

**From:** Casey, Joseph M  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2011 12:58 PM  
**To:** Kelly, Francis E; Heinle, Kim S; Knueppel, Jeffrey D  
**Subject:** FW: Response to SEPTA GM Joe Casey's Allegations against PA-TEC

idiots!

---

**From:** Grant, Elizabeth  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2011 12:57 PM  
**To:** Casey, Joseph M  
**Subject:** FW: Response to SEPTA GM Joe Casey's Allegations against PA-TEC

---

**From:** Paul Iverson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2011 11:35 AM  
**To:** Grant, Elizabeth  
**Subject:** Response to SEPTA GM Joe Casey's Allegations against PA-TEC

Ms. Grant,

As a courtesy, I am forwarding this letter to SEPTA which I request be sent to the board of directors at the earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Paul Iverson



**The Honorable Michael P. McGeehan, Democratic Chairman  
Pennsylvania House Transportation Committee  
3141rvis Office Building  
P.O. Box 202173  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2173**

February 22, 2011

Chairman McGeehan:

This letter is in response to a letter sent to your office from Mr. Joseph Casey at SEPTA on February 10, 2011. PA-TEC, founded in 2009, is a transit advocacy network that seeks incremental expansion of rail service on SEPTA's Newtown line in Bucks County. We have evolved into addressing the broader issues of responsible investment in mass transit, in the interest of protecting future transit needs.

It is ironic after 28 years of avoiding the Newtown line, it is now preferred that PA-TEC focus only on Newtown. SEPTA's response has sidestepped the issue of safety in favor of discrediting PA-TEC's concerns.

SEPTA's major recent contributions to our region's transit system include a hopelessly delayed set of inferior rail cars from Korea (attachment#1), rail lines converted to walking trails (attachment#2), overpriced bus shelters (see attachment#3), a failed computerized signal system(attachment#4), and the diversion of funding away from a needed power station in favor of a local station project (attachment#5).

Please be assured that our concerns, positions and statements are based on careful research, discussion with other civic organizations, such as the DVRPC's Regional Citizens Committee, and consultation with experts in the transportation industry. Our efforts to revive Newtown rail service are backed by ten municipal resolutions, and numerous endorsements from businesses and labor unions.

In the meantime, we have consulted with Mr. Jim Southworth, the NTSB Chief of Rail Safety Division regarding the February 2<sup>nd</sup> incident involving SEPTA's underground trolleys.

We will contact you in the future regarding the Newtown line to provide you with a full briefing of the project. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Iverson".

Paul Iverson

Share / Save  
Email  
Add to Favorites

[Facebook](#)[Delicious](#)[Google Bookmarks](#)[MySpace](#)[Yahoo Buzz](#)

[Twitter](#)[Digg](#)[Google Buzz](#)[Reddit](#)[Messenger](#)

Powered by [AddToAny](#)



## SEPTA is short railcars for commute

[Print Page](#)

[Home](#) » [News](#) » [Notebook](#)

January 27, 2011

By [Anthony Campisi](#)

For *PlanPhilly*

If your train's been crowded recently, it's not just your imagination.

SEPTA general manager Joe Casey said at a SEPTA Board meeting this afternoon.

Out of 349 railcars, 42 were out of service before yesterday's storm, leaving the authority **20 cars short each day**.

Of those, 18 are scheduled to be **out of commission for 10 weeks**, awaiting parts, while six to seven with wheel problems are scheduled to be back in service within a week.

Casey said that repairs are delayed by the age of some of the cars, which requires that new parts be specially fabricated. He added that he expects the 120 new Silverliner V railcars that SEPTA is purchasing to reduce maintenance problems and alleviate overcrowding.

**Six of the new railcars are currently in SEPTA's possession**, though they've been taken **out of service for testing**. Casey said that three more should be delivered in February, but that it would take a month of testing before they enter revenue service.

Also at the board meeting, Beverly Harper of Portfolio Associates announced preliminary results from SEPTA's customer satisfaction survey.

Her firm interviews 1,412 area residents, including 403 nonriders, and found that satisfaction with SEPTA has increased since the study was last conducted in 2008.

The Market-Frankford El and suburban trolley lines received the highest marks from riders, which Harper attributed to the extensive capital improvements SEPTA undertook on those modes over the past few years.

At the same time, non-riders' **opinions of SEPTA have declined in key areas**, including **convenience**, **reliability** and **their view of SEPTA as a "real or viable alternative to driving."**

Harper's firm is still crunching numbers to explain the declines.

Contact the reporter at [acampisi@planphilly.com](mailto:acampisi@planphilly.com)

Tags: [Traffic & Transportation](#) [SEPTA](#) [Silverliner V](#) [SEPTA regional rail](#)

*Wood*

EXECUTION DOCUMENT

LEASE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN  
SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY,  
LESSOR, AND THE COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, LESSEE

SEPTA REGISTRY NO. 4622

This Lease Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into on this 28<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2008 by and between Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority ("SEPTA"), a body corporate and politic which exercises the public powers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an agency and instrumentality thereof with its principal office located at 1234 Market Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-3780, and the County of Montgomery, Pennsylvania ("County") with its seat of government located at Montgomery County Courthouse, Norristown, Pennsylvania 19404-0311.

WITNESSETH THAT:

WHEREAS, SEPTA is the owner of tracts of land known collectively as the Fox Chase/Newtown Branch ("Newtown Branch"), Line Code No. 0325, that include the part that is located north of Fox Chase Passenger Station on which no train service currently operates ("Non-Operating Newtown Branch"); and

WHEREAS, title to the part of the Non-Operating Newtown Branch that is located within Montgomery County is recorded at the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Montgomery County in Book 4534 at Pages 86 to 100 and in Plan Case No. 13 on June 12, 1980; and

WHEREAS, SEPTA wishes to preserve the Non-Operating Newtown Branch for future railroad and/or public transport use; and

WHEREAS, SEPTA deems that the Non-Operating Newtown Branch and its associated right-of-way are not abandoned and SEPTA will retain the Non-Operating Newtown Branch as part of the rail transportation system for use on an interim basis for recreational trail purposes as if under the National Trail Systems Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1247(d), and the Pennsylvania Rails to Trails Act; and

WHEREAS, County wishes to turn a portion of the Non-Operating Newtown Branch that starts at the border of the City of Philadelphia and the Borough of Rockledge, then runs north through Lorimer Park in Abington Township up to the southern bank of the Pennypack Creek in Lower Moreland Township just south of the intersection with SEPTA's R3 West Trenton Railroad Line, into an interim trail ("Pennypack Trail") for recreational purposes such as, but not limited to, bicycling, walking, jogging,

## EXECUTION DOCUMENT

rollerblading and cross country skiing for use by the public consistent with the guidelines for trail development within Montgomery County.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the sum of \$1.00 lawful money paid to SEPTA by County, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, and other good and valuable consideration, SEPTA and County, intending to be legally bound hereby, agree as follows:

1. The recitals above are hereby incorporated herein as if set forth in full.
2. Subject to § 11 hereof and insofar as SEPTA's title and interest permit, SEPTA hereby leases to County and its successors that portion of the surface of the Non-Operating Newtown Branch situated north of Fox Chase Passenger Station starting at the border of the City of Philadelphia and the Borough of Rockledge at Mile Post 11.59, then running north through Pennypack Trail in Abington Township up to the southern bank of the Pennypack Creek at Mile Post 14.03 in Lower Moreland Township just south of the intersection with the right-of-way of the West Trenton Railroad Line, as identified in the drawing on Attachment A, a copy of which is attached hereto ("Premises"), for interim trail use by County, subject to all the terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement and all applicable statutes and regulations. Nothing in the Agreement shall prohibit SEPTA and County from increasing the area described as long as both parties agree.
3. SEPTA acknowledges that County intends to use the Premises for an interim trail as generally described herein and identified as Pennypack Trail. County acknowledges that SEPTA has the paramount right to continue to use the Premises for its present railroad use and to return all or part of the Premises into an operating railroad and/or use the Premises for other public transport purposes.
4. So long as the Agreement is in effect, neither SEPTA nor its successors or assigns shall erect or maintain any improvements on the Premises that would adversely affect access to or use of the Premises, and other rights and privileges granted herein; provided, however, that SEPTA, its licensees and/or holders of easement rights ("SEPTA Occupiers") may use the Premises to gain access to and to construct, maintain, inspect, repair and/or renew their respective facilities. SEPTA and SEPTA Occupiers shall not park or stop their motor vehicles or other equipment in any manner on the Premises so that the motor vehicles or other equipment will impede the use of the Premises unless it is necessary for the construction, maintenance, inspection, repair and/or renewal of their respective facilities, in which case such construction, installation, maintenance, repair and/or renewal of the facilities shall be coordinated with the County so that there is a minimal disruption of the trail use. SEPTA and SEPTA Occupiers agree to restore the Pennypack Trail to its original condition. SEPTA shall have unrestricted and

## DVRPC FY 2009-2012 TIP for PA

Final Version

## Pennsylvania - Transit Program

## SEPTA

MPMS# 77183 *Transit and Regional Rail Station Program*

AQ Code M8 Stations  
 Not SOV Capacity Transit Improvements  
 Adding Subcorr(s): Various

This program provides for the reconstruction or rehabilitation of transit and regional rail stations and terminals, bus/trolley loop facilities, and transportation centers. Program elements include the **total replacement of all station and loop facility components**, as well as projects that significantly rehabilitate stations and loops, such as improvements to, or replacement of, station buildings, ticket offices and waiting rooms, passenger shelters, canopies, platforms, crosswalks and overpasses, escalators and elevators lighting, signage, and accessible paths and features. All improvements will fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Projects include but are not limited to:

\$1.573 million ARRA is for the R8 Fox Chase Regional Rail Station (\$1,573,179)  
 R5 Wayne Station - \$19.3 million (Prior Years & FY 2010, 2011)  
 Queen Lane/Allen Lane - \$17.1 million (Prior Years & FY 2010, 2011, 2012)  
 Wayne Junction - \$25 million (Prior Years & FY 2011, 2012, & 2013)  
 Croydon Station - \$17.5 million (Prior Years & FY 2009, 2010)  
 Levittown Station - \$18.5 million (Prior Year & FY 2010, 2011, 2012)  
 R5 Ambler Station - \$7 million (FY 2009 & 2010)  
 R8 Olney Station (additional work) - \$2 million (FY 2009)  
 BSS Logan Station - \$3.7 million (FY 2009, 2010)  
**Frankford and Gregg Loop - \$1.3 million (FY 2009)**  
 R5 Villanova Station - \$8 million (FY 2009, 2010, 2011)  
 R8 Ryers Station - \$3 million (FY 2010, 2011)  
 R3 Hatboro Station - \$2.5 million (FY 2010, 2011)  
 8th Street Station - \$2.7 million (FY 2010, 2011)  
 BSS Hunting Park Station - \$4.2 million (FY 2011, 2012, and Later Years)  
**Bell Corner Loop - \$1.3 million (FY 2010)**  
**33rd and Dauphin Loop - \$1.3 million (FY 2011)**

Projects scheduled for FY12 and later years - R5 Exton Station - \$5 million; Primos Station - \$7 million; East Falls Station - \$8 million; R3 Willow Grove - \$2.5 million; Highland Avenue Station - \$5 million; 5th Street Station - \$10.5 million; BSS Wyoming - \$3.2 million; Wycombe Loop - \$1.3 million; Fern Rock Loop - \$1.3 million; and 61st and Pine Loop - \$1.3 million.

Phase	Fund	TIP Program Years (\$ 000)				Later FYs
		FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	
ERC	5307ER	1,573				
ERC	1514	9,787				
ERC	LOCAL	338				
ERC	5307		1,840			
ERC	5309		3,938			
ERC	CB		953			
ERC	1514		32,383			
ERC	CB		445			
ERC	LOCAL		1,117			
ERC	LOCAL		15			
ERC	LOCAL		32			
ERC	5307			1,422		
ERC	5309			14,178		
ERC	CB			296		
ERC	1514			10,633		
ERC	CB			2,954		



Frankford Ave & Gregg Street Bus Loop  
\$1.3 million dollars for passenger shelter & driver restroom - 50 riders per day utilize the Gregg Street Bus Stop on routes 66 and 70

**From:** Phil Craig [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 13, 2011 12:39 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED] LRPPPro@yahoogroups.com  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: [LRPPPro] Subway Surface Collision Concerns

Ed et al:

Without question, the **Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) system installed in SEPTA's subway-surface lines tunnels perpetuated the most frequent cause of rear-end collisions** and side swipes of the non-enforced color light signalling system that dated conceptually back to the early 1900s.

What is missing from this discussion is how the installation of CBTC came about. It was adopted as a hardware-in lieu-of-cash offer made by ADtranz, the successor to Asea Brown Boveri (ABB), which was the prime contractor for the 26 N-5 type cars built for the Norristown High Speed Line (formerly Route 100 and before that the Philadelphia and Western Railroad). The N-5 cars, while at the end of the day turning out to be excellent vehicles, were delivered several years late due to ABB and its US final assembly partner, Amtrak, not being able to get their collection act together. As a result, SEPTA was due millions in contract penalties.

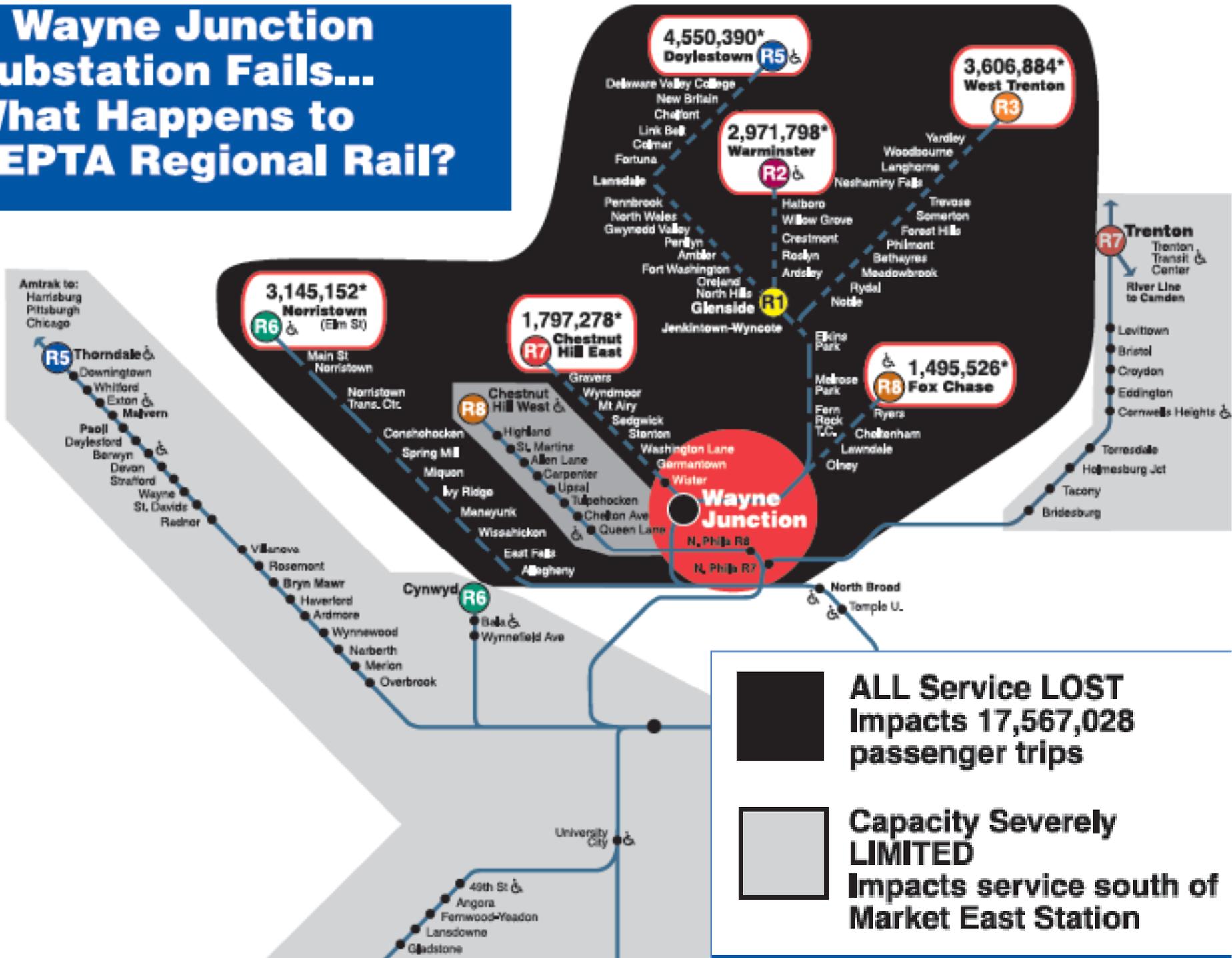
ADtranz USA, being a Pennsylvania-based firm, had significant political connections which it used to avoid a cash payout. **SEPTA's Chief Signalling Engineer was itching for an opportunity to "make history" by adopting CBTC,** then gatharing attraction as a flavor-of-the-month. While installing Automatic Train Stop (ATS), perhaps by outfitting the existing signal system and rolling stock with equipment required to implement magnetic or inductive train stops giving a penalty brake application (emergency for full service) to any car passing a red signal, **this safer solution was not considered by SEPTA because it was not "state of the art" signalling technology.**

As a result, ADtranz got off the hook, SEPTA's management got what it wanted, and the riders of the five subway-surface lines were subjected to continued safety risks, all in the name of obtaining "the most modern technology available" while in fact pushing the state of the art in the interest of being able to present a "Look at What We've Done" paper at one of the American Public Transportation Association's meetings.

Phil Craig

**Philip G. Craig**  
[REDACTED]

# If Wayne Junction Substation Fails... What Happens to SEPTA Regional Rail?



## **SEPTA Board Committee Considers Bonds For New Railcars And Wayne Junction Station Project**

PHILADELPHIA, PA (January 20, 2011) – The SEPTA Board Administration Committee today is considering a proposal to issue Grant and Fare Revenue Bonds for the purchase of the new Silverliner V rail cars and renovations at the Wayne Junction Station. If approved by the full board at its regular meeting next week (Thursday, Jan 27, 2011), SEPTA would be able to borrow up to \$250 million for these projects.

SEPTA has long expected to issue bonds for the Silverliner V railcars. SEPTA is purchasing 120 of these new cars for Regional Rail under a contract with Hyundai-Rotem. SEPTA expects to take delivery on a significant portion of the new cars this year. The total cost of the Silverliner V project is \$330 million.

The bond issue would also fund long-needed repairs to Wayne Junction Station – a crucial part of the Regional Rail system, the Chestnut Hill East Line, and the transit system as a whole. The station, which is among SEPTA’s busiest, was built in 1901, and has fallen into a serious state of disrepair.

SEPTA planned to move ahead with a project to **overhaul Wayne Junction Station – a nearly \$30 million initiative** – this year. The project, however, was among 22 SEPTA was forced to cut from its Fiscal Year 2011 Capital Budget due to a lack of funding from the state. SEPTA reduced the Capital Budget by 25 percent – down to about \$300 million – when the state could not fulfill its funding obligation under Act 44, due to the federal rejection of tolls for Interstate 80.

SEPTA has continued to try to find ways to advance projects cut from the budget. Help with Wayne Junction Station recently came in the form of a \$4 million grant from the FTA.

###



February 10, 2011

The Honorable Michael P. McGeehan, Democratic Chairman  
Pennsylvania House Transportation Committee  
314 Irvis Office Building  
P.O. Box 202173  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2173

Dear Chairman McGeehan:

This letter is in response to an email sent to you on February 3, 2011 from Paul Iverson curiously questioning the Authority's investment in critical safety systems on SEPTA's light rail trolley tunnel in Center City, Philadelphia. You should also be aware that in a separate email to some of your colleagues, Mr. Iverson has expressed his displeasure with SEPTA's announced plan to seek innovative financing to complete the long-overdue implementation of our new payment technology program and construction activities at Wayne Junction Station, a highly congested and key area within SEPTA's Regional Rail network.

In the past few years, Mr. Iverson and several associates have requested numerous documents, information, and findings related to their advocacy for the restoration of SEPTA service on the Newtown Regional Rail branch Line between Fox Chase and Newtown, Bucks County. SEPTA has cooperated by supplying requested information and has met with this group to learn their thoughts and explain our broader Capital program and long term planning objectives. Most notably, in January 2010 we hosted a forum for federal, state and county elected officials from the rail corridor to hear from Mr. Iverson's group and receive a detailed briefing from SEPTA Chief Financial Officer, Richard Burnfield.

At that time, and even more so now, SEPTA steadfastly held that based on existing cost assumptions and ridership data reinstating service on the line would be cost prohibitive, add few additional *new* riders to the system, a requirement of the federal New Starts Program, and be inconsistent with our efforts to maximize federal, state and local investment in a manner which offers the greatest return – state of good repair improvements to an already extensive transit network. Furthermore, any type of rail extension within the SEPTA service region must have the formal backing and support of the Counties, as there are significant operating and capital investments that they would need to make. Finally, the Metropolitan Planning Agency (MPO) for the region – the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission – would need to identify the extension

project as a worthwhile project within the Long Range Plan for the region. Neither Counties nor the MPO have in any way endorsed this project to date.

Working with state and national transportation advocacy groups SEPTA continues to highlight the need to invest in existing assets and aggressively fund infrastructure repairs to begin to address our state of good repair backlog – estimated at \$4.2 billion. The Authority simply does not have the capital resources to bring our assets up to a state of good repair, let alone devote already scarce resources to projects of limited value.

Decisions regarding SEPTA's Capital program reflect the critical needs of an aging system and are made based on engineering analysis and available funding. These internal decisions are further vetted through the state and regional Transportation Improvement Program processes, annual Capital Budget public hearings held each year in April, briefings before SEPTA's Citizen Advisory Committee, and project-specific public hearings in the affected communities. The SEPTA Board must approve each project and award contracts; projects are then subject to strict review by the state and federal regulating agencies charged with overseeing transit capital construction. Unhappy that this transparent and multi-tiered evaluation process has not yielded advancement of their project, this group has undertaken an effort to publicly undermine every capital investment decision SEPTA has recently made.

It is not my intention in this letter to re-present SEPTA's rationale for not including Fox Chase to Newtown service in our long range capital plan, but, as always, we are available to you and your staff to discuss this matter in greater detail. I do feel compelled, however, to respond to Mr. Iverson's most recent emails to you. With constrained funding, and millions of residents throughout the region relying on public transportation for mobility and access, the stakes are too high to have the public's confidence in SEPTA eroded by parochial agendas, misinformation, and a misguided set of priorities.

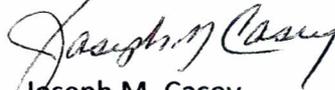
To that end, I have included detailed reasons as to why we are pursuing financing for our rail vehicles and Wayne Junction Station, as well as obtaining loans to advance our Smart Card project. In a second attachment, I have included an analysis of the safety benefits achieved from our Communication Based Train Control (CBTC) system which governs the safe operation of Light Rail Trolleys, despite Mr. Iverson's claims to the contrary.

We are grateful that so many of our riders feel personally invested in their public transportation system. Their grass roots advocacy lends a unique voice to our efforts to improve our service, as well as providing an invaluable check on the decisions we make that affect their daily lives. In Mr. Iverson's case, it is unfortunate that he has raised these issues without attempting to first obtain information or justification of these investments from SEPTA. Equally disturbing is the fact that he draws conclusions based

facts behind our decisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Mr. Iverson's charges and provide you with substantive information about our recent capital investments. Please know that SEPTA staff and its Board will continue to make the most prudent investment in our transit system to the benefit of our riders, the communities we serve, and the taxpayers in Pennsylvania. I am available to speak with you further on these or any other SEPTA related concerns you may have, and look forward to continuing to work with you on matters important to your constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph M. Casey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Joseph M. Casey  
General Manager

Enclosure

cc: Paul Iverson

You are being carbon copied on the attached letter, a version of which was sent to the following recipients:

State Representative Joseph Markosek  
State Representative Richard A. Geist  
State Representative Michael P. McGeehan  
State Representative Josh Shapiro  
State Representative Brendan F. Boyle  
State Representative Gene DiGirolamo  
State Representative Jerry Knowles  
State Representative John Myers  
State Representative Michael Gerber  
State Representative John P. Sabatina, Jr.  
State Representative Steven J. Santarsiero  
State Representative Katharine M. Watson  
State Representative Tim Briggs  
State Representative Kate Harper  
State Senator Stewart J. Greenleaf  
Mayor Michael A. Nutter  
Deputy Mayor Rina Cutler  
Philadelphia City Council President Anna C. Verna  
Philadelphia City Council Member James F. Kenney  
FTA Region III Administrator Letitia A. Thompson  
Bucks County Board of Commissioners Chairman Charles H. Martin



Paul Iverson <[paul.iverson1@gmail.com](mailto:paul.iverson1@gmail.com)>

---

## Fw: Collision on SEPTA Subway Surface Trolley Line 2/2/2011

---

Linda.Callan@phila.gov <[Linda.Callan@phila.gov](mailto:Linda.Callan@phila.gov)>  
To: paul.iverson1@gmail.com

Fri, Feb 4, 2011 at 9:16 AM

Good morning Paul:

I forwarded this information to Councilman Curtis Jones.  
Councilman Jones is the Chairman of the Transportation Committee.

----- Forwarded by Linda Callan/Council/Phila on 02/04/2011 09:03 AM -----

Linda Callan/Council/Phila

To Curtis Jones.Jr/Council/Phila

cc

02/04/2011 08:52 AM

Subject Fw: Collision on SEPTA Subway Surface Trolley Line 2/2/2011

----- Forwarded by Linda Callan/Council/Phila on 02/04/2011 08:51 AM -----

Rae Semidey/Council/Phila

To Linda Callan/Council/Phila@Phila, Karen Small/Council/Phila@PHILA

cc

02/03/2011 04:51 PM

Subject Fw: Collision on SEPTA Subway Surface Trolley Line 2/2/2011

Rae Semidey  
Constituent Services Representative  
Office of City Council President Anna C. Verna  
Councilwoman, 2nd Council District  
City Hall, Room 405  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 686-3412 Office  
(215) 686-1932 Fax

----- Forwarded by Rae Semidey/Council/Phila on 02/03/2011 04:50 PM -----

Rita Mezzaroba/Council/Phila

To Rae Semidey/Council/Phila@Phila

cc

02/03/2011 03:18 PM

Subject Fw: Collision on SEPTA Subway Surface Trolley Line 2/2/2011

----- Forwarded by Rita Mezzaroba/Council/Phila on 02/03/2011 03:18 PM -----

Paul Iverson <[paul.iverson1@gmail.com](mailto:paul.iverson1@gmail.com)>

02/03/2011 02:40 PM

To [Mmcgeehan@pahouse.net](mailto:Mmcgeehan@pahouse.net), [michael.nutter@phila.gov](mailto:michael.nutter@phila.gov),  
[James.Kenney@phila.gov](mailto:James.Kenney@phila.gov), [rina.cutler@phila.gov](mailto:rina.cutler@phila.gov), [rgeist@pahousegop.com](mailto:rgeist@pahousegop.com),  
[Anna.verna@phila.gov](mailto:Anna.verna@phila.gov), [ssantars@pahouse.net](mailto:ssantars@pahouse.net), [kwatson@pahousegop.com](mailto:kwatson@pahousegop.com),  
[egrant@septa.org](mailto:egrant@septa.org), [Tbriggs@pahouse.net](mailto:Tbriggs@pahouse.net), [kharper@pahousegop.com](mailto:kharper@pahousegop.com)  
cc [letitia.thompson@dot.gov](mailto:letitia.thompson@dot.gov), [chmartin@co.bucks.pa.us](mailto:chmartin@co.bucks.pa.us), "Greenleaf, Senator  
Stewart" <[sgreenleaf@pasen.gov](mailto:sgreenleaf@pasen.gov)>

Subject: Collision on SEPTA Subway Surface Trolley Line 2/2/2011

Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Transportation Committee, City Council members, and SEPTA board members:

Yesterday, [there was a minor collision between two SEPTA trolley cars in the subway surface tunnel](#) in center city. Fortunately this was a very minor accident, and I applaud SEPTA and the city's front line responders who handled the situation well.

I am concerned though that this accident occurred, despite a collision prevention system being in place, which was installed in the early part of the last decade, and has never worked as intended despite numerous upgrades and millions of dollars invested.

From what I've read, this system was given to SEPTA in lieu of a \$25 million cash payment for a breach of contract settlement with Adtranz on a rolling stock order years ago. Most recently, this communication based train control (CBTC) system received a \$5 million dollar upgrade using ARRA funding, to address the [performance and speed problems since the system went into 24 hour use](#).

While I don't know the particulars of yesterday's accident, [the concept for the CBTC system dates back to 1997](#):

*John LaForce (SEPTA) tabled a news report from the Philadelphia Inquirer and advised that SEPTA have negotiated a deal with Adtranz to implement an "off-the shelf" CBTC system on the City Light Rail Subway Surface Trolley Tunnel, in lieu of receiving liquidated damages from Adtranz with respect to a separate new car procurement contract. The deal is currently with the FTA for final approval.*

*A scope document has been jointly developed by Adtranz and SEPTA, with a 30 month implementation schedule; 115 vehicles will need to be equipped. As the LRV vehicles are single ended, operating on a loop track, no reverse running is required.*

*The CBTC system will interface to one existing interlocking. All of the existing track circuits will be removed, except at the interlocking. There will be no "fall back" system. In the event of CBTC equipment failures, vehicles will operate at an enforced restricted speed (15 - 20 mph), on line-of-sight.*

*The CBTC system will need to support 30s to 1 min headways, with multiple berthing in stations.*

and since its initial installation, it has never worked right, cost us millions of dollars, while yesterday's accident highlights the overall failure of the system to even perform its most basic function--preventing trolleys from crashing into each other.

Many of us are concerned that this project has cost taxpayers alot of money, and has failed to perform as it was supposed to, nor provided any real benefit to the riding public. In short, the trolleys now run slower, and the systems most basic function of preventing trolley collisions is now being called into question. I am asking members of the transportation committee to take appropriate action to investigate this issue further. How many more millions in upgrades will this system require in order to work properly? Will it ever? And should the public be concerned about their safety in light of yesterday's collision?

Thank you for your time and concern.

Regards,

Paul Iverson  
Pennsylvania Transit Expansion Coalition  
PO Box 76  
Southampton, PA 18966  
(215) 399-1783  
[www.PA-TEC.org](http://www.PA-TEC.org)

---

## SEPTA CBTC System Update

SEPTA began the installation of a Communications Based Train Control (CBTC) system in the Green Line Tunnel in 2003. The new system began operational service with utilization in off peak hours in 2006 and, after certain modifications, was put into full service in 2008.

This CBTC system was designed to enforce the most stringent set of train control safety measures within all of SEPTA's rail operations; the level of protection exceeds even the FRA's new Positive Train Control (PTC) standards for Railroad operations. The system automatically assures train separation and prevents vehicle collisions between stations by enforcing safe stopping distances and preventing trolleys from exceeding speed limits. Indeed there have been no collisions outside of station berths since the system became fully operational in July 2008.

From the project's inception, however, service requirements dictated that multiple berths must be allowed at stations. Although the second trolley is only permitted to enter the station at a maximum controlled speed of not more than 8 mph, this allowance for multiple berthing does mean the possibility of a collision at a station will always exist. The risk is mitigated by continuous operator education and training, as well as prudent system controls. Although a station berthing collision did take place recently, impact occurred at just 1.5 mph, and the effect on riders, vehicles, and service was minimal.

Prior to the CBTC installation, trolley speed was controlled by the operators. Adherence to speed limits was inconsistent, and collisions were a significant problem. Naturally the imposition of the CBTC safety controls had the effect of reducing operating speeds throughout the system. The Green Line Tunnel is a high-throughput operation. Service standards and heavy passenger loads call for a trolley entering the tunnel every 60 seconds during rush hour peaks. In 2008 running times through the tunnel increased due to full implementation of the CBTC system. As operators got used to the system controls and made adjustments, the learning curve gradually flattened. We have now returned to pre-CBTC running times throughout the day except the 8-9 AM and 5-6 PM peaks, when running times have increased by 3-4 minutes. This increase is necessary for safe operations and schedules have been adjusted accordingly. The CBTC system is now functioning reliably and yielding the expected safety results.

Recently, the ARRA funded upgrades to CBTC computers and other hardware, along with software updates to reflect the current operating environment. New, easier to read digital speedometers have been installed on the vehicles, allowing for tighter operator adherence to speed guidelines. Operating control software adjustments are being developed that, among other things, should improve automatic speed governance and permit incremental improvements in vehicle throughput. And the replacement of the original, dated computer hardware and software operating system with current technology will improve the system's overall functional reliability. When these upgrades are completed later this spring, the system will retain the same level of safety protection, and with more reliable, up-to-date technology, operating performance on the line will continue to improve.