

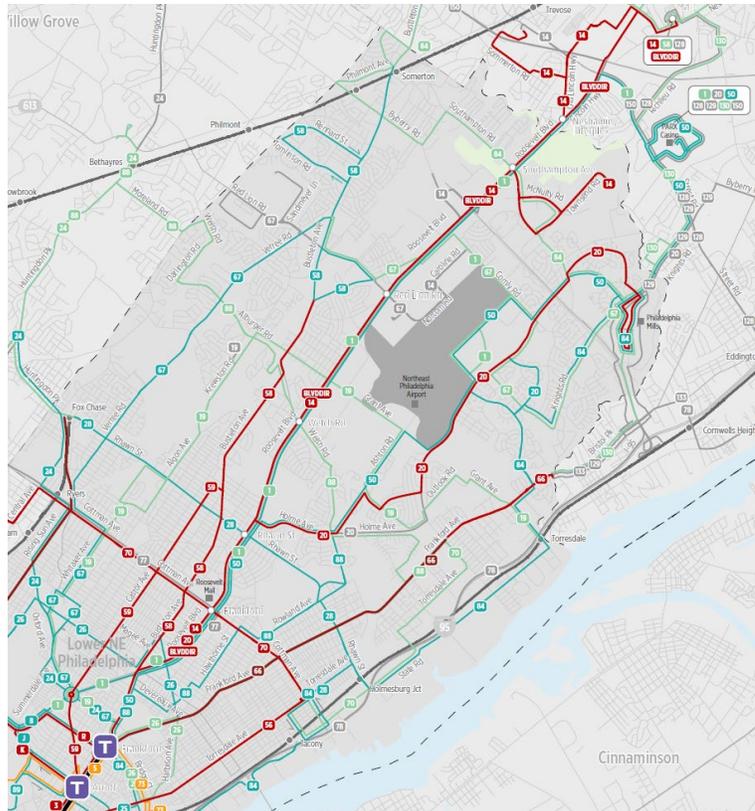
NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA

Routes: 1, 14, 19, 20, 24, 28, 50, 58, 59, 66, 67, 70, 84, 88, Boulevard Direct

Northeast Philadelphia is the largest region in overall land area within the City of Philadelphia and has wide variations in land use and neighborhood characteristics.

Lower Northeast Philadelphia, south of Pennypack Park, is very transit supportive – with dense, walkable residential neighborhoods, several urban retail corridors, and large shopping centers along Cottman Avenue.

Far Northeast Philadelphia, north of Pennypack Park, is somewhat less supportive of traditional fixed-route transit. The area has a mix of higher and lower density residential neighborhoods, suburban-style shopping centers, and large office and industrial parks. The road network is less connected than in other Philadelphia neighborhoods, and most major streets are wider and have higher traffic speeds.



Northeast Philadelphia Transit Network

Roosevelt Boulevard, where Boulevard Direct and Route 14 operate, bisects Northeast Philadelphia and its width and high traffic design speed create a significant barrier for pedestrians.

NETWORK DESIGN

Northeast Philadelphia is served by a core network of frequent north-south bus routes that run to the Market-Frankford Line at Frankford Transportation Center or Arrott Transportation Center. These core north-south corridors include Bustleton Avenue, Castor Avenue, Roosevelt Boulevard, and Frankford Avenue.

These frequent north-south corridors are supplemented by less frequent service on secondary corridors. Many of these secondary routes leave the Market-Frankford Line along north-south corridors and then become east-west crosstown routes as they go further into the Northeast.

Far Northeast Philadelphia has multiple locations where customers can transfer to suburban routes and terminal locations – including Neshaminy Mall, Philadelphia Mills, Parx Casino, City Line Loop, and Gregg Street Loop. Most routes serve at least one of these hubs, and several serve multiple hubs.

Several primary corridors are served by multiple routes, most notably Roosevelt Boulevard. This corridor is served by five different routes between the Frankford Transportation

Center and Holme Avenue. Other corridors served by multiple bus routes include Academy Road, Oxford Avenue, Knights Road, and Street Road.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Northeast Philadelphia has many of the highest ridership and strongest performing bus routes in the SEPTA network. Bus ridership is especially high along Roosevelt Boulevard, Bustleton Avenue, Castor Avenue, and Frankford Avenue.

Northeast Philadelphia bus service is oriented towards the Market-Frankford Line. It is more difficult to make short crosstown trips within Northeast Philadelphia or access the Broad Street Line. Crosstown service on Routes 19, 28, 84, and 88 is infrequent and often circuitous due to the road network, resulting in long waits and travel times. These routes are further complicated by numerous patterns that deviate to serve office parks.

About three-quarters of riders in Northeast Philadelphia transfer to at least one other SEPTA service. Many of these transfers happen at the Market-Frankford Line or along Cottman Avenue.

Most routes are complex, with 171 different service patterns across 15 routes. This complexity is driven by specialized service to office parks in the Far Northeast and short turns. Route 14, for example, operates with 27 different patterns, eight different terminals, and numerous short turns and infrequently served deviations.

Northeast Philadelphia routes generally operate at higher speeds and with stronger on-time performance than in other areas of the SEPTA network. This is likely due to routes operating on higher speed suburban arterials with less congestion and wider average stop spacing. However, some routes in the Lower Northeast operate at slower speeds, such as routes on southern Bustleton Avenue, Oxford Avenue, Cheltenham Avenue, and Cottman Avenue. And many higher speed arterials like Roosevelt Boulevard have poor pedestrian connectivity.

Many end-of-line locations are located on private property, have circuitous circulation patterns, and have limited passenger amenities. This adds complexity to operations by limiting layover space and requiring some end-of-line locations to shift at certain times of day.

OPPORTUNITIES

The following opportunities focus on how to improve the SEPTA bus network in Northeast Philadelphia. Opportunities for individual routes are included in each route evaluation.

Upgrade Frequent North-South Corridors and Cottman Avenue to Rapid Bus: Northeast Philadelphia has some of SEPTA's highest ridership bus corridors, including services on Frankford Avenue, Roosevelt Boulevard, Castor Avenue, Bustleton Avenue, and Cottman Avenue. These corridors could be priority for Rapid Bus improvements, including transit priority measures, enhanced stop amenities, and consistent high frequency service. Upgrading these routes would complement the Market-Frankford Line and Boulevard Direct to provide a foundation of high frequency and reliable service.

Create Stronger and More Frequent East-West Crosstown Services: East-west crosstown services in North Philadelphia operate infrequently and are often circuitous or complex. This design makes it difficult for riders to make short trips within Northeast Philadelphia. SEPTA could work to strengthen crosstown service by:

- Operating the same route along an entire crosstown corridor, rather than splitting service across multiple routes on partial segments

- Splitting crosstown route segments from north-south segments and establishing strong end-of-line locations, such as a frequent north-south route or a regional rail station
- Removing complex patterns and deviations
- Increasing crosstown service frequency

Improve Connections between Northeast Philadelphia and the Broad Street Line: Most bus north-south service in Northeast Philadelphia connects to the Market-Frankford Line. Many riders therefore must transfer at least once to access the Broad Street Line and bus routes that serve the Olney and Fern Rock Transportation Centers. To reduce travel times for these riders, SEPTA could reconfigure some Northeast Philadelphia routes to serve the Broad Street Line more directly.

Identify Alternative Approaches to Serving Far Northeast Office Parks: SEPTA currently serves Far Northeast office and industrial parks with infrequent variants of both high frequency north-south routes and lower frequency east-west crosstown routes. This design reduces the number of transfers for some riders but requires customized schedules that only meet the needs of some office park employees. It also makes service on primary corridors harder to operate and reduces crosstown service options. SEPTA could explore alternative approaches to serving Far Northeast office parks that both increase employee access and simplify operations, such as:

- Creating more frequent crosstown service through office parks
- Introducing microtransit service within office parks, with connections at improved stops on frequent north-south corridors
- Establishing frequent office park circulator shuttles

Simplify Service in Academy Gardens: Service in Academy Gardens is split across multiple routes that are duplicative, circuitous, and operate infrequently. SEPTA could comprehensively redesign Academy Gardens service to provide simpler, higher frequency routes that better meet the needs of riders.

Improve the Quality of Major Bus-to-Bus Transfer Locations: Many high ridership transfer locations in Northeast Philadelphia are located at high traffic intersections with limited bus stop amenities. To make bus-to-bus transfers easier, SEPTA and the City of Philadelphia could work to add amenities and improve the walking experience at these locations.

Identify Stronger End-of-Line and Layover Locations: SEPTA could work to establish stronger end-of-line locations in Far Northeast, including potentially at Regional Rail stations such as Somerton.

Implement Transit Priority on Major Approach Corridors to the Frankford Transportation Center: The Frankford Transportation Center is one of SEPTA's highest ridership bus hubs. SEPTA and the City of Philadelphia could work to improve operations at this hub by implementing transit priority on its primary approach corridors. These improvements would reduce delays for thousands of bus riders each day at a relatively low cost.