

SOUTH PHILADELPHIA

Routes: 2, 4, 7, 12, 17, 29, 45, 47, 47M, 57, 79

South Philadelphia is a large and densely populated neighborhood south of Center City. Much of the neighborhood has a strong, walkable roadway network with narrow residential blocks interspersed with retail corridors. There are also significant commercial plazas, industrial facilities, and regional entertainment venues outside of the Schuylkill and Delaware Expressways. These include the South Philadelphia Sports Complex, the Navy Yard, and Columbus Commons.

NETWORK DESIGN

South Philadelphia is served by a dense grid of bus routes. North-south routes run in pairs mostly spaced two or three blocks apart, except in Gray's Ferry. East-west crosstown routes are spaced somewhat further apart.

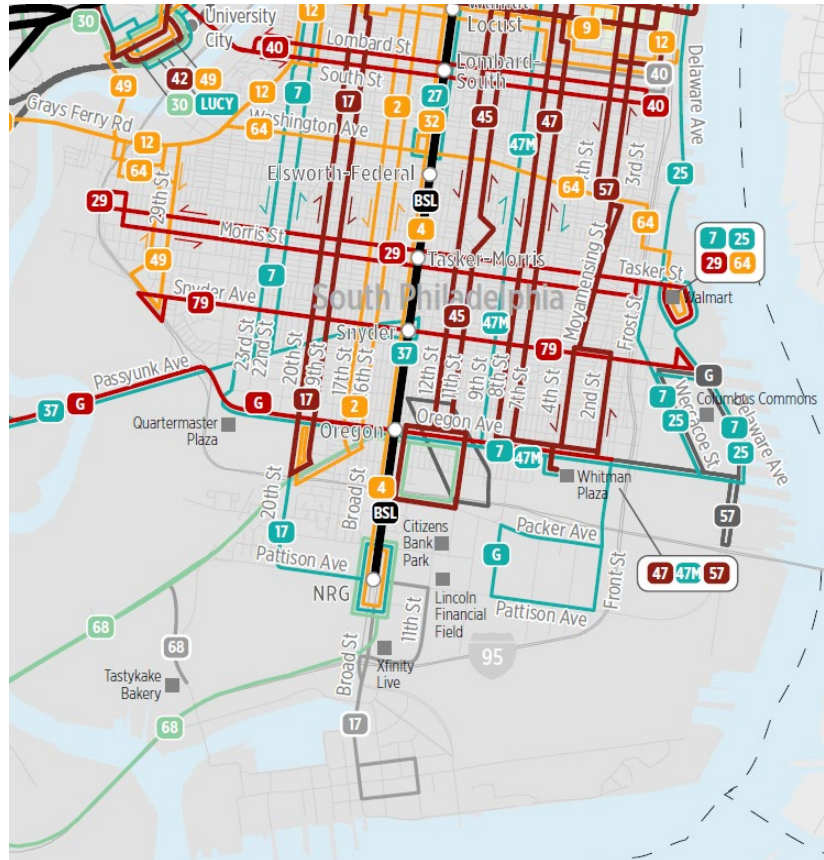
The bus network is oriented towards Center City and the Broad Street Line. North-south routes primarily provide one-seat rides to and from Center City, with several continuing further north into North Philadelphia. East-west crosstown routes provide direct access to the Broad Street Line, and some continue across the Schuylkill River into West Philadelphia.

Route length and complexity varies greatly. Eight routes are 10 miles or longer, while six routes are less than 5 miles long. South Philadelphia routes are generally less complex than others in the SEPTA network, with 10 routes having four or fewer patterns. However, some of the highest ridership routes in the area are significantly more complex, including Route G (25 patterns) and Route 57 (14 patterns).

Routes terminate at a wide range of end-of-line facilities. Many of these facilities are on-street or on private property, such as retail plazas. Some routes end at locations without strong ridership generators, especially Route 29, 49, and 79.

MAJOR FINDINGS

South Philadelphia bus routes are among the highest ridership and most productive in the SEPTA network. The area is served by SEPTA's highest (Route 47) and second highest



South Philadelphia Transit Network

(Route G) ridership bus routes, as well as two of its top ten most productive bus routes in terms of ridership by revenue hour (Routes 79 and 29).

Bus service is often slow and unreliable. Most bus routes in South Philadelphia operate at weekday average speeds below 10 mph, among the slowest in the SEPTA network. These slow speeds are caused by very close stop spacing, often more than 10 stops per mile, as well as frequent stop signs and congestion from parking or other activities on narrow streets.

North-south routes are spaced more closely together than in other parts of the SEPTA network. Between 7th Street and 23rd Street, north-south routes are spaced in pairs two or three blocks apart. This design prioritizes short access times but results in heavily duplicative service, less frequent service on each corridor, and longer waiting and trip times. North-south route spacing is wider east of 7th Street, as well as for east-west crosstown routes in most of South Philadelphia.

Having fewer Market-Frankford Line stations west of Broad has significant impacts on the current bus network design. Many north-south routes east of Broad continue straight across Market Street, while those routes west of Broad are more likely to have an L-shaped alignment which includes an east-west segment through Center City.

It is difficult to travel between much of South Philadelphia and West Philadelphia, especially University City. Most SEPTA routes between these two areas operate less frequently and miss critical activity centers in both neighborhoods. There are no one-seat rides to University City south of South Street and east of 29th Street. SEPTA also does not provide crosstown service to West Philadelphia from South Philadelphia neighborhoods between Washington Avenue and Oregon Avenue.

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Create More Consistent Route Spacing: North-south routes in South Philadelphia are spaced more closely than in other parts of the SEPTA network. SEPTA could work to create more consistent route spacing by either:

- **Consolidating north-south service on corridors spaced about six blocks apart,** which is a similar distance as east-west route spacing in South Philadelphia and north-south route spacing in West Philadelphia. This change would reduce wait and travel times for most riders, by enabling SEPTA to provide very frequent service on all routes at no additional cost. Some riders would need to travel up to three blocks farther to access the bus, but many would see little to no change.
- **Maintaining existing routes on most north-south corridors, with high frequency service and lower frequency service on alternating corridors.** Service on the high frequency corridors would be less frequent than under the consolidation approach, but many riders would still have somewhat reduced wait and travel times. This approach would enable most riders to continue accessing transit from their current corridor.

Develop a Rapid Bus Network to Complement the Broad Street Line: South Philadelphia has high overall bus ridership and a connected grid street network. SEPTA and the City of Philadelphia could create a comprehensive Rapid Bus network in this area to complement high frequency and reliable Broad Street Line service. Under this approach, Rapid Bus upgrades, such as transit priority measures and enhanced stop amenities, would be evenly distributed across a grid of north-south and east-west corridors.

Improve Connections to West Philadelphia, Including University City: Trips between South and West Philadelphia can be long, in part due to missed transfer opportunities and infrequent service on some routes. SEPTA could improve connections between the neighborhoods by extending some crosstown routes across the Schuylkill River, as well as ensuring that high frequency bus routes meet at logical transfer locations, such as trolley stations or major activity centers.

Create Shorter Routes to Improve On-Time Performance: Long bus routes are harder to operate on-time, often resulting in bus bunching and long gaps in service. Several bus routes serving South Philadelphia are over ten miles long, such as Route 57 and Route G. Splitting these long routes at logical ridership turnover locations could improve on-time performance.

Improve End-of-Line and Transfer Locations: SEPTA could work to establish stronger end-of-line locations in South Philadelphia, including developing off-street facilities to consolidate layover near major ridership generators.

Collaborate with the City of Philadelphia on Parking/Curb Management: South Philadelphia bus speeds and on-time performance could be improved through a variety of measures, such as signaling long stretches of stop-controlled corridors, implementing transit signal priority on signalized corridors, and improved curb and parking management strategies.