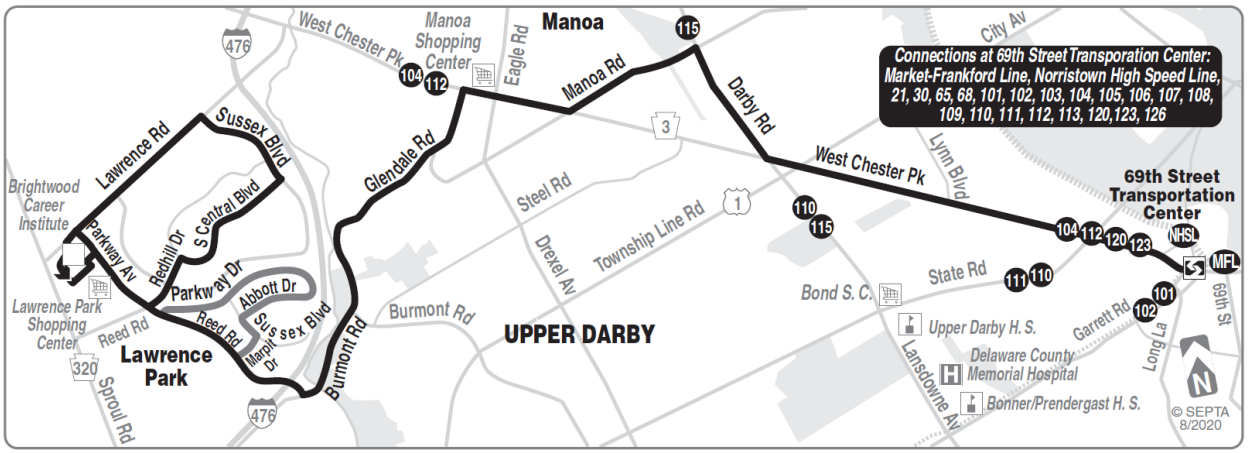
ROUTE 126

Lawrence Park to 69th Street Transportation Center

KEY SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Route 126 operates infrequently between 69th Street Transportation Center and Lawrence Park via Darby Road and Manoa Road. Some service patterns serve Lawrence Park Industrial Center.*
- *Route 126 loops through Lawrence Park using 8 different service patterns, making service complex.*
- *An opportunity to strengthen Route 126 is to simplify service by streamlining the route and operating all service using one service pattern. Route 126 could also be discontinued and its unique service in Lawrence Park and the Industrial Center could be served by microtransit.*

Figure 1 | Route Map



ROUTE OVERVIEW

Route 126 operates between 69th Street Transportation Center and Lawrence Park via West Chester Pike. The route's major function is to provide connections to 69th Street Transportation Center for Lawrence Park residents. The route is circuitous with service along Darby Road and Manoa Road as well as the loops through Lawrence Park (as shown in Figure 1 above). Additionally, the route's multiple service patterns make the service more complicated and the inbound and outbound service create a loop in Lawrence Park.

SERVICE OVERVIEW

Schedule

Weekdays, Route 126 operates from 5:15 AM to 11:02 PM (see Table 1). On Saturdays, the route operates from 6:34 AM to 7:30 PM, and on Sundays, the route operates from 5:55 AM to 6:41 PM. Frequencies vary during all time periods, and on weekdays:

- Peak period frequencies average every 34 to 46 minutes
- Midday and evening frequencies average 50 to 57 minutes.
- Late night services average 144 minutes.

On Saturdays, service frequencies average 62 minutes during the day and 54 minutes at night. As on weekdays, actual frequencies vary from the averages.

On Sundays, frequencies average 60 minutes during the day and 60 minutes at night. As on weekdays and Saturdays, actual frequencies vary very slightly from the average during the day.

Table 1 | Schedule Statistics

Service Day	Span Of Service	Frequency (Range)	Frequency (Average)
Weekdays	**5:15 AM to 11:02 PM**		
Early AM	4:00 AM to 5:59 AM	-	-
AM Peak	6:00 AM to 8:59 AM	27-60	34
Midday	9:00 AM to 2:59 PM	31-70	57
PM Peak	3:00 PM to 5:59 PM	30-63	46
Evening	6:00 PM to 9:59 PM	27-122	50
Late Night	After 10:00 PM	144-144	144
Owl	Before 4:00 AM	-	-
Saturdays	**6:34 AM to 7:30 PM**		
Day	8:00 AM to 5:59 AM	57-89	62
Night	Before 8:00 AM & After 5:59 PM	35-60	54
Sundays	**5:55 AM to 6:41 PM**		
Day	8:00 AM to 5:59 AM	60-62	60
Night	Before 8:00 AM & After 5:59 PM	60-60	60

Note: Span of service reflects the time the first bus begins service until the time the last bus finishes service.

Service Patterns

Route 126 operates with eight service patterns that generally operate on the same alignment (see Table 2). The major differences consist of the alignment through Lawrence Park and stopping patterns and short-turns. The inbound and outbound service together create a loop in Lawrence Park.

Table 2 | Service Patterns

Pattern	Origin	Destination	Unique Feature	Unique Stops	Trips Per Day Wkd	Sat	Sun
Inbound/Westbound							
229135	69th St Transportation Center West Terminal	Lawrence Park Shopping Center	Primary Pattern	0	13	7	0
229134	69th St Transportation Center West Terminal	Lawrence Park Shopping Center	Circulates through Lawrence Park	15	7	0	0
229136	69th St Transportation Center West Terminal	Lawrence Park Shopping Center	Does not deviate to Abbott Drive and Park Way	1	0	0	13
229137	69th St Transportation Center West Terminal	Lawrence Park Shopping Center	Does not deviate to Abbott Drive and Park Way	1	0	6	0
Outbound/Eastbound							
229141	Lawrence Park Shopping Center	69th St Transportation Center West Terminal	Primary Pattern	0	11	0	0
229140	Lawrence Park Shopping Center	69th St Transportation Center West Terminal	Deviates to Abbott Drive and Park Way	10	9	7	0
229142	Lawrence Park Shopping Center	69th St Transportation Center West Terminal	Does not circulate through Lawrence Park	2	0	0	13
229139	Lawrence Park Shopping Center	69th St Transportation Center West Terminal	Does not circulate through Lawrence Park	2	0	6	0

Note: Unique stops are those not served by the primary pattern

RIDERSHIP

In Fall 2019, Route 126 carried 637 passengers on weekdays, 348 on Saturdays, and 235 on Sundays (see Table 3). Based on weekday ridership, it had the 101st highest ridership in the system. It has an average of 35.1 boardings per revenue hour on weekdays, the 76th highest in the SEPTA system (see Table 3).

Table 3 | Fall 2019 Ridership and Productivity

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays
Daily Ridership	**637**	**348**	**235**
Rank	101	99	90
Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Hour	**35.1**	**32.6**	**25.9**
Rank	76	57	73

Transfer Patterns

All transfers occur at the 69th Street Transportation Center and many trips involve a transfer to the Market-Frankford Line. The highest transfer rates are to and from:

- The Market-Frankford Line (41.0% of all trips)
- Route 113 Tri State Mall and Darby Transportation Center to 69th Street Transportation Center (2.9%)
- Route 108 Airport and Airport Business Center to 69th Street Transportation Center (2.8%)
- Route 65 Germantown-Chelten to 69th Street Transportation Center (2.8%)

Weekend transfer patterns are similar but at a lower rate.

Ridership by Stop

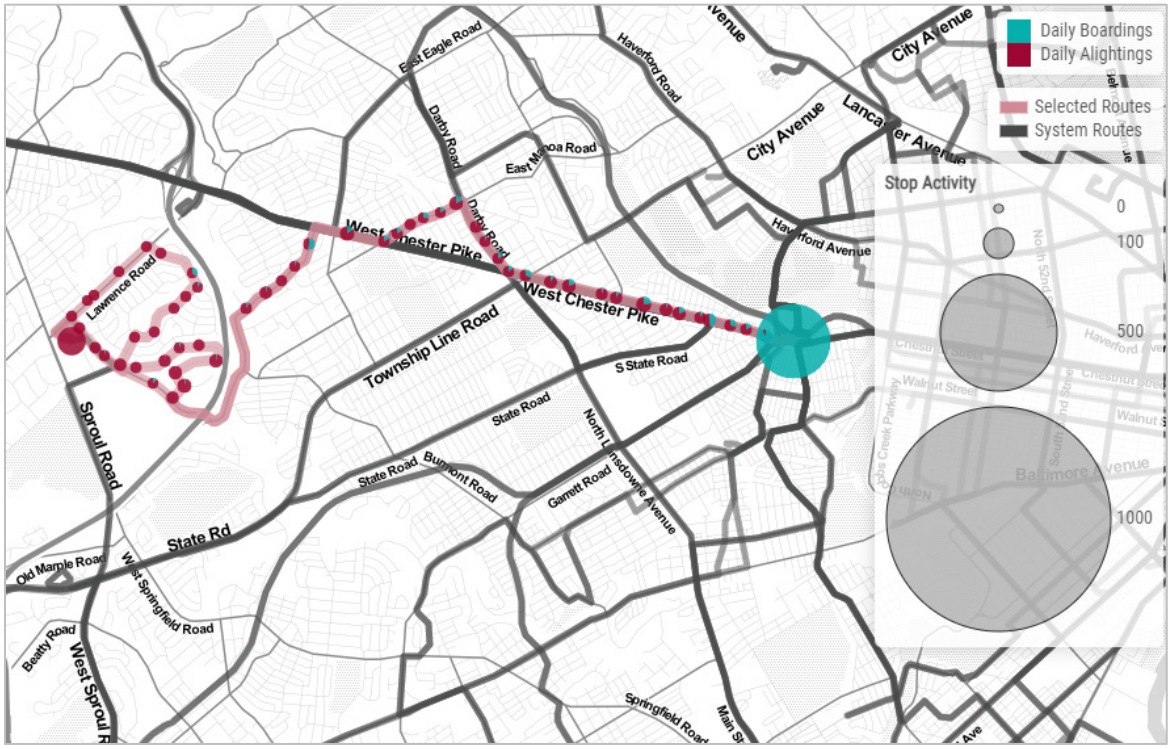
Route 126's major function is to transport people to and from the 69th Street Transportation Center. On westbound trips, 87% of all passengers board at 69th Street Transportation Center. Ridership is low throughout the rest of the route except for the last stop, Lawrence Park Shopping Center.

In more detail, and again on westbound trips (also see Figure 2):

- The largest numbers of passengers – 295 – board at the 69th Street Transportation Center.
- An average of 1 passenger boards and 6 alight at each of the 40 stops between 69th Street Transportation Center and Lawrence Park Shopping Center.
- 80 passengers alight at the Lawrence Park Shopping Center.
- An average of 1 passenger alights at 15 stops when the route serves the Lawrence Park neighborhood.

Eastbound patterns generally mirror northbound patterns. Weekend patterns are also similar but with lower volumes.

Figure 2 | Weekday Westbound Ridership by Stop

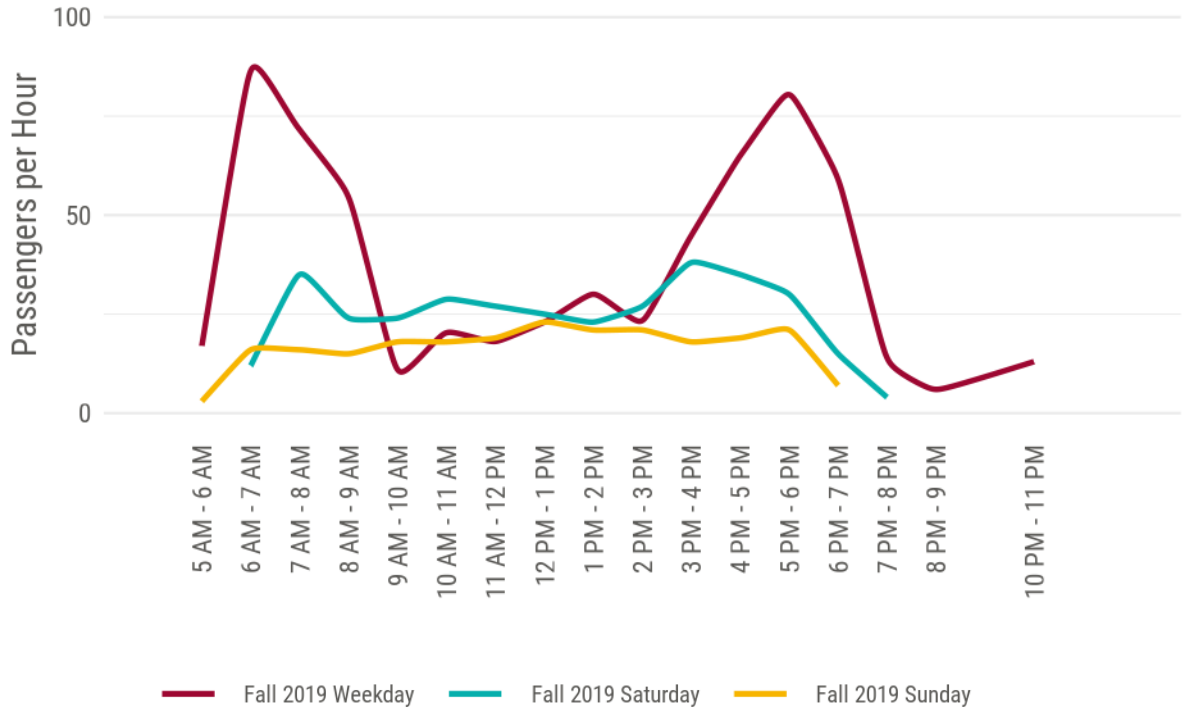


Ridership by Time of Day

Ridership by Hour

In Fall 2019, weekday ridership was very peaked during peak periods (see Figure 3). Early morning, midday, and after 7:00 PM, ridership is much lower than peak period ridership. Saturday ridership was generally plateaued and had slight peaks around 7:00 AM and 3:00 PM and quickly declined after 6:00 PM. Sunday ridership did not exhibit peaks and was generally plateaued with the least ridership during the first and last hours of service.

Figure 3 | Ridership by Hour: Fall 2019



Ridership and Maximum Loads by Trip

Weekday ridership per trip is low on most trips, no trips serve more than 30 passengers (see Figure 4):

- Early morning trips before 6:00 AM carried about 15 or fewer passengers.
- AM and PM peak trips carried close to 10 to 30 passengers.
- Midday trips carried 8 to 17 passengers.
- After 6:00 PM, ridership gradually declined to 7 to 24 passengers per trip.

No trip meets the maximum seated load (see Figure 5). The highest maximum loads are generally during peak periods.

On Saturdays, generally, approximately 10 to 20 passengers are served per trip. After 6:00 PM, ridership declines to around 5 passengers per trip.

Sunday ridership by trip patterns are very similar to those on Saturday but with overall lower ridership. However, the trips with less activity are the first two trips of the day rather than the last trips of the day. They serve fewer than 5 passengers.

Figure 4 | Weekday Ridership by Trip: Fall 2019

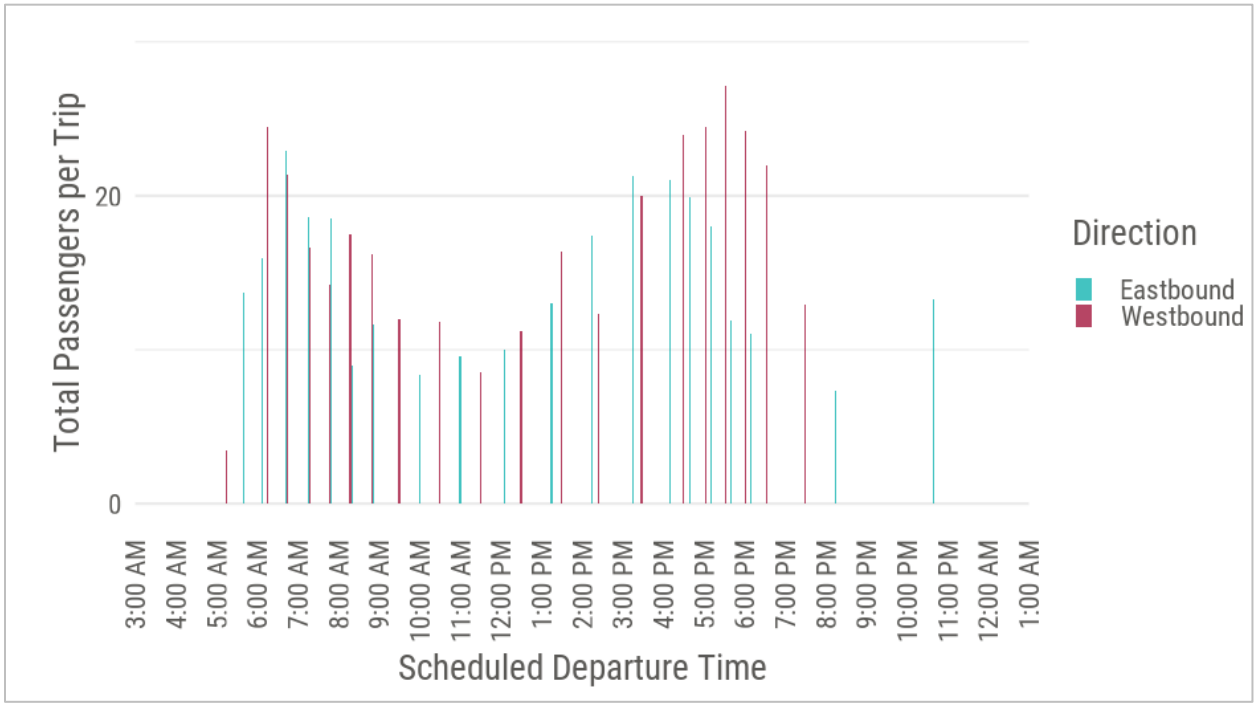
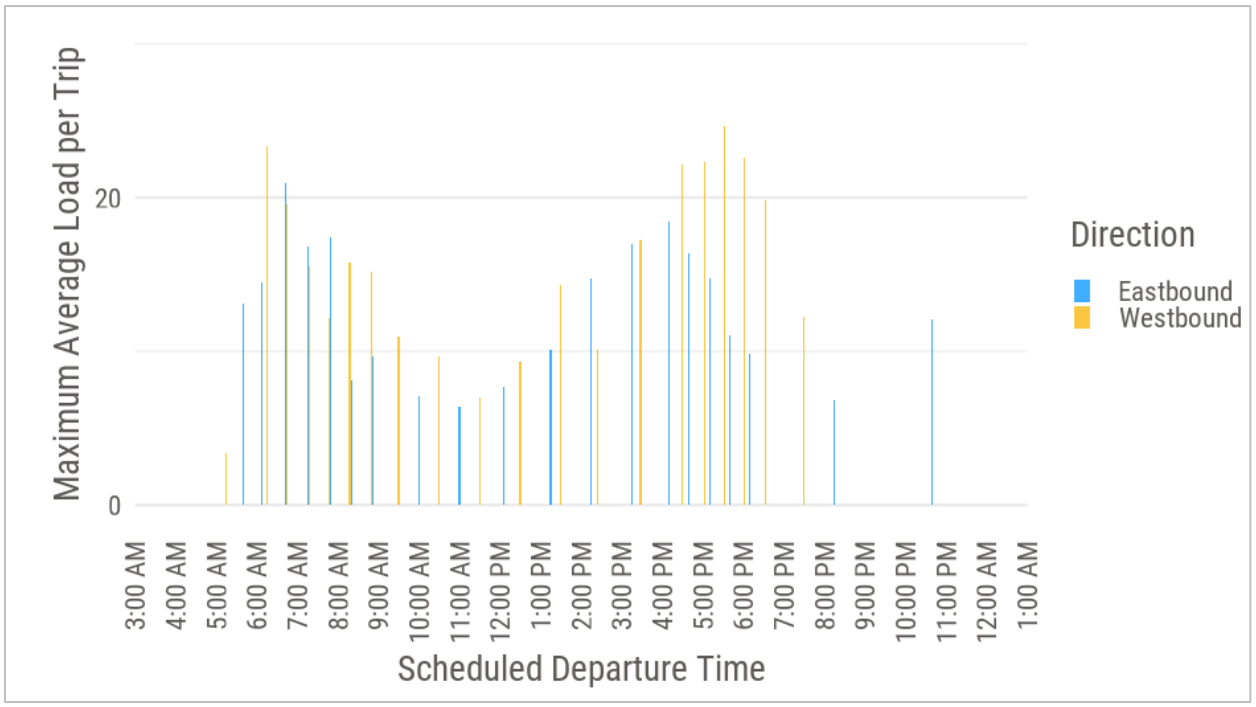


Figure 5 | Weekday Maximum Loads by Trip: Fall 2019



ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND RUNNING TIMES

On-Time Performance

In Fall 2019, Route 126's on-time performance was above SEPTA's goal, at 82% on weekdays, 85% on Saturdays, and 89% on Sundays (see Table 4). Off-schedule performance was more often due to late service on weekdays and split relatively equally between early and late service on Saturdays and Sundays.

Dropped trips are an issue weekdays and Sundays, with 1% of trips not run on weekdays and Sundays.

Table 4 | On-Time Performance: Fall 2019

	Early (>2 Mins Early)	On Time (<2 Mins Early to 6 Mins Late)	Late (>6 Mins Late))	Missed Trips
Goal		80%		
Fall 2019 Actual				
Weekday	2.9%	82.4%	14.7%	1.1%
Saturday	8.5%	84.7%	6.7%	0.0%
Sunday	4.2%	88.8%	7.0%	1.1%

Note: On-time percentages are for trips that are run (do not include dropped trips)

AVERAGE SPEEDS AND STOP SPACING

Route 126's average weekday speed is 19.7 mph. Speeds are slower along West Chester Pike between Wilson Avenue and Eagle Road during eastbound trips. They are also slower east of Manoa Road at West Chester Pike during westbound trips at some parts of the day (see Figure 6). Route 126 has an average of 5.2 stops per mile, with closer stop spacing in the eastern half of the route and along the Abbott Drive and Park Way alignment (see Figure 7).

Figure 6 | Average Speeds: PM Peak Westbound

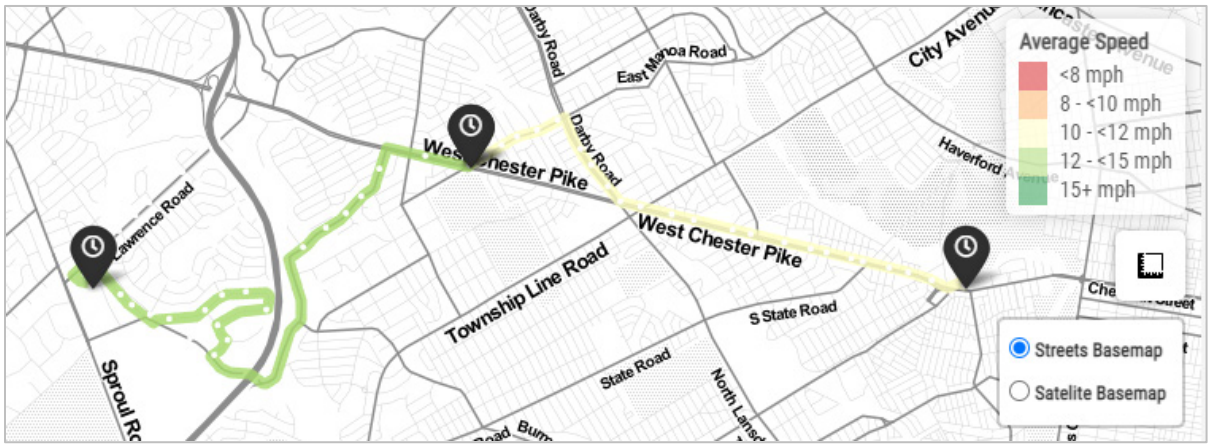


Figure 7 | Stop Spacing by Route Segment

RIDER CHARACTERISTICS

In many respects, Route 126's service area is typical of SEPTA's service area as a whole with slight differences, for example, in the racial and ethnic composition of the area – with a greater percentage of white riders and people who do not identify at white, Black, or Hispanic (see Table 5). The route notably serves a smaller share of people in poverty and people without access to a vehicle.

Table 5 | Rider Characteristics

	Route 126 Riders	Systemwide Average
Median Household Income	$36,961	$32,713
Share in Poverty	23%	30%
Ethnicity		
White	44%	38%
Black	40%	46%
Hispanic	5%	10%
Other	12%	7%
Without a Vehicle	28%	37%
Seniors	9%	15%
With a Disability	2%	2%

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities to strengthen Route 126 are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route:

- **Simplify Service:** Simpler service will nearly always attract more riders than complicated service. Potential ways to simplify service include:

  - **Discontinue Service through the Lawrence Park Neighborhood:** Ridership is low through the Lawrence Park Neighborhood. Consider discontinuing service in the neighborhood. It would simplify service because eastbound and westbound service would following the same alignment to and from the Lawrence Park Shopping Center.
  - **Streamline Service via West Chester Pike:** Route 126 is one of two infrequent routes (the other being Route 115 Darby Transportation Center to DCCC) to operate via the Darby Road deviation north of West Chester Pike. This segment of the route has low ridership, and it makes the route less useful for passengers traveling to or from West Chester Pike and the 69th Street Transportation Center. SEPTA could consider operating the route via West Chester Pike in both directions.

- **Operate Service on Clockface Headways:** Route 126 frequencies are inconsistent and infrequent. To make the route simpler to understand and more rider-friendly, operate service at the same time(s) every hour.
- **Replace with Microtransit Service in Lawrence Park:** Route 126 mostly provides duplicative service, and its unique service in Lawrence Park may be better served by microtransit.