


SEPTA FORWARD >>>



Bus Revolution

TRANSIT TALK

June 20, 2023



Agenda

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Bus Revolution
- 3 Findings from Spring 2023
- 4 Next Steps
- 5 Questions & Answers



SEPTA Forward: Bus Revolution



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.

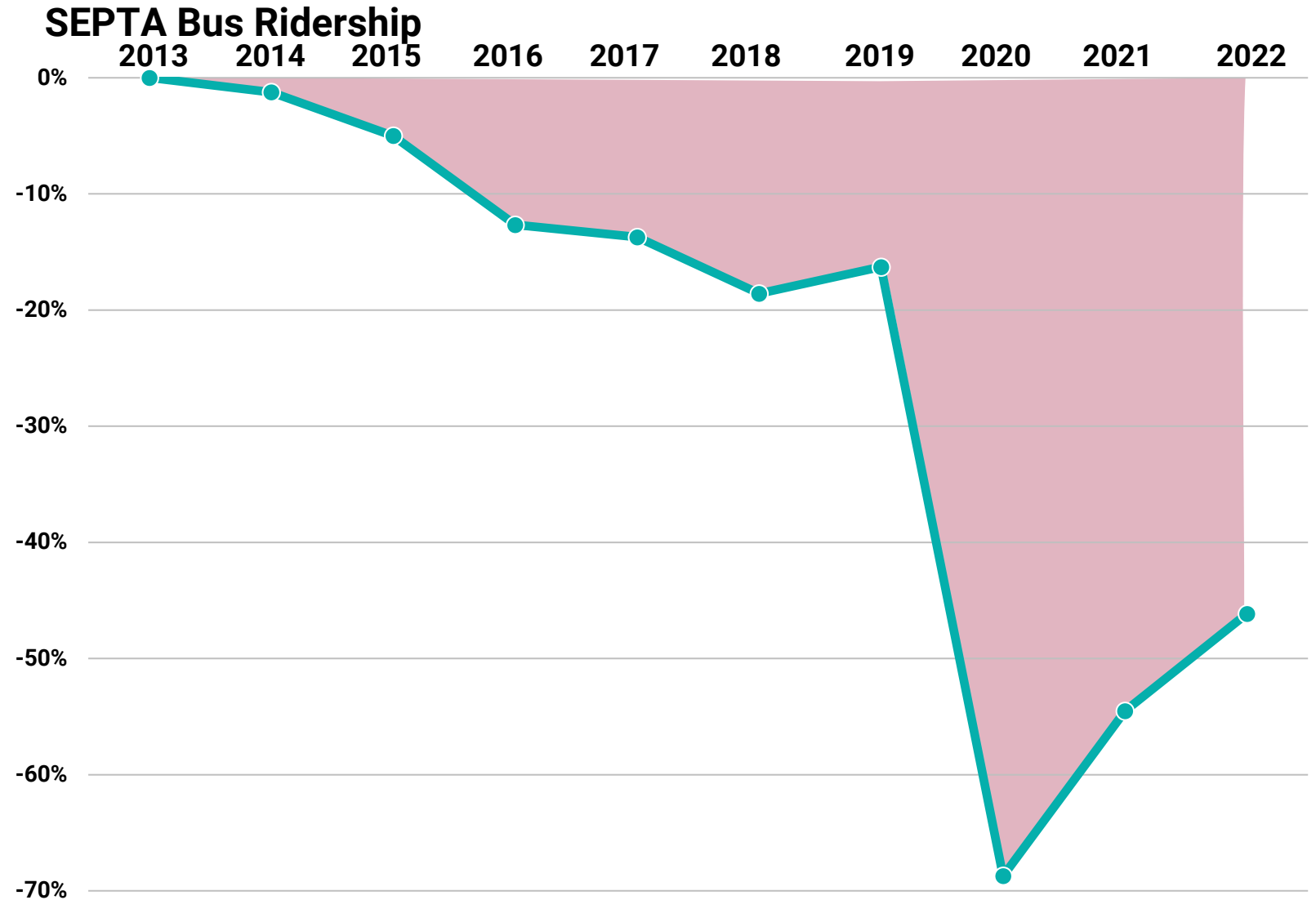


Philadelphia circa 1950s


Why Now?

The pandemic added to this issue by changing how people work and travel.

SEPTA's ridership is getting stronger, but **still below 2019 levels.**



What is Bus Revolution

A stylized diagram of a bus network. It features several colored lines (purple, red, yellow, teal, grey) connecting various nodes (circles and stars) in a networked pattern. The nodes are distributed across the diagram, with some lines being horizontal and others diagonal.

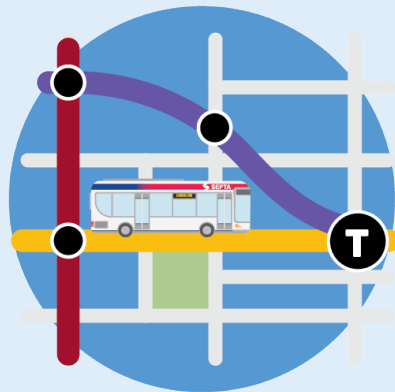
**“Blank Slate”
redesign of
SEPTA’s fixed-
route bus
network**



Identifying Challenges and Opportunities



Market Analysis



State of the System



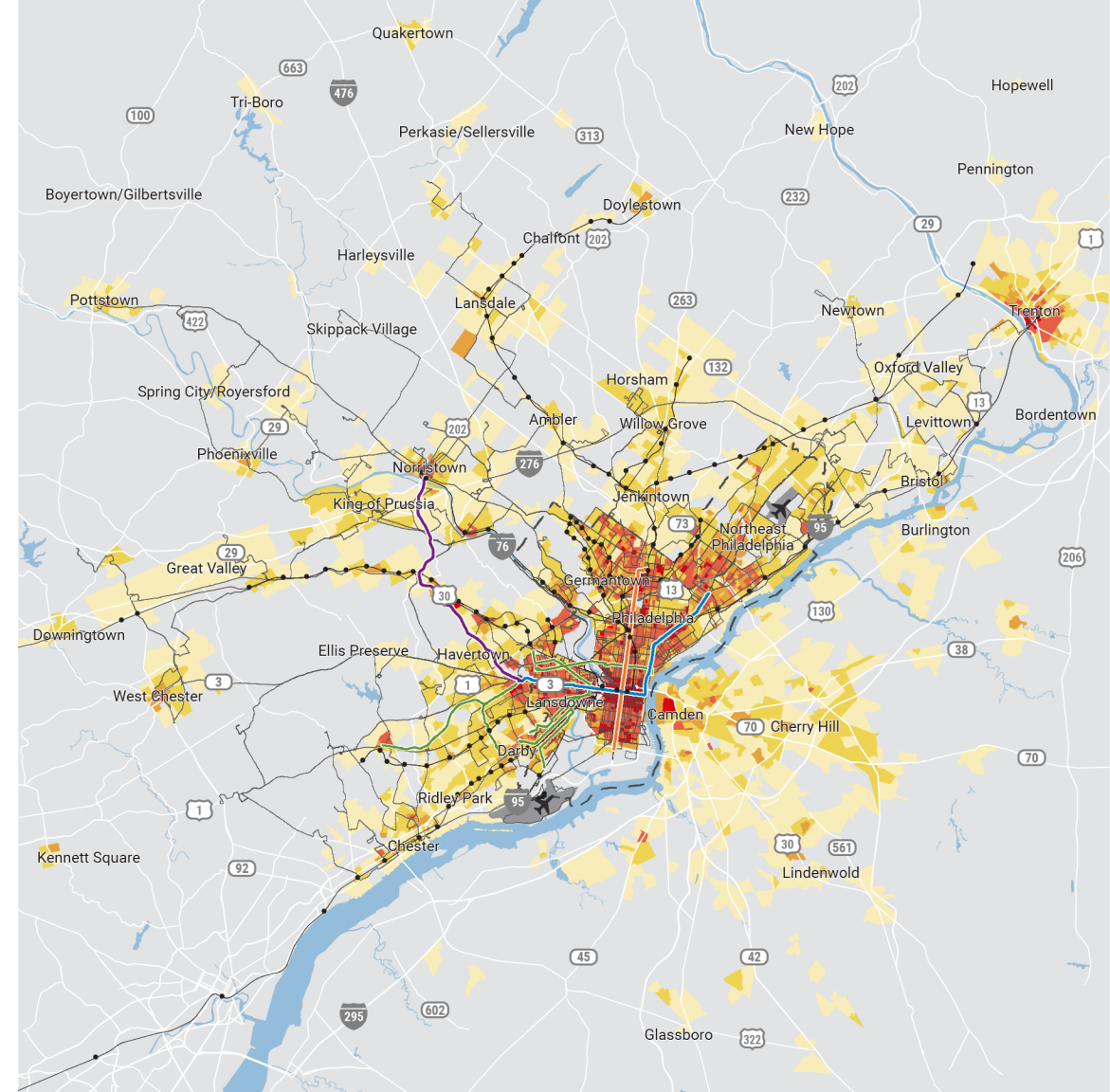
Route Evaluations



**Stakeholder and
Community
Engagement**



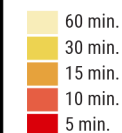
The Philadelphia region has one of the **strongest markets** for transit service in the United States.



Composite Transit Demand

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

Transit Frequency Demand



Transit Routes

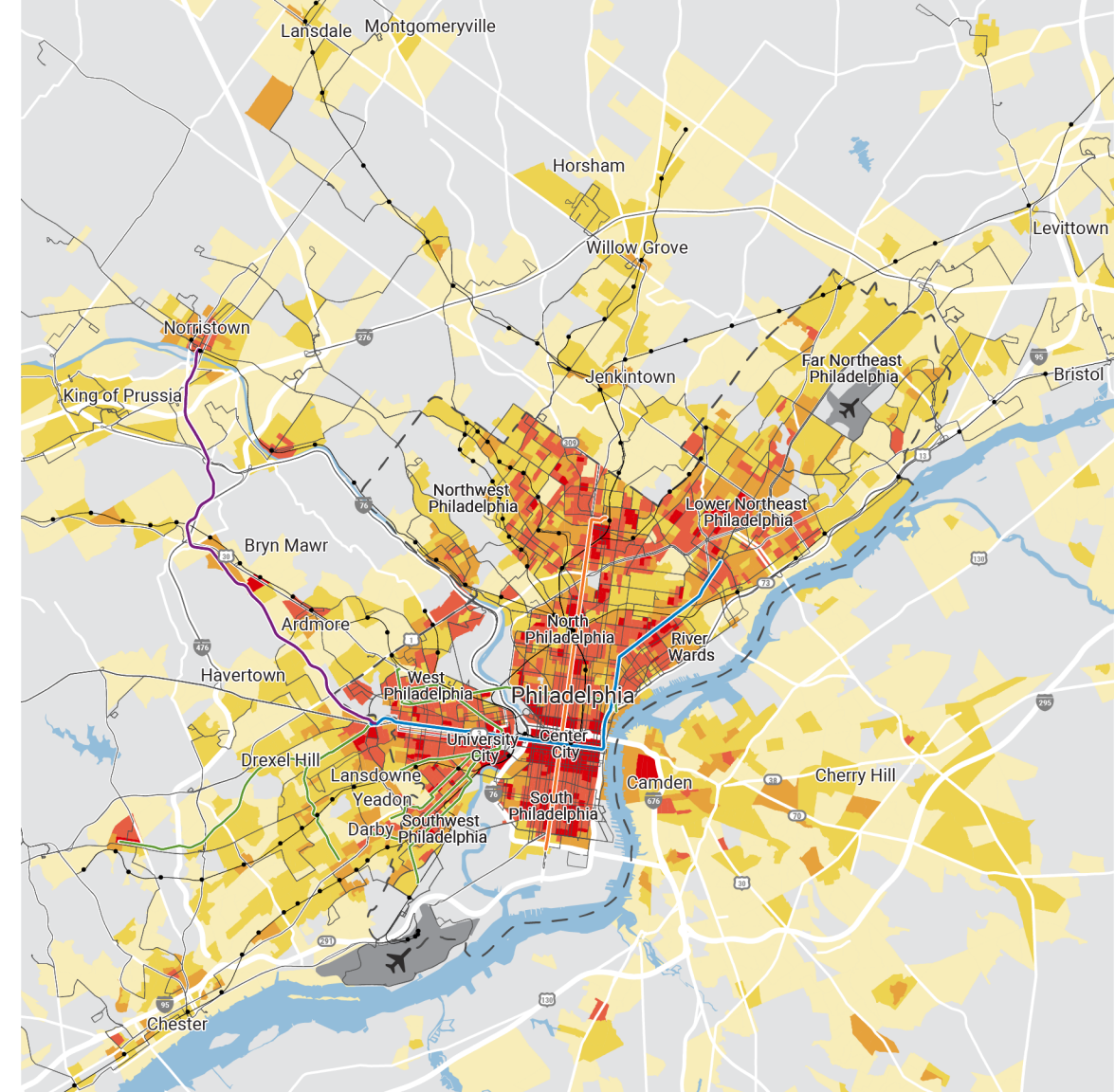
- SEPTA Rail
- SEPTA Bus
- SEPTA Trolley
- Market-Frankford Line
- Broad Street Line
- Norristown High Speed Line



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



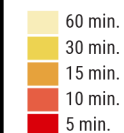
Transit markets are strong in **Center City** and outside of the **urban core**.



Composite Transit Demand

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

Transit Frequency Demand



Transit Routes

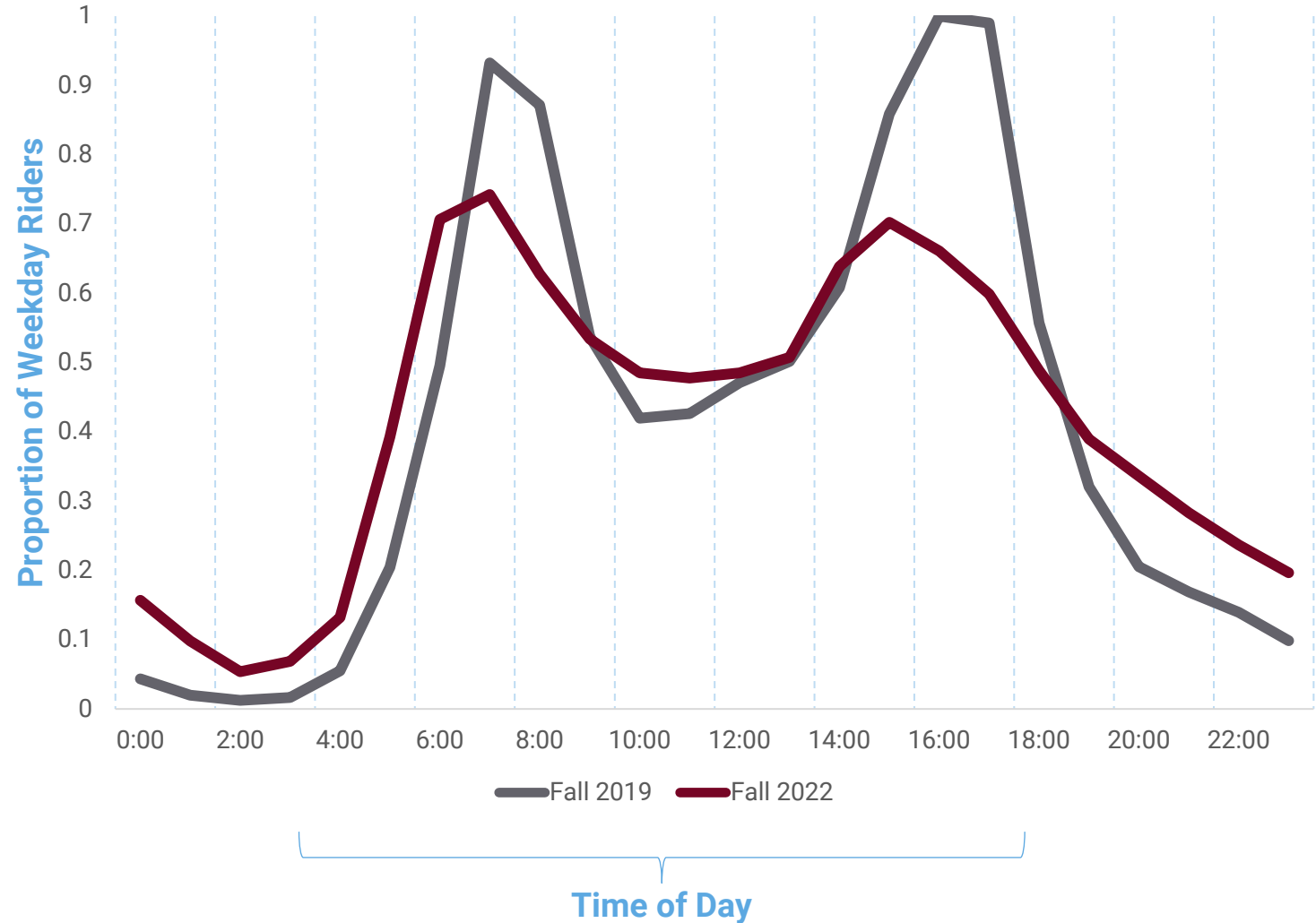
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People are traveling more in the **middle of the day**.

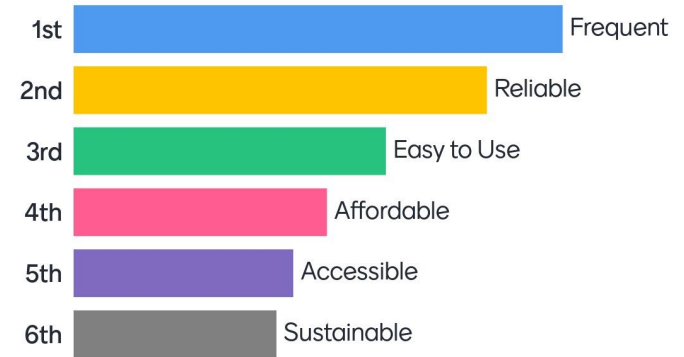


Source: SEPTA key swipe data, all modes, weekdays only

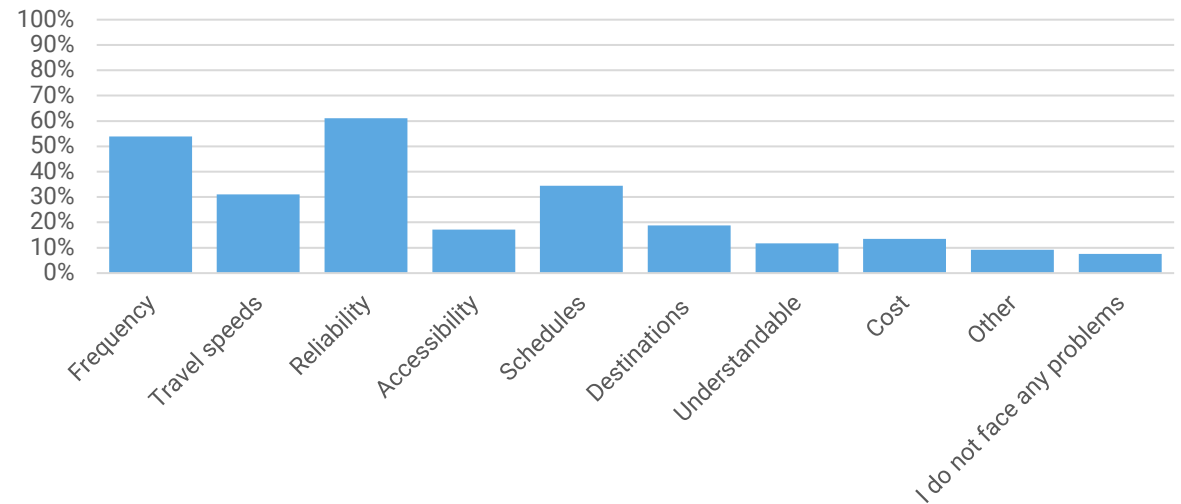


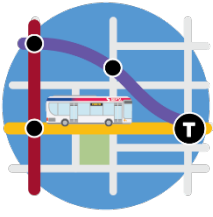
In nearly every conversation, SEPTA riders told us they care about **bus service speed and reliability**.

What is most important to you about SEPTA's bus network?

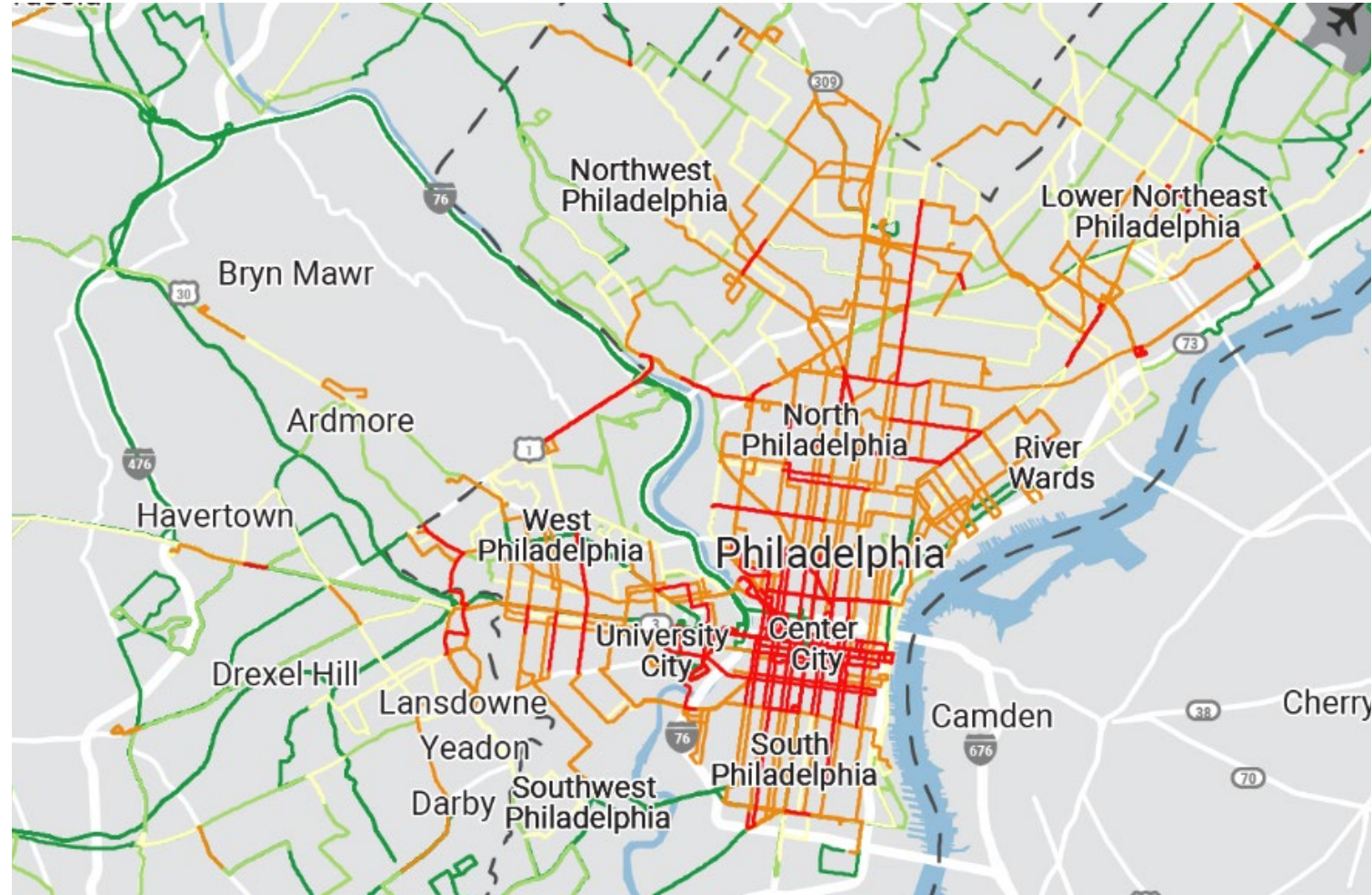


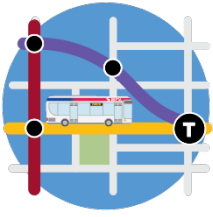
N=5,406
*survey weighted for race





One of the biggest opportunities to make SEPTA's bus service better is around **speed** and **reliability**.





SEPTA Average Bus Speeds

Center City



8 MPH

Philadelphia



10 MPH

United States

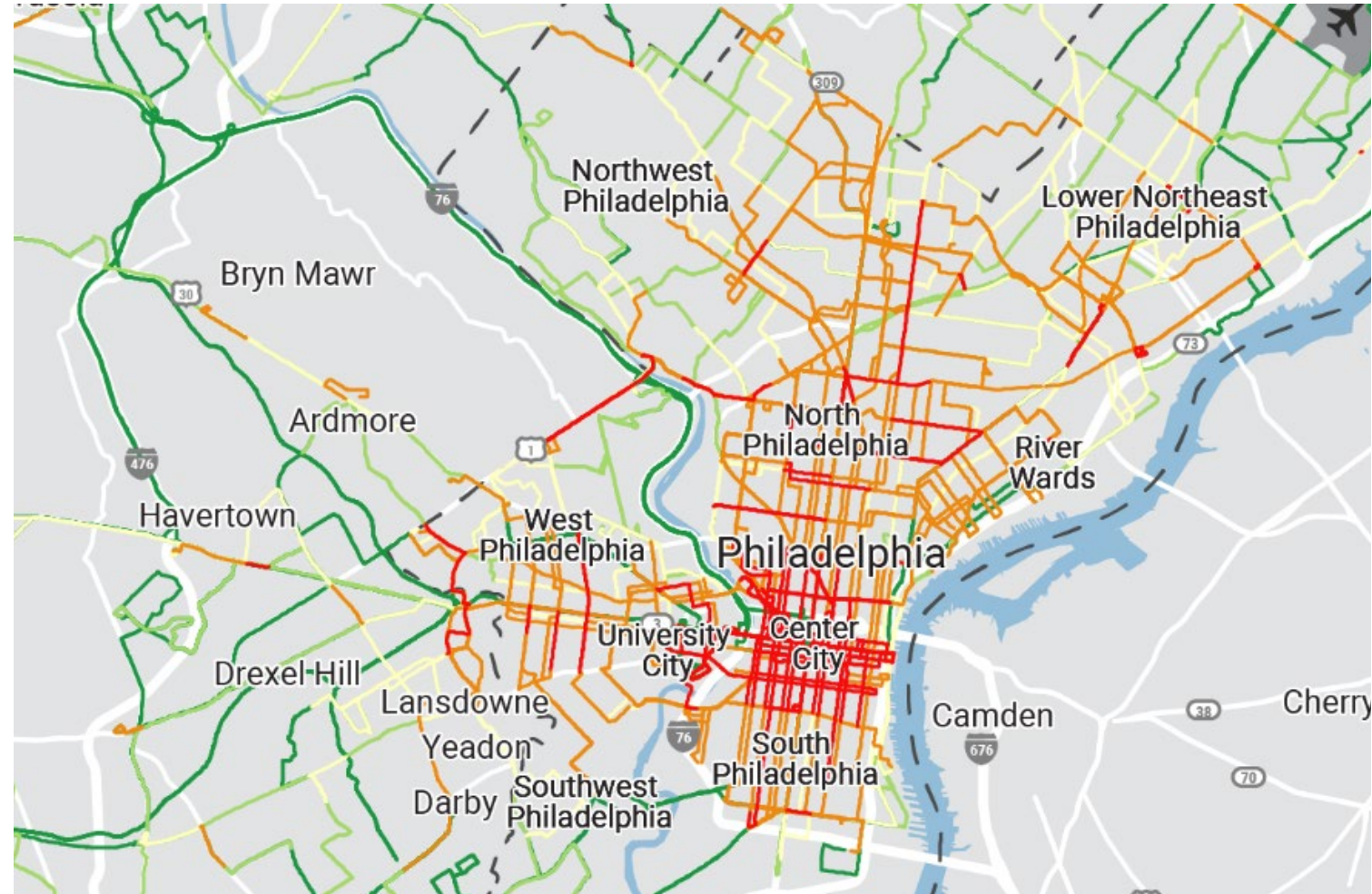


13-14 MPH

Pedestrians



3-4 MPH





SEPTA has a lot of well designed, high performing bus routes.

13 routes carry more than 10,000 riders per day.



Fast is better than slow

Virtually all passengers prefer to get places faster rather than slower



Make routes as direct as possible

Avoid deviating from the most direct path unless there is a compelling reason



Serve well-defined markets

Service configured around clearly defined markets is easier to understand, reduces duplication, and can form the basis for premium services



Operate to and from strong anchors

Anchor routes with major destinations at one or both ends



But there is work to do to **simplify and straighten bus routes.**



Avoid complicated routing

A simpler route structure will attract more riders than a complex one



Avoid alternative patterns

Only use alternative patterns when there is a very sound reason



Operate routes on arterial streets

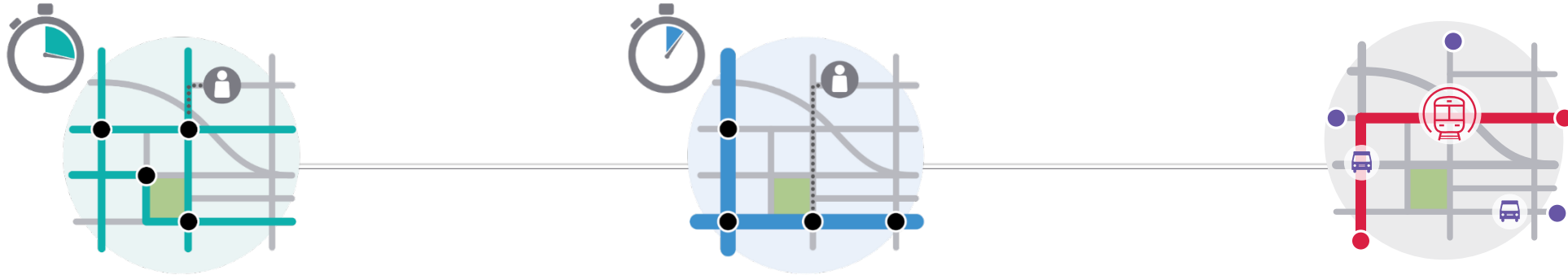
Keep routes on arterial streets to make transit service easier to understand and operate



Better choices, not more choices

Providing better service on fewer routes provides most riders with better options

SEPTA's Bus Network: Strategic Approach



- More frequent bus **service** and more consistent **schedules**

- Straighter, more **direct bus routes** to improve reliability

- **Better connections** so people can get further, faster

- **Focusing resources** on higher ridership routes in higher demand areas

- **On-Demand service** in some lower-demand areas

Developing the Draft Bus Network(s)



Network Development



Starting Point

Existing bus service on the street now

Spring 2022

Two network “options”

- Shared goals and ideas
- Started to talk about “MAX” routes
 - Feedback led to the Fall 2022 network

Fall 2022

Draft network balanced between frequency and access

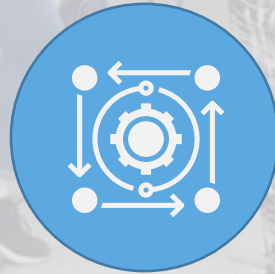
- Feedback from Fall led to Spring 2023 revised draft network

Spring 2023

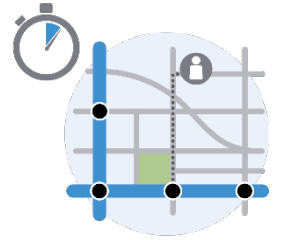
Re-balance frequent service while adding back routes

- Feedback from Spring informs recommendations

Spring 2022: Shared Network Options



Network #1 Highlights and Benefits



Network Option 1

- Simpler network
- Fewer, but more frequent routes
- Straighter, more direct routes
- More regional connections
- Improved service quality and coverage in suburbs through on-demand service
- But longer walks and more transfers for some customers

	Existing Network	Network Option 1
Total Bus Routes	125	93
Frequent Bus Routes	32	48
On-Demand Zones	0	13

Bus Revolution defines a “frequent” bus route as one that operates every 15 minutes or better.



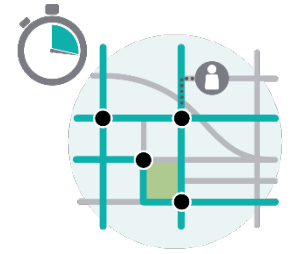
10 MAX Routes operate every 10 minutes or better, all day, seven days a week



Network #2 Highlights

More bus routes, less frequency

- More routes, shorter walks
- More one-seat rides for some riders
- More fixed route services on regional corridors
- Less frequent service overall,
- Slightly more complicated network with more service duplication



Network Option 2

	Existing Network	Network Option 2
Total Bus Routes	125	109
Frequent Bus Routes	32	36
On-Demand Zones	0	9

Bus Revolution defines a “frequent” bus route as one that operates every 15 minutes or better.



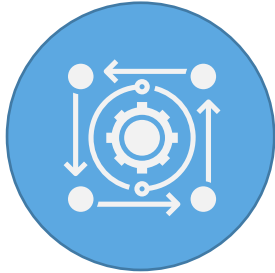
10 MAX Routes operate every 10 minutes or better, all day, seven days a week





What we learned...

about the Network Options



Showing two networks was too complicated

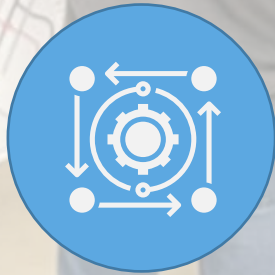
- Too hard to compare what's happening to individual routes and trips



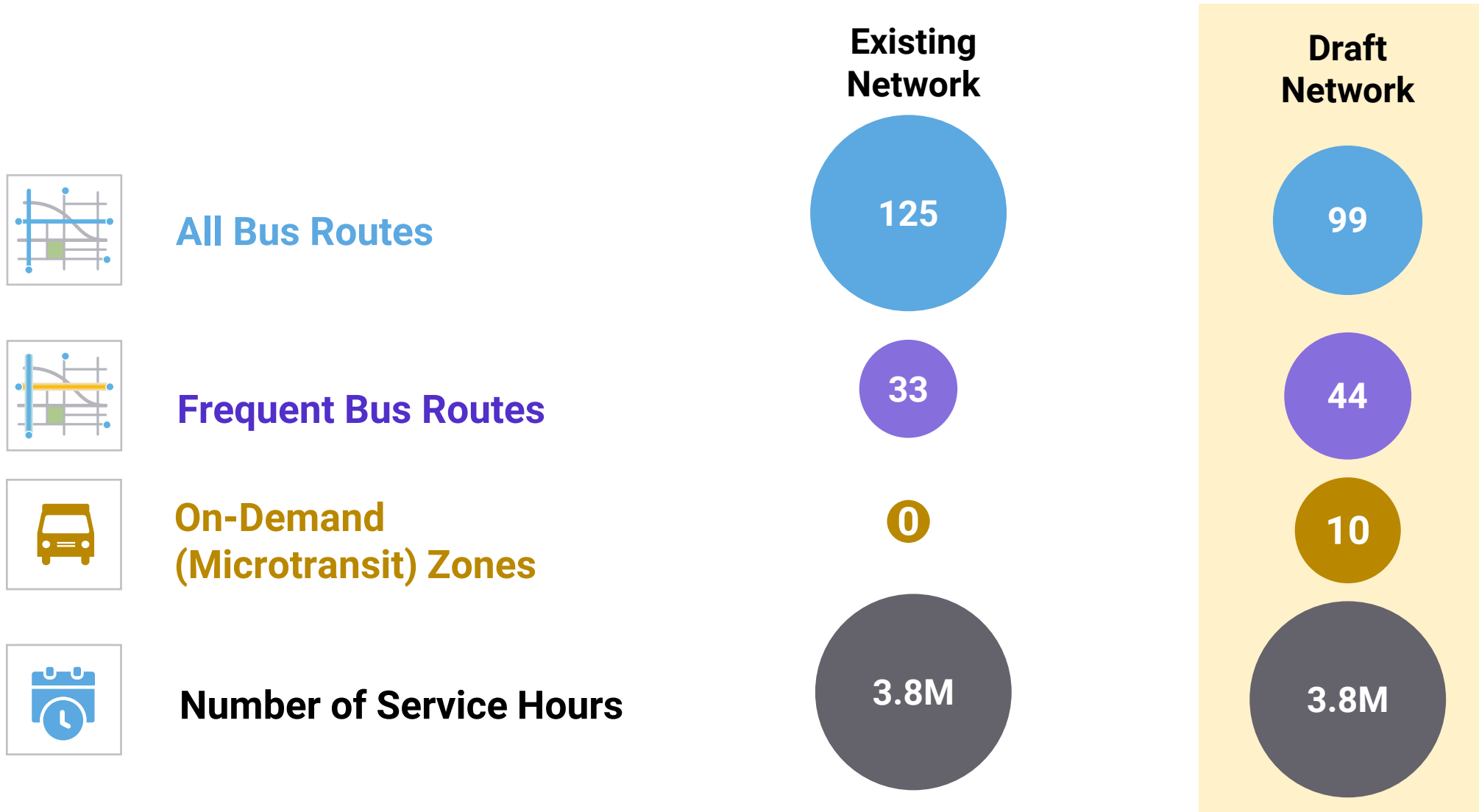
People often like the idea of more frequent service—but can't clearly see the trade-offs

- Challenging to understand and evaluate trade-offs
- What was lost for the addition of frequent service

Fall 2022: Shared Initial Draft Network



Bus Revolution Initial Draft Network



Initial Draft Bus Network

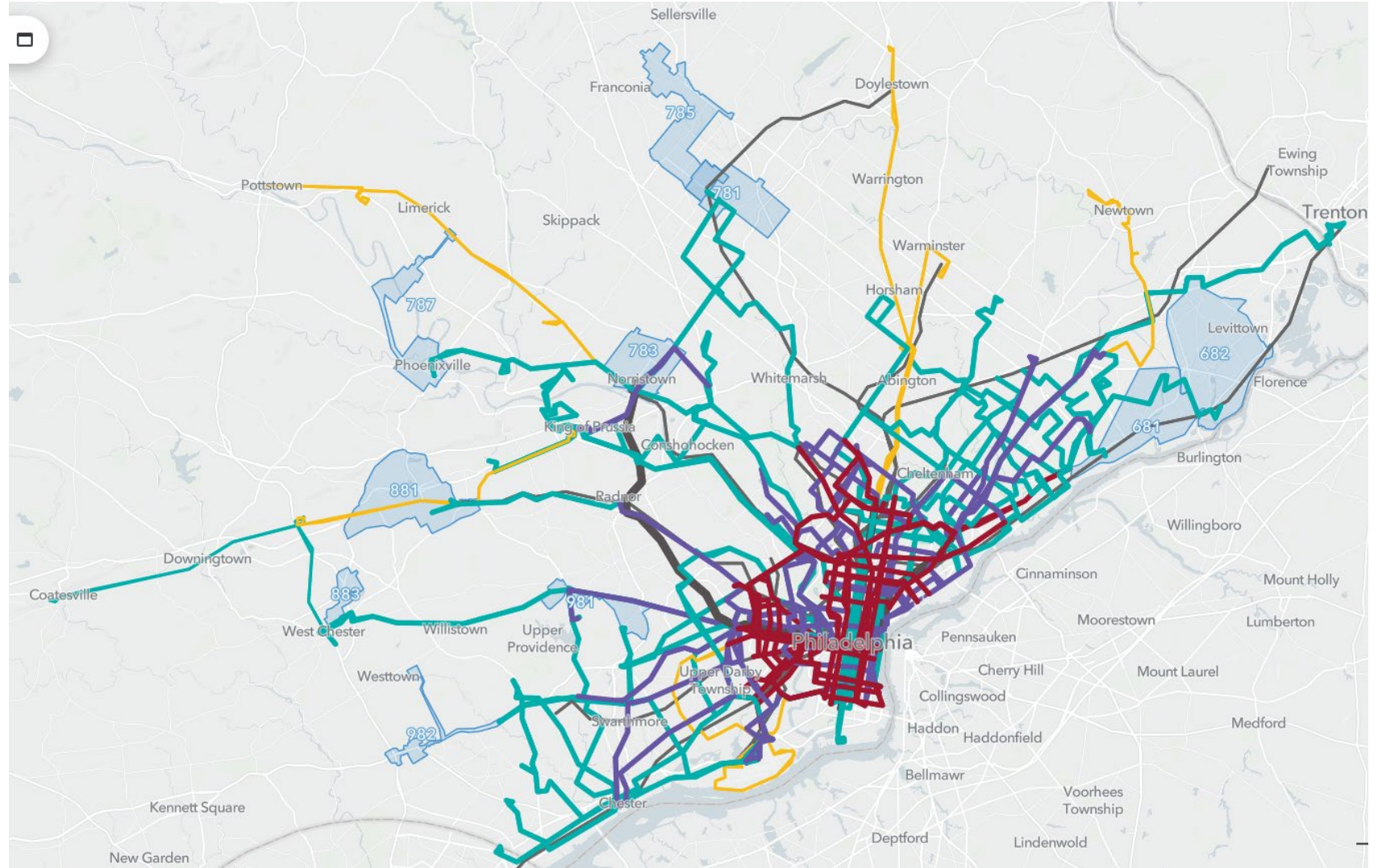
More frequent routes

Overall fewer routes

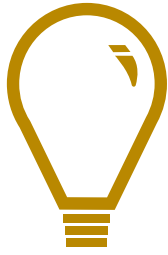
Straighter lines

Looks more like a grid

On-demand transit zones

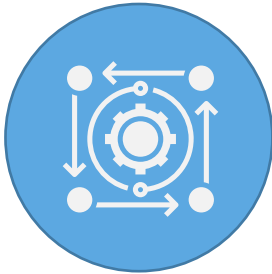


<https://nelsonnygaard.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/84577af5d58849b6b2c1aac00ac1dd37>

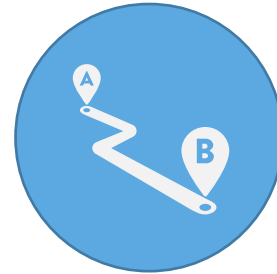


What we learned...

about the Initial Draft Network



Understanding draft networks was still complicated



People could see what was happening to individual routes (*despite complication*)

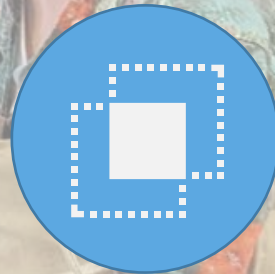
- Still liked concept of simple, frequent, service, but want:
 - ✓ More of the existing network
 - ✓ Fewer transfers (“one-seat” rides) especially for short trips
 - ✓ Concerned about specific routes and parts of routes that were eliminated



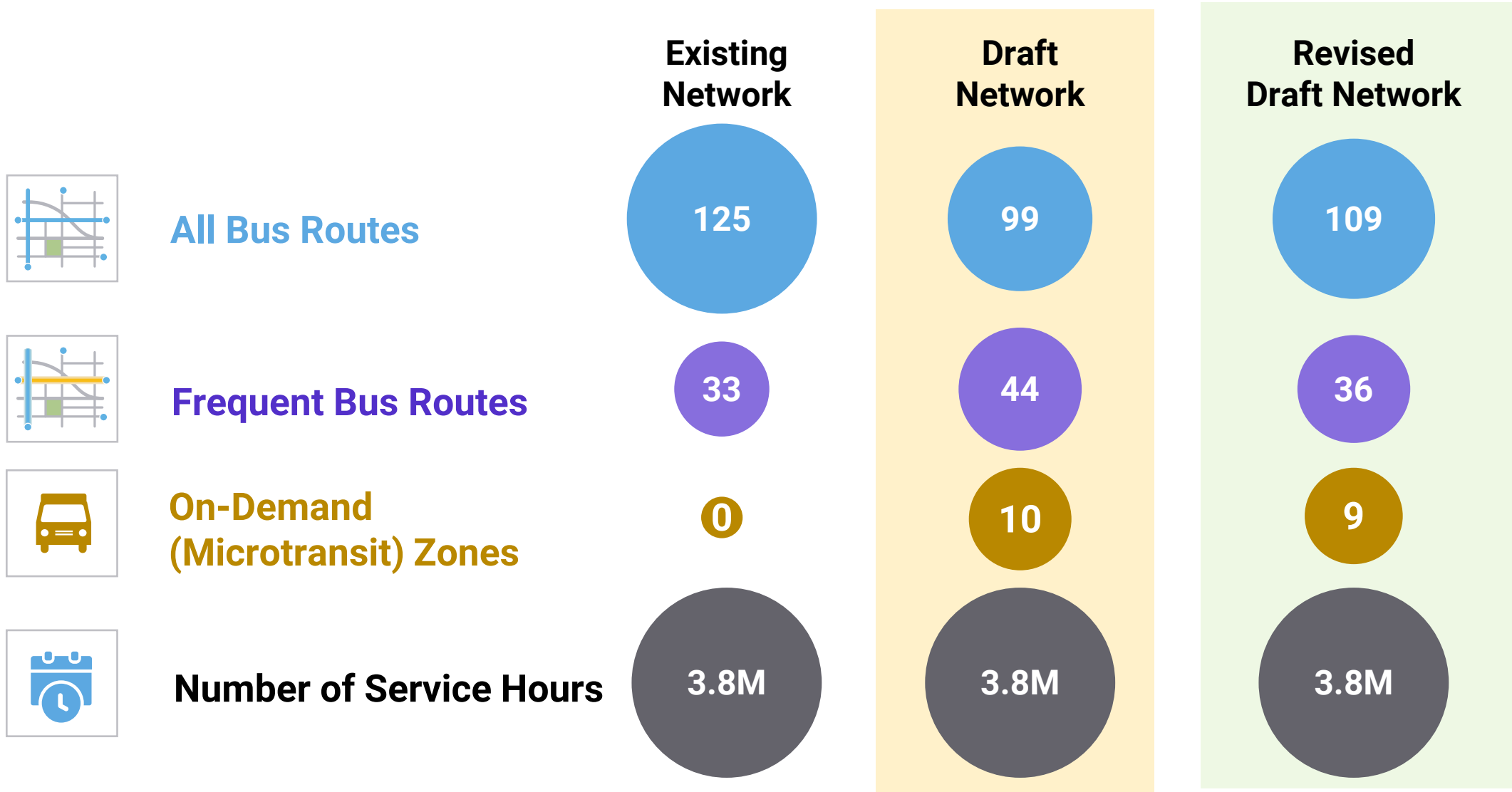
Concerned we hadn’t talked to enough people

- Students
- Older adults
- People with disabilities

Spring 2023: Updated Draft Bus Network



Bus Revolution Updated Draft Network



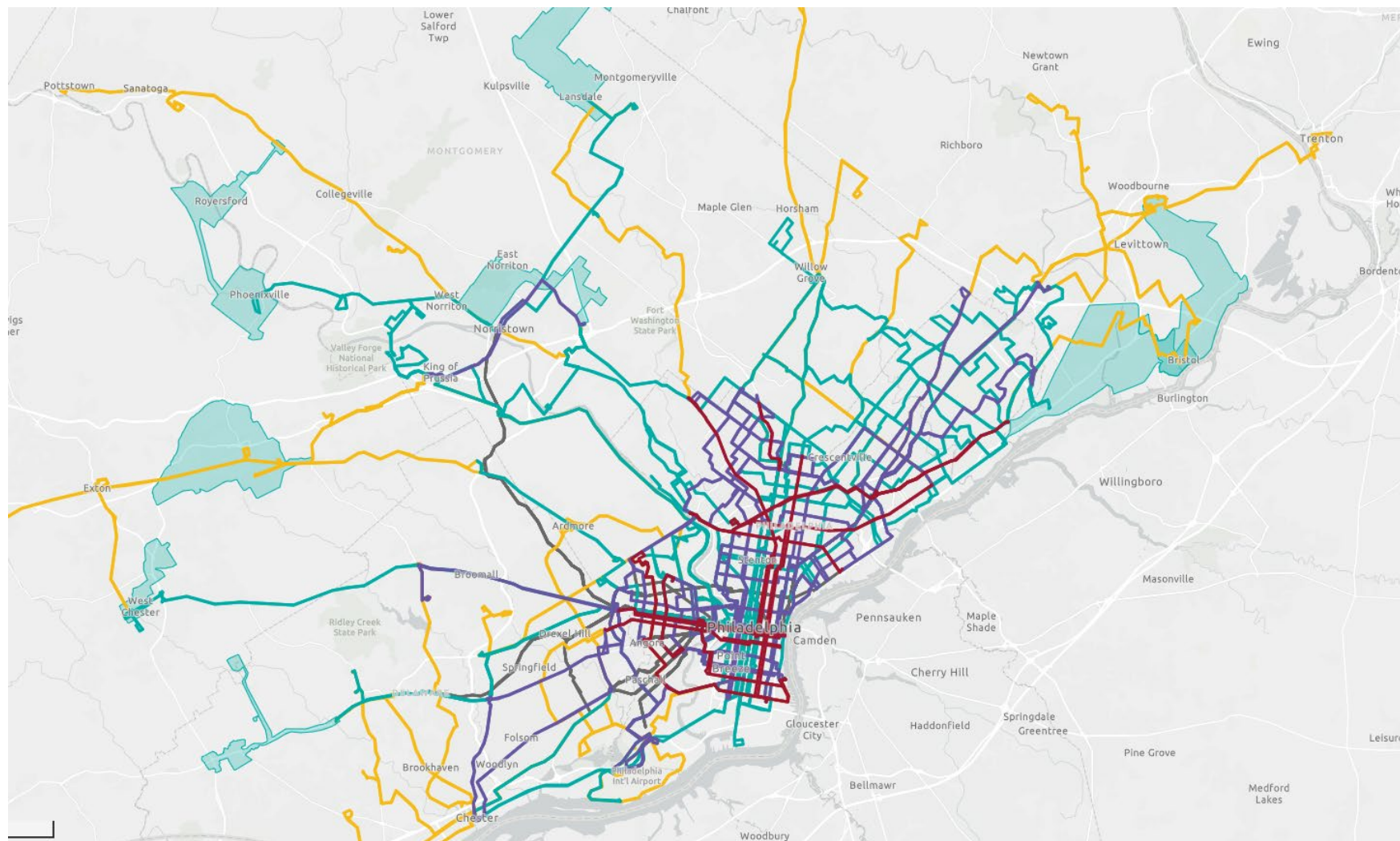
Updated Draft Network

Added some routes back in

Kept as much frequency and simplicity as possible

More hourly routes

Reduced on-demand zones





What we learned...

about the Updated Draft Network



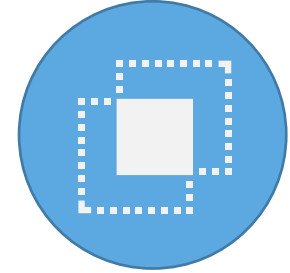
Some riders felt SEPTA is listening and responding

- Many comments were addressed
- Still like more frequency and more weekend service



Challenges and frustration remain

- Want more of the existing network:
 - ✓ Bring some routes and route segments that were removed
 - ✓ Want more connections to regional services

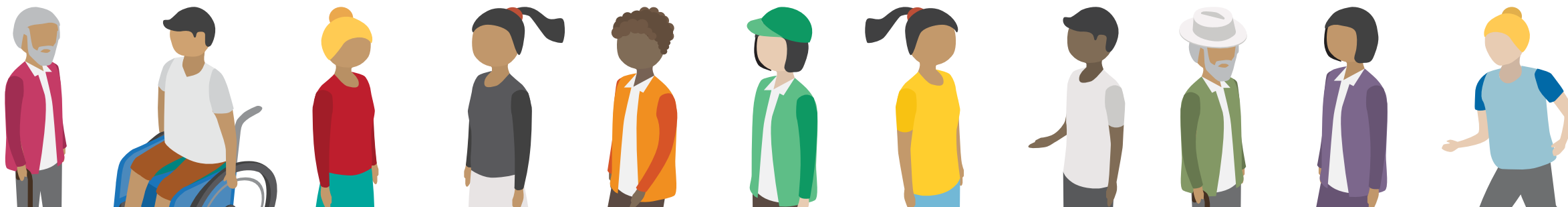
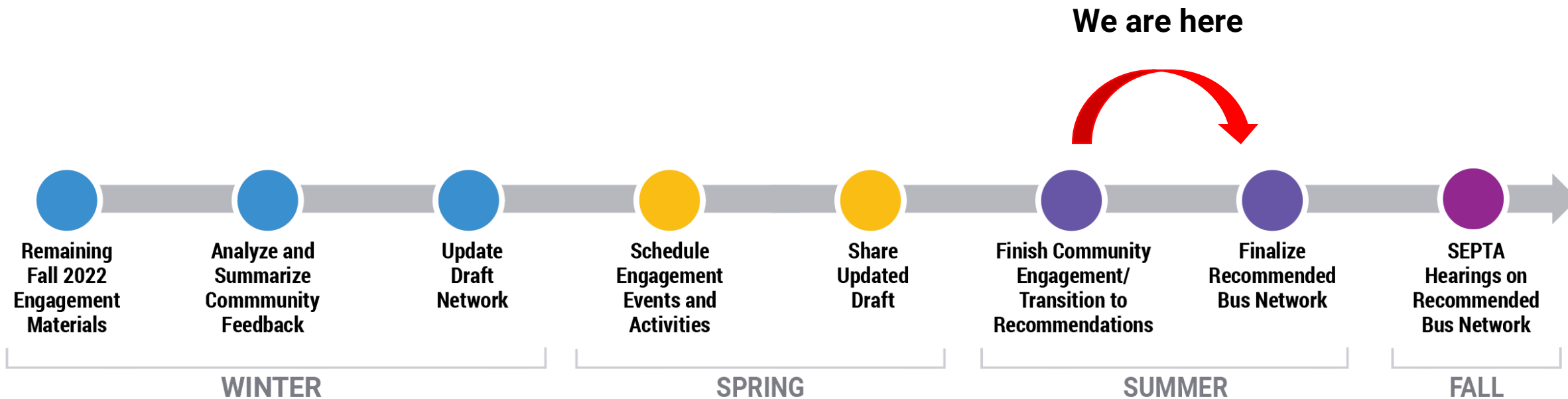


Want to know more about on-demand service (microtransit)

What's Next

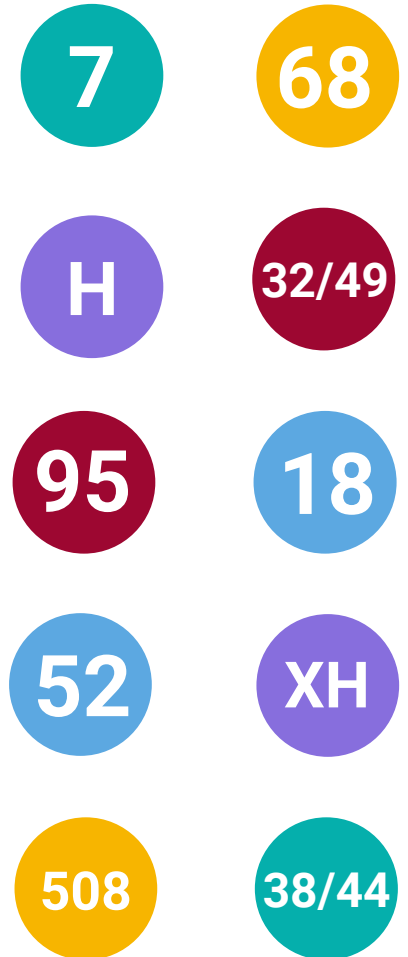


Bus Revolution Year Ahead: 2023

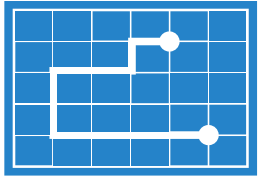


Spring Engagement to Recommendations

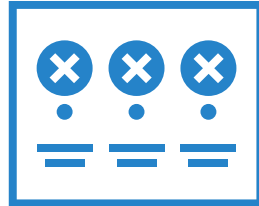
- More detailed review and analysis of some routes
 - Comments/feedback from riders
 - Ridership data
 - Land use, community demographics and travel patterns
- Impact of route changes on network design
- Addressing operational considerations
- Developing recommendations
- Balance budgets



Coming in 2023



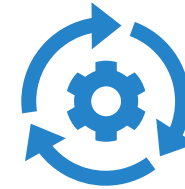
June & July
Finalize network
based prepare
materials for public
hearings



August
Post recommended network
and all materials
online, with some
Open Houses to
update the public –
formal comment
period opens



September
Hearings
throughout the
month to allow
for additional
public feedback



October & November
Make revisions
based on public
hearings



December
Seek SEPTA Board adoption
of the new bus
network

What's Next


- Technical team is confirming Bus Revolution recommendations
- Updates to Bus Revolution website in June, recommendations available in August
- Schedule hearings for September 2023





thank you!

Thank you for providing feedback (again) and letting us know what worked—and what didn't work—on the Updated Draft Network.



**Q&A
Discussion**

Join the Revolution!
septabusrevolution.com

