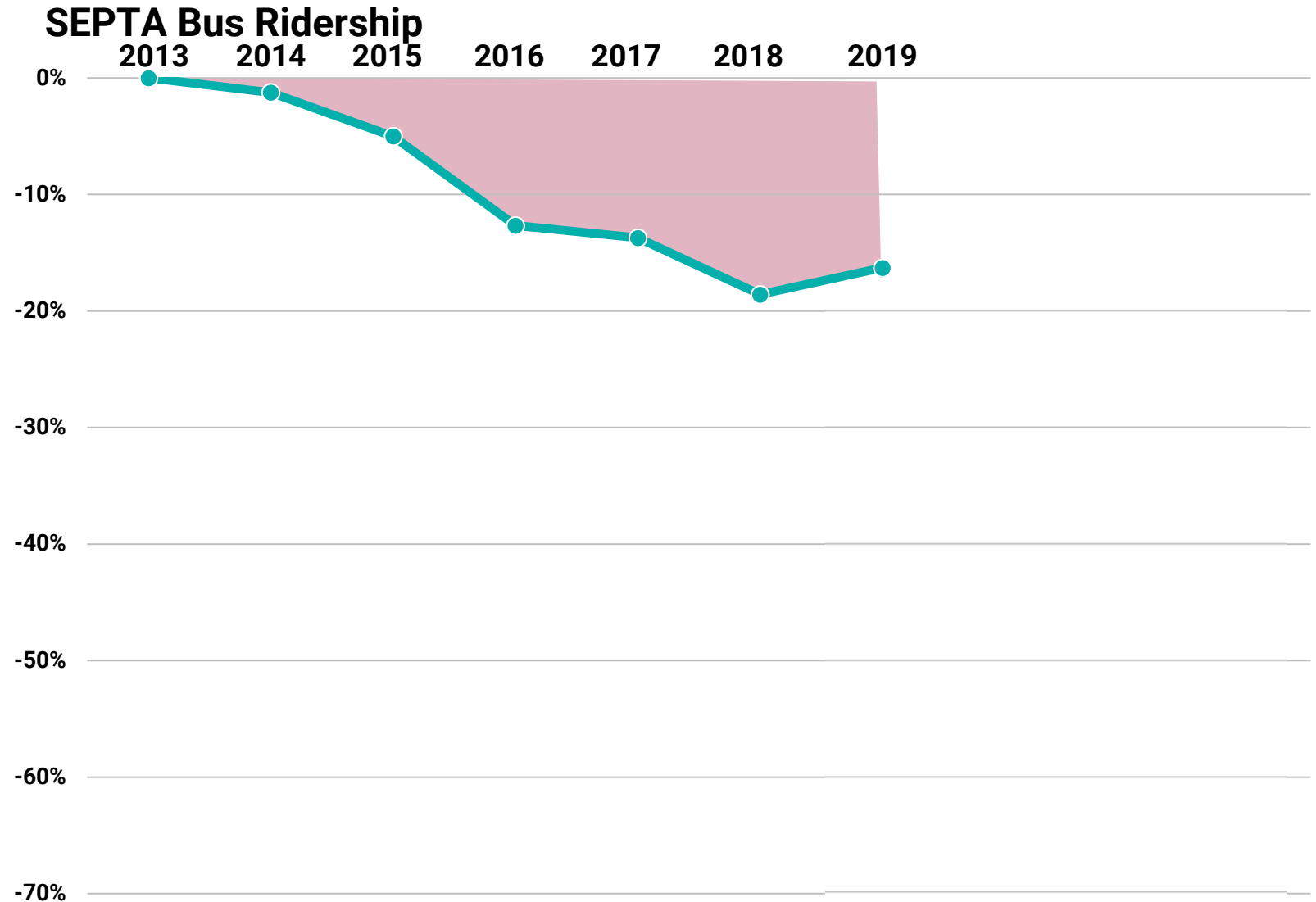


*Philadelphia circa 1950s*

# Why Now?

**Ridership  
dropped nearly  
20% between  
2013 & 2019.**

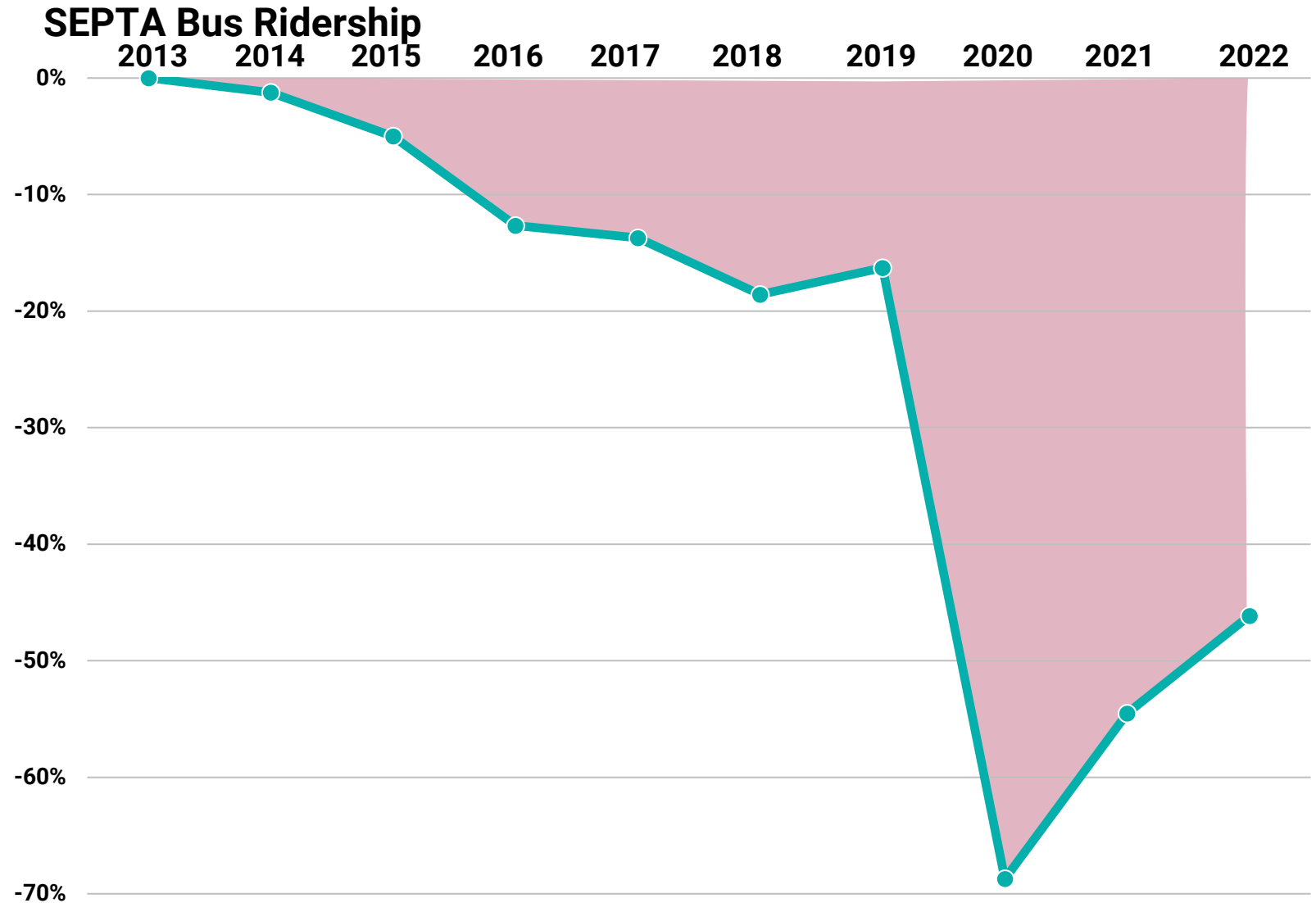
**At the same time,  
operating costs  
increased by 10%  
while service got  
slower and less  
reliable for our  
customers.**



# Why Now?

The pandemic exacerbated this issue by completely changing travel patterns.

While ridership is returning, **it is still 30% to 40% below 2019 levels.**

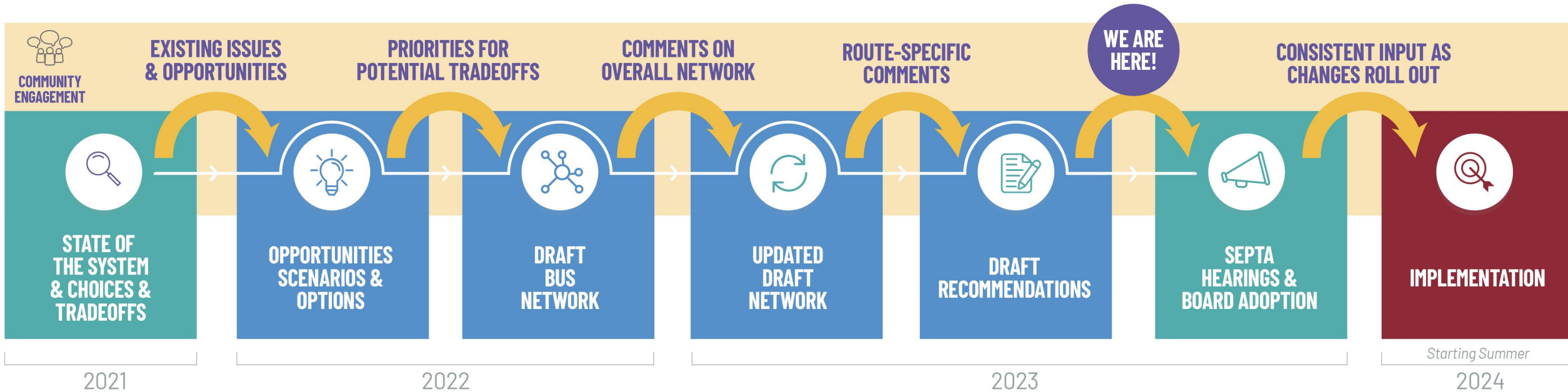


# Bus Revolution Process



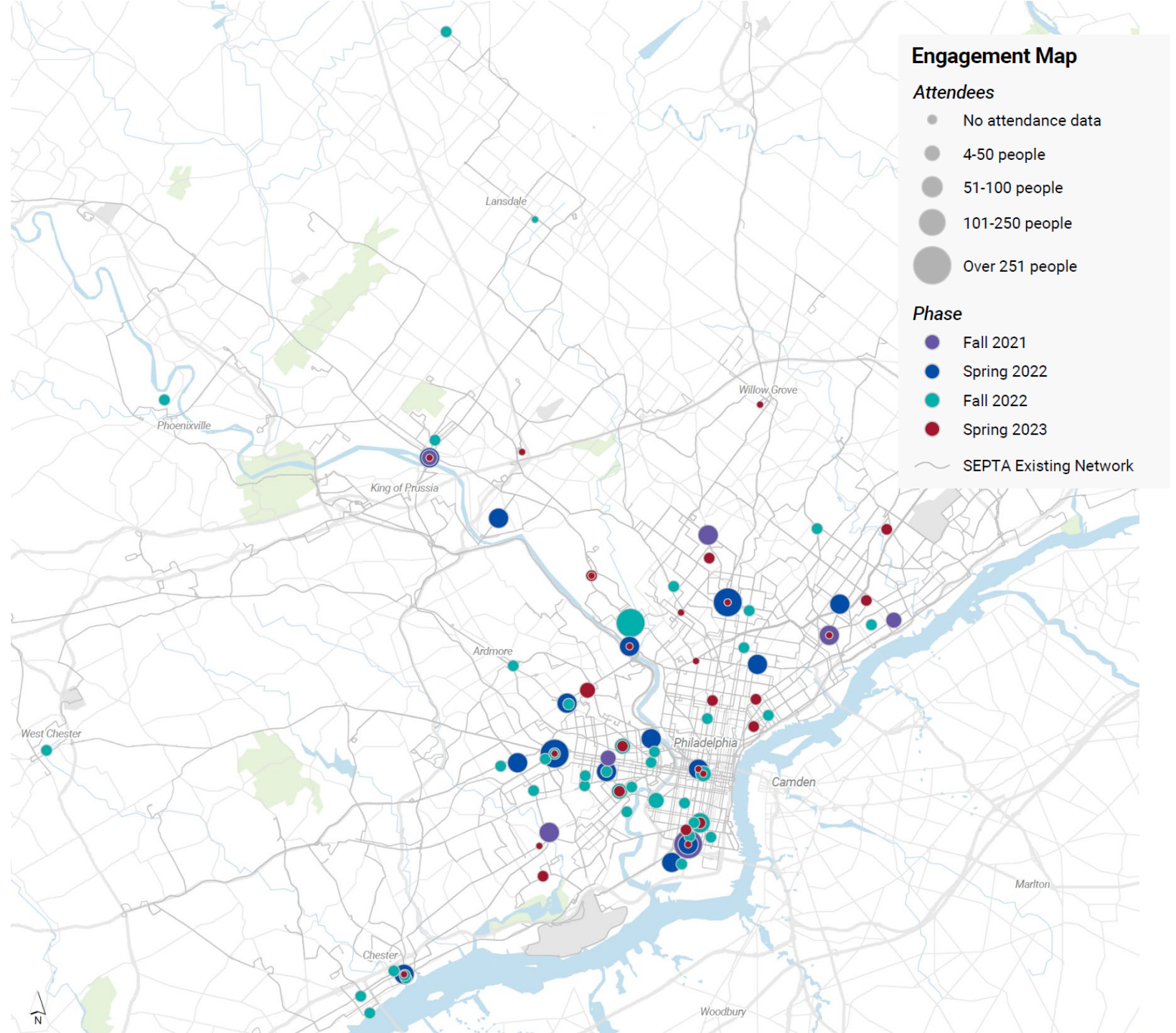
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# Project Schedule



We held **144** in-person events and **37** virtual meetings over two years.

We heard from **over 20,000** people through surveys and comments.





In **Fall 2021**,  
we asked  
**riders**  
**questions**  
**about their**  
**priorities and**  
**preferences.**

**Over 7,000**  
**people replied.**

**People consistently told us they want faster and more reliable service.**

A shorter walk to slower bus?



OR

A slightly longer walk to faster bus?



A bus that takes an indirect path & is slower but stops closer to your destination?



OR

A bus that travels more directly & is faster but stops a little bit further from your destination?



# The Market Analysis showed:

- A need for more neighborhood-to-neighborhood service.
- A need for off-peak and weekend service.

## Composite Transit Demand

Estimated demand for transit services calculated by adjusted employment and adjusted population per acre

### Transit Frequency Demand

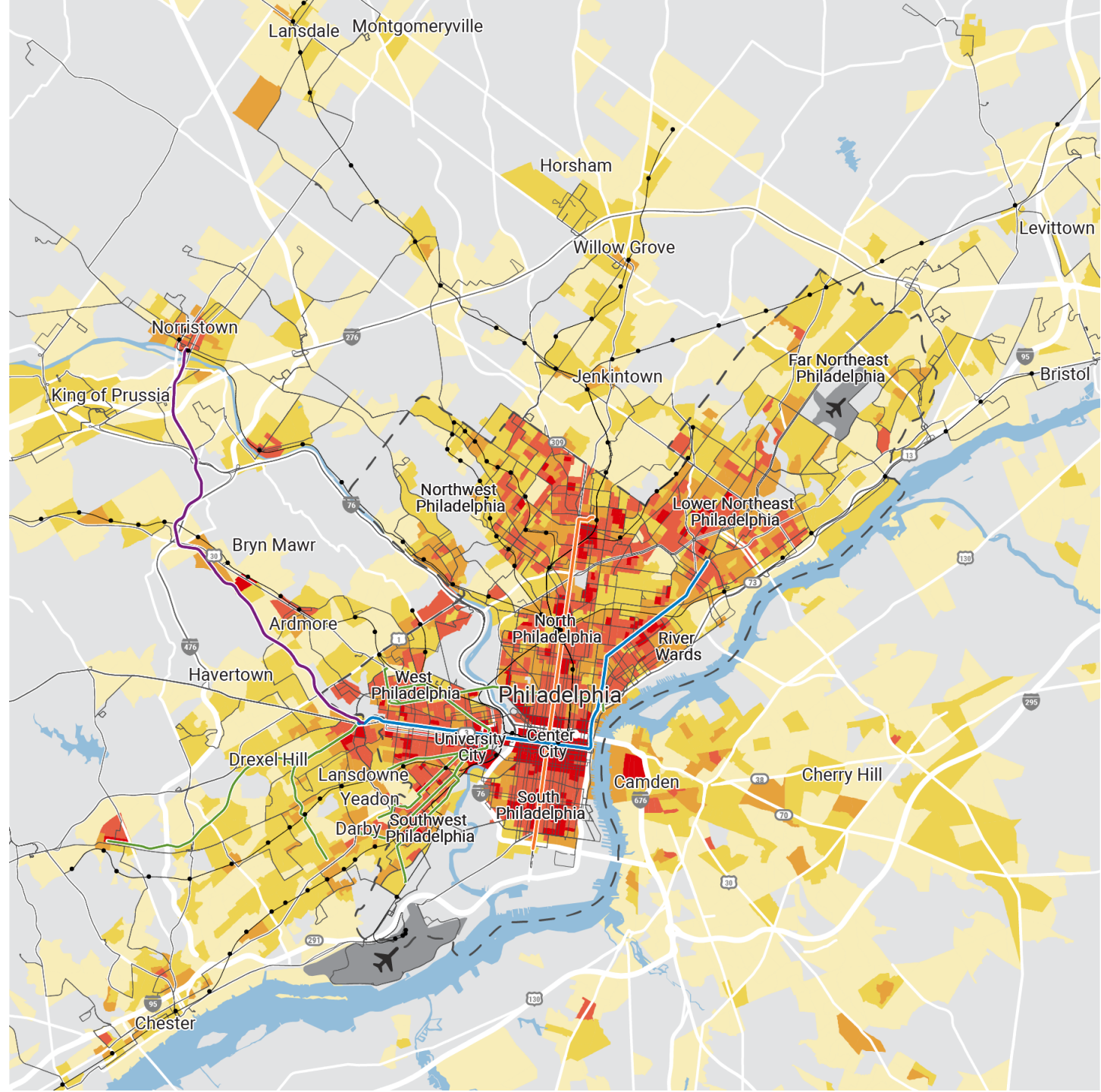


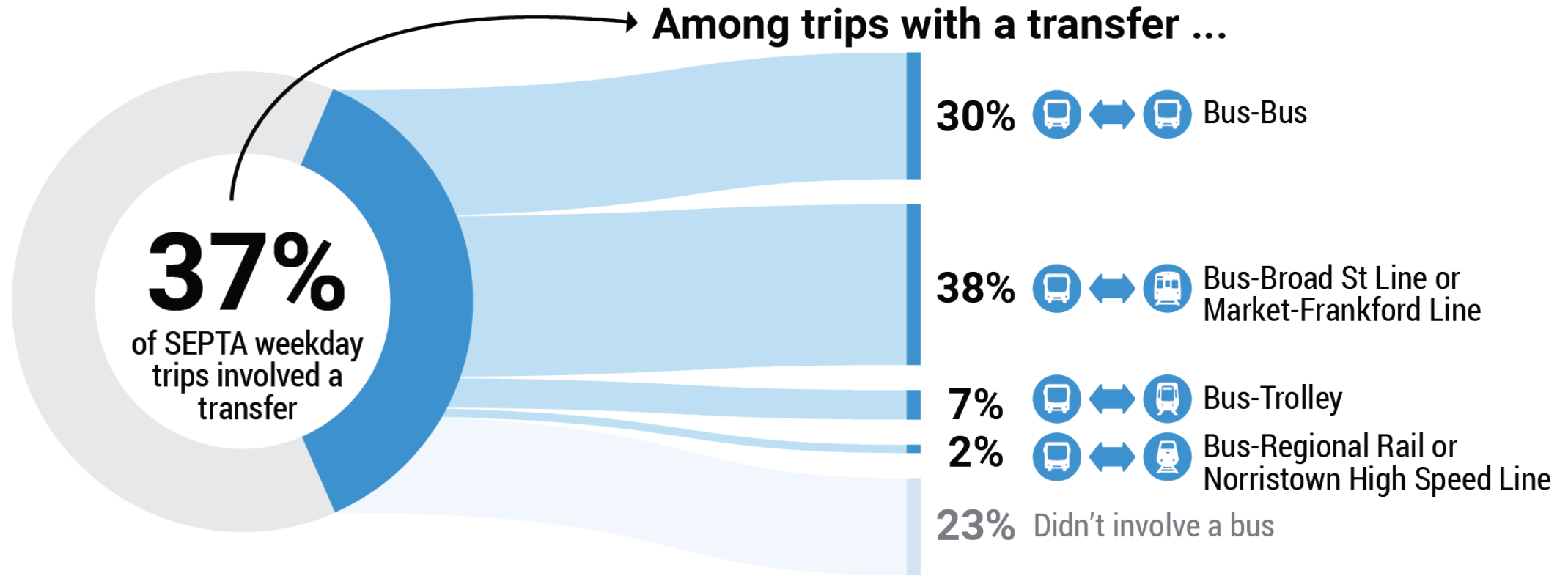
### Transit Routes

- SEPTA Rail
- SEPTA Bus
- SEPTA Trolley
- Market-Frankford Line
- Broad Street Line
- Norristown High Speed Line



Data Sources: Census Transportation Planning Products, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. Map Created June 2021





**The State of the System analysis showed:**

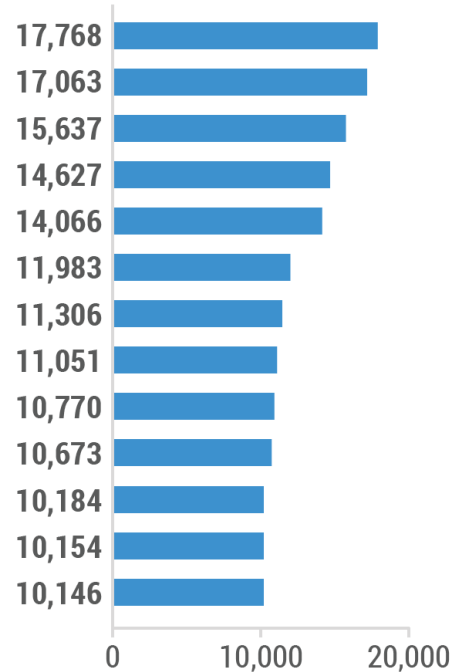
- **Nearly 40% of all riders make a transfer.**
- **Bus speeds are slow.**
- **The bus service is complicated**

# SEPTA buses are slow.

# Some of SEPTA's highest ridership routes are also the slowest and least reliable.

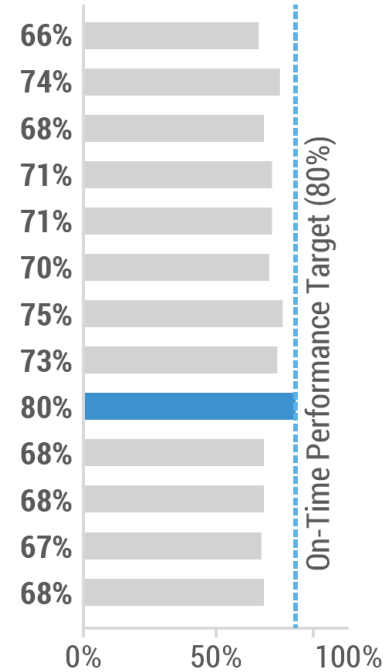
Among the 13 busiest bus routes (10,000+ daily boardings) ...

Average Weekday Ridership



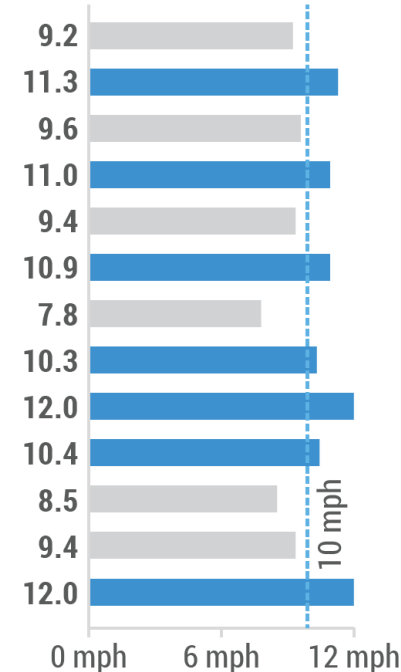
**1** ... only 1 passes our reliability target ...

On-Time Performance



**7** ... and only 7 have an average speed greater than 10 mph.

Average Speed

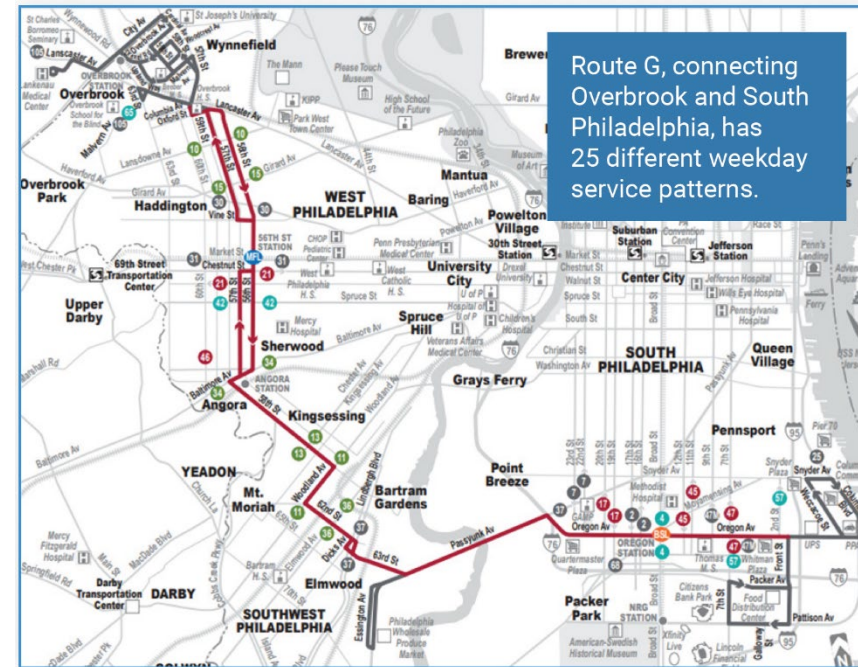
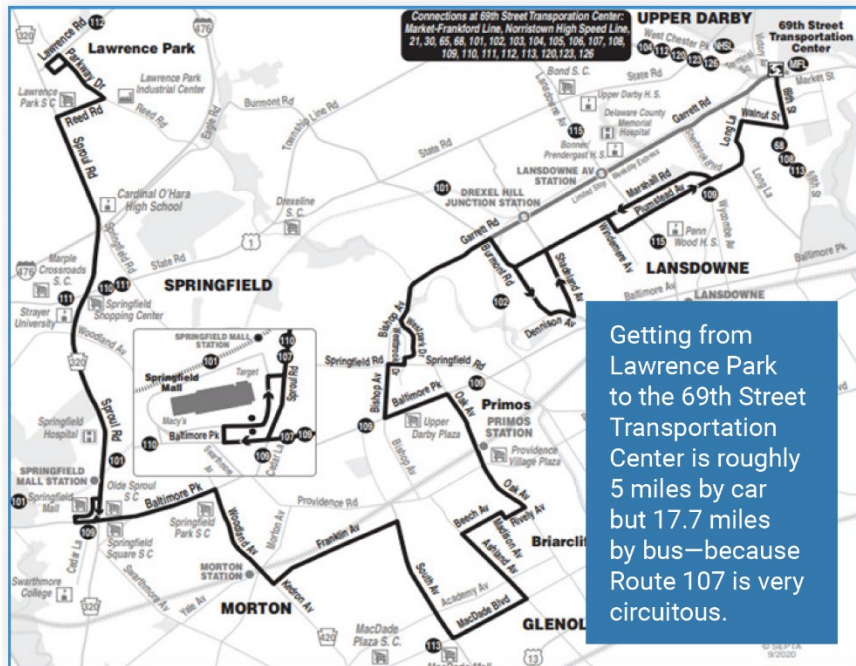


Highest Ridership Routes (10,000+ Average Weekday Boardings)

- 47** Whitman Plaza to 5th-Godfrey
- G** Overbrook to Columbus Commons or Food Distribution Center
- 23** Center City to Chestnut Hill
- 18** Fox Chase to Cedarbrook Plaza
- 52** 49th-Woodland to 54th-City or 50th-Parkside
- 56** 23rd-Venango and Bakers Centre to Torresdale-Cottman
- 33** Penn's Landing to 23rd-Venango
- 26** Cheltenham Station to Frankford Transportation Center
- 66** Trackless Trolley/Frankford-Knights to Frankford TC
- 57** Whitman Plaza to Rising Sun-Olney or Fern Rock TC
- 21** Penn's Landing to 69th Street TC
- 60** 35th-Allegheny to Richmond-Westmoreland
- R** Henry-Midvale and Wissahickon TC to Frankford TC

# SEPTA's service design is complex & hard to navigate.

- Routes have many patterns
- Excessive service duplication
- Buses operate on too many streets



# Riders, staff and the data told us....



Bus service should be **faster and more reliable**.

- Travel should be *predictable and reliable*.



Routes need to be **easier to understand**.

- Buses should *travel more directly* between destinations.
- There should be *fewer service patterns* and deviations.



Service needs to be **matched with demand**.

- Buses need to *go where people live* and where they want to go
- Buses should be *available when people want to travel*.



Overall, buses should be **better organized**.

- Operate the most *frequent service on highest ridership corridors*.
- *Improve connections* to other SEPTA services.

**Based on the survey results and service analysis, in **Spring of 2022**, SEPTA shared two different approaches for changing the bus network**



## Network Option 1: **LESS WAITING**

- Fewer overall routes
- Greatest emphasis on frequency
- Minimize duplication/coverage wherever possible
- Seamless but frequent transferring



## Network Option 2: **LESS WALKING**

- More routes than Option 1  
*(less than existing network)*
- More frequency than current network  
*(not as much as Option 1)*
- Some duplication/coverage retained
- Some transferring required

**Based on comments from riders in Spring 2022, we responded and updated the network.**



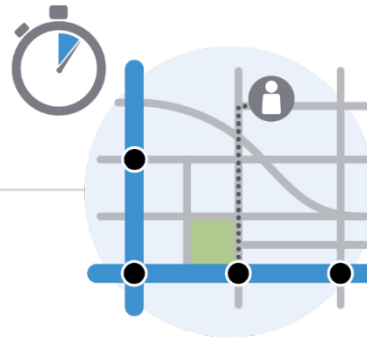
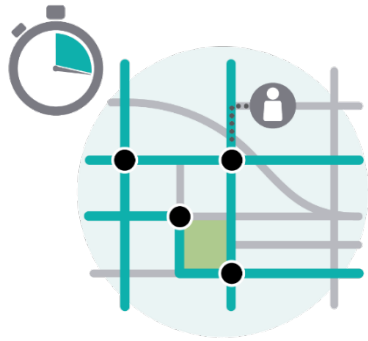
## ***WHAT WE HEARD***

- Many people liked the **network with less waiting** because it is easy to understand.
- Others preferred the **network with less walking**.
- Lots of people said the information was too hard to understand.
- Rider voiced concern about **personal safety and security**.
- People generally like **on-demand service** but want to learn more.





# SEPTA's Draft Bus Network: Strategic Approach



**More frequent bus service**  
*All day, every day*

**More consistent schedules**

**More direct (straighter) bus routes**

**Better connections**  
*to other SEPTA services*

**Fewer choices, but better coverage**  
*where demand dictates*

**The first draft network, released in **Fall 2022**, emphasized frequency and connectivity but required some transfers.**



**SEPTA held an extensive engagement campaign in Fall 2022 with dozens of in-person & virtual events across the region.**



## ***WHAT WE HEARD***

- Many people were concerned that there hadn't been enough engagement.
- People were frustrated about having to make more transfers.
- There was a lot of concern about routes that were being eliminated.
- Lots of comments about safety and security.



Riders had the most comments for the following routes:

49

27

9

32

57

# Parts of the Draft Network to Keep



## Increased frequency of service

Riders like increased service levels on weekend days and evenings.



## Simpler network overall to enhance reliability

Riders and residents liked the simplicity of the updated network.



## Focus on connectivity

New connections so people can get further, faster.

**We relied on community input to update the bus network.**

**This network, released in **Spring 2023**, balanced familiar service while keeping as much frequent service as possible.**



# We also adjusted our engagement approach.

- Meeting people where they are – at bus stops, and at transportation centers
- Updated materials that are **easier to understand**
- Make it easier to see **what has and hasn't changed**
- Provide simpler information on **individual routes**



Based on comments from riders in **Spring 2023**, we responded and updated the network.



## WHAT WE HEARD

- This is so much better, thanks for listening.
- There are a handful of routes that need to be looked at again.
- Some folks were disappointed that there was less frequency in the network.
- Lots of comments about safety and security.



Riders had the most comments for the following routes:

49

32

12

24

17

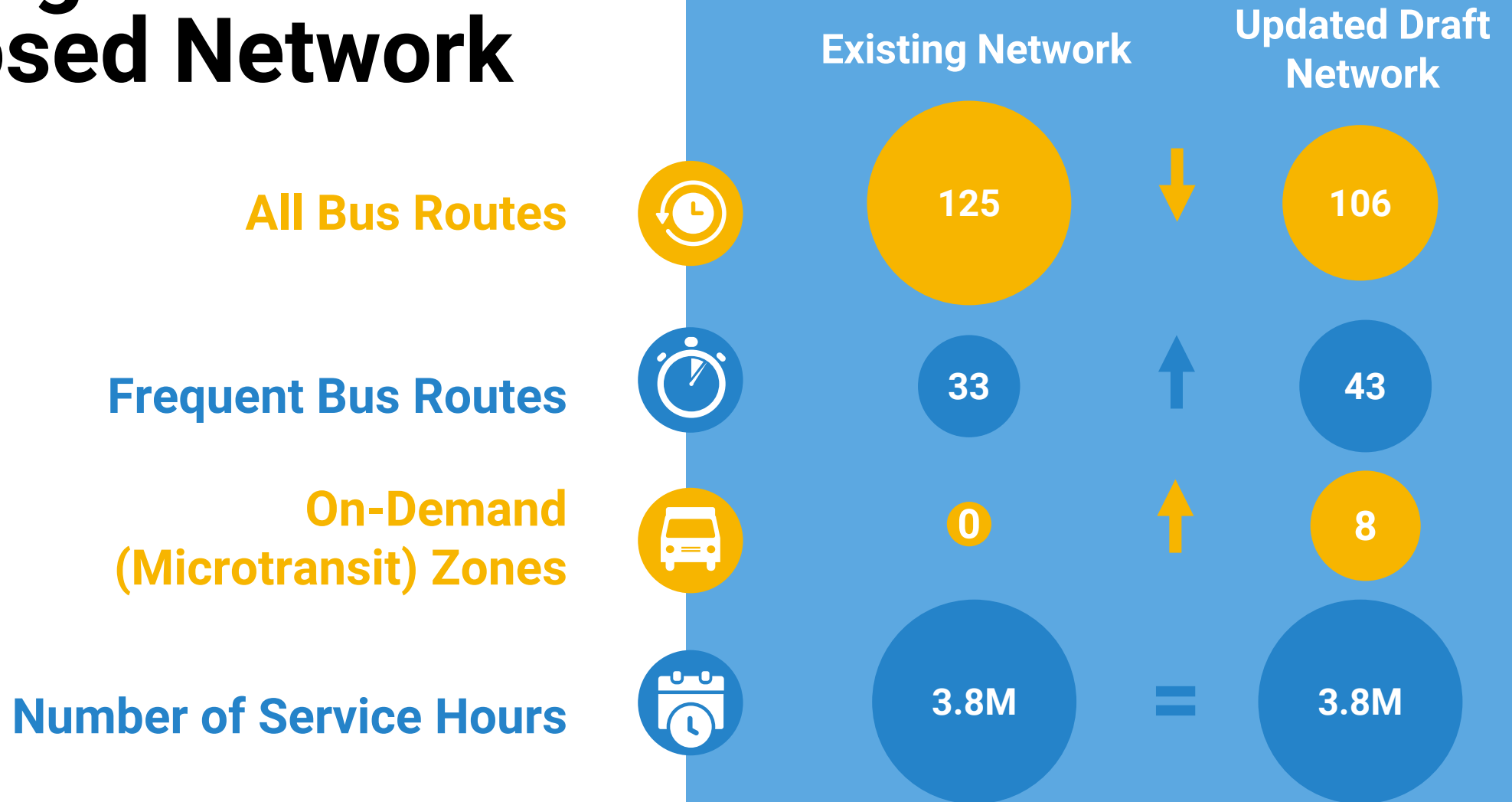
# SEPTA Proposed Network



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# Existing Network vs. Proposed Network



The proposed network balances public input with the goals of the project and will result in **a more useful and reliable bus network.**

**30%  
MORE  
Frequent  
Routes**

The number of frequent routes increases from 33 in today's network to **43 in the proposed network.**

**+64%  
RIDERS  
Within 10 Min  
Walk of Frequent  
Transit**

**1.1 million more people** have walking access to frequent routes.

**>99% of  
RIDERS  
Maintain  
Access**

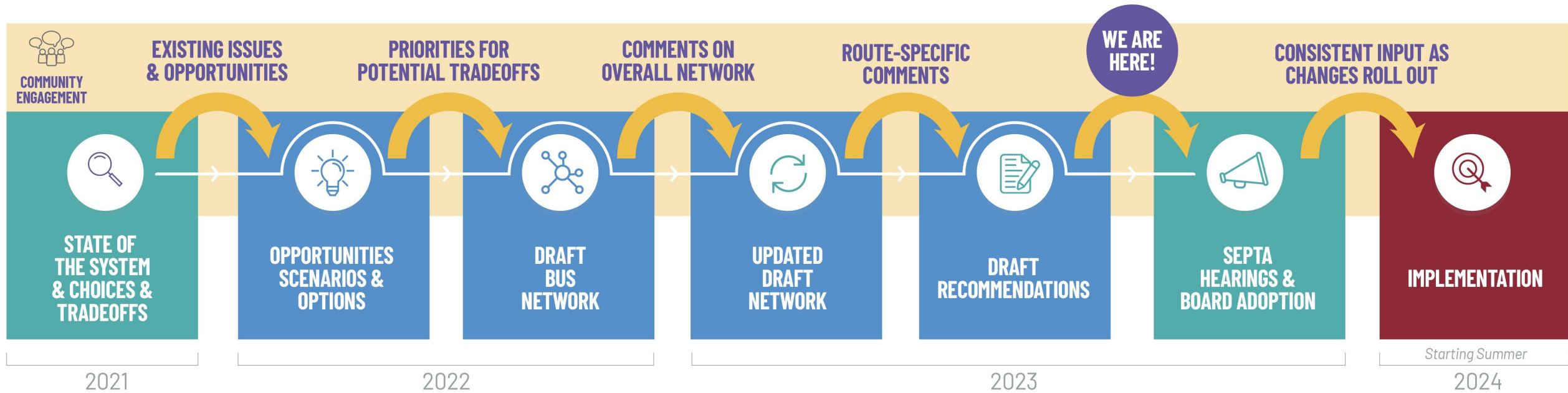
More than 99% of riders within a 5-minute walk of a bus route today will still be **within a 5-minute walk.**

# SEPTA's also investing in infrastructure

- Building **safer, more comfortable places** for people to wait for transit.
- Working with partners to make buses **faster and more reliable** on key corridors.



# Thank you.



**Join the Revolution!**  
**[septabusrevolution.com](http://septabusrevolution.com)**

