



# Rebuilding SEPTA: A Path Forward



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Innovating SEPTA for the Future

Broad Street Brains

# Current State of SEPTA

Why are riders not returning to SEPTA?

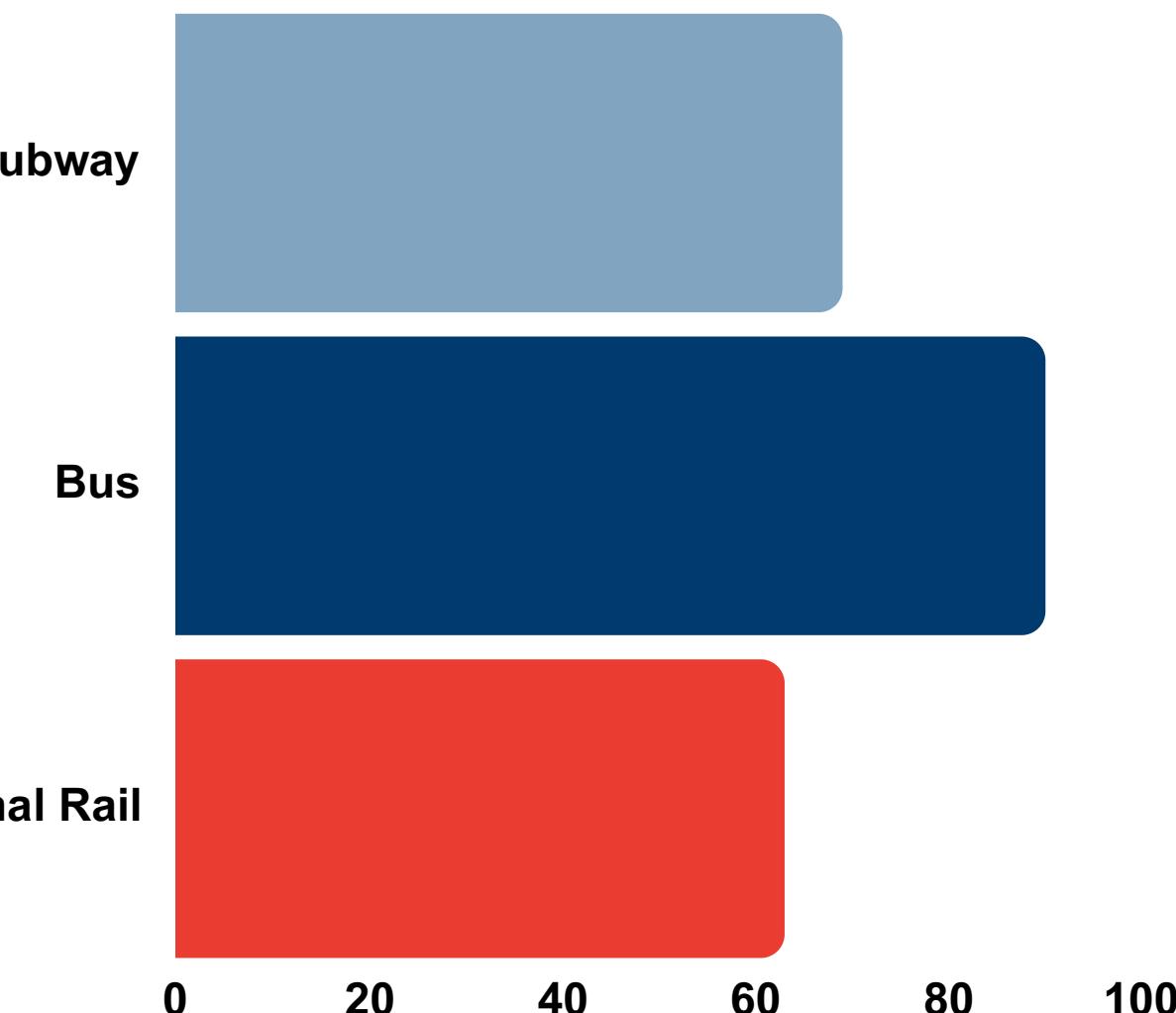


**Declining Ridership:** Despite efforts to restore pre-pandemic ridership levels, SEPTA has struggled to attract commuters back, impacting revenue and system efficiency

**High Fare Evasion:** An estimated 18% of riders evade fares across the system, resulting in an annual revenue loss of \$30–68 million, despite increased enforcement efforts

**Service Reliability Issues:** Frequent delays, breakdowns, and scheduling inconsistencies have eroded rider trust, discouraging consistent usage of SEPTA services

Post-Pandemic Ridership Recovery (in %)



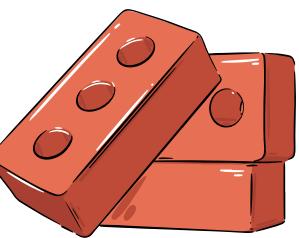
# Short-Term Summary

Summary



## Tasked

The company has \$25M to allocate to a combination of 18 different short-term initiatives with one-year implementation timelines



## Foundation

The chosen short-term strategies should reflect initiatives that will have a tangible impact within one year. They also should set the foundation for long-term strategic growth and improvement



## Strategy

SEPTA should implement the seven initiatives that we identified to align with its goals. This includes predictive maintenance, corporate deals, cleaning initiatives, AI scheduling, charging stations, new bus routes, and real-time info screens



## Analysis

Through these seven initiatives, SEPTA will see tangible growth across reliability, ESG, profitability, and ridership rates, improving to an average of 98% across the four categories

# Short-Term Initiative: Decision-Making Process

How to determine the correct initiative?



## 1. Task

Allocate \$25 million across various short-term initiatives to boost satisfaction rates above 80% across four key criteria

## 2. Streamlining Initiatives

Ensuring selected programs are feasible within a one-year timeline while laying the foundation for long-term strategies

## 3. Data Analysis

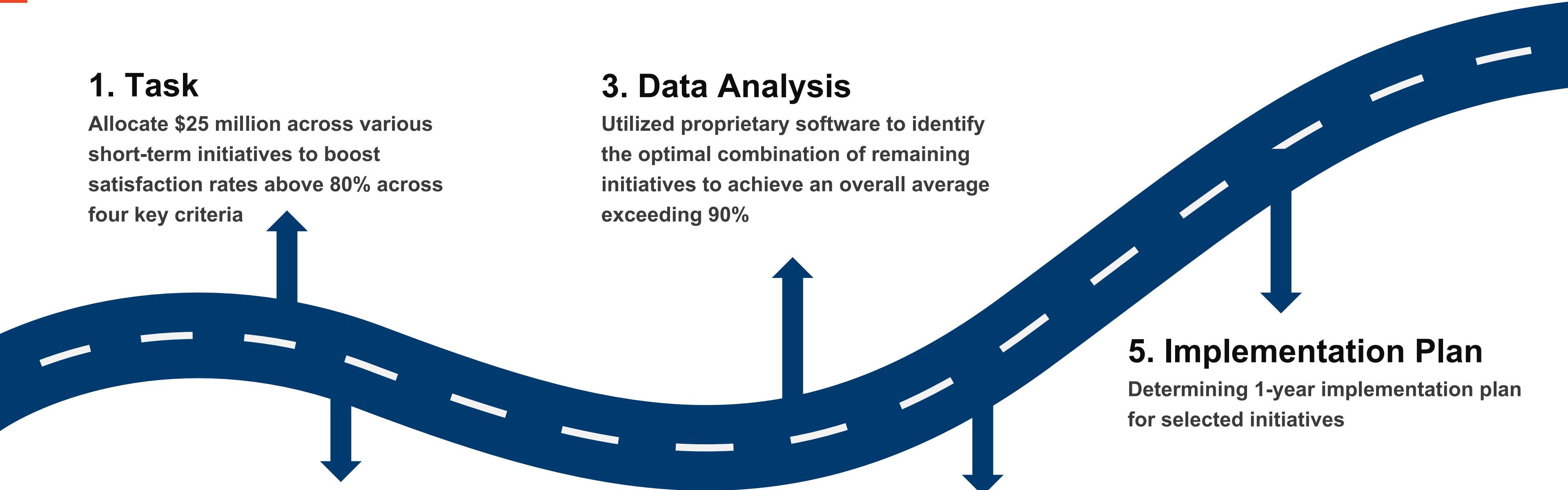
Utilized proprietary software to identify the optimal combination of remaining initiatives to achieve an overall average exceeding 90%

## 4. Determining Initiatives

Identify the initiatives that yield the highest percentage increase while aligning with SEPTA's long-term goals

## 5. Implementation Plan

Determining 1-year implementation plan for selected initiatives



# Initiative Choices

Combination of initiatives most effective while aligning with SEPTA's goals

<b>ESG</b>	<b>98%</b>
<b>Reliability</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Ridership</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Profitability</b>	<b>92.5%</b>
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>98%</b>



# Initiative and Implementation

Why are riders not returning to SEPTA?



## CHOSEN INITIATIVES



1



2



3



4

### Corporate Deals

Corporate deals boost ridership, revenue, and long-term growth through tailored transit solutions.

**Implementation:** Offer tailored transit solutions, bulk discounts, and advertising partnerships to companies.

### Cleaning Initiatives

Enhances satisfaction, boosts community investment, and lowers long-term repair costs.

**Implementation:** Adopt-a-Station, allow individuals or organizations to sponsor stations, funding cleaning and maintenance.

### Charging Stations

Boost convenience and enhance the passenger experience.

**Implementation:** Audits, stakeholder engagement, design, regulatory consideration, and construction.

### New Bus Routes (x2)

New routes could boost ridership, profitability, and community engagement while supporting long-term projects.

**Implementation:** Community engagement, draft plans, stakeholder hearing, and phase implementation.

# Initiative and Implementation

Why are riders not returning to SEPTA?



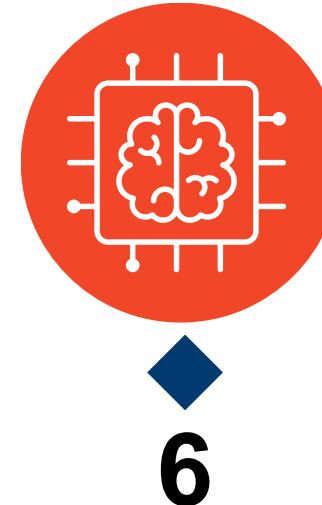
## CHOSEN INITIATIVES



### Real Time Info Screening

Improve passenger experience with live updates and support AI model training.

**Implementation:** Integrate sensors and software for real-time data collection and display.



### AI for Scheduling

A key tool in major cities, enhancing reliability, boosting ridership, and reducing delays through predictive analytics.

**Implementation:** Choose AI model, train on SEPTA data, evaluate results, and error reduction.



### Predictive Maintenance

Improves reliability, cuts maintenance costs, and enhances efficiency with AI-driven predictive analytics.

**Implementation:** Integrate AI sensors and analytics to monitor and predict maintenance needs or conduct analysis on maintenance requests and associate vehicle.

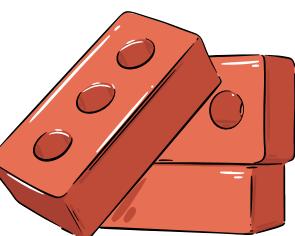
# Long-Term Initiatives

Summary



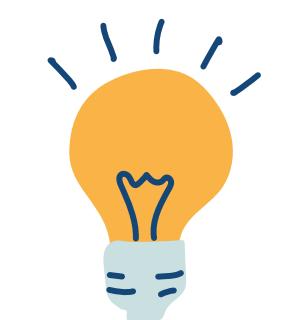
## Tasked

Out of the current and proposed five initiatives, which two should SEPTA continue to support its long term goals and improve profitability?



## Foundation

Given the current state of SEPTA, there are opportunities for growth across many transportation lines and business areas. However, with a limited budget SEPTA should focus on initiatives that boost ridership and deliver value for riders at the lowest cost



## Strategy

SEPTA should commit to improving the Reimagining the Regional Rail and the SEPTA Bus Revolution programs. The other three programs are slower to deliver benefits, especially when comparing the costs of the programs

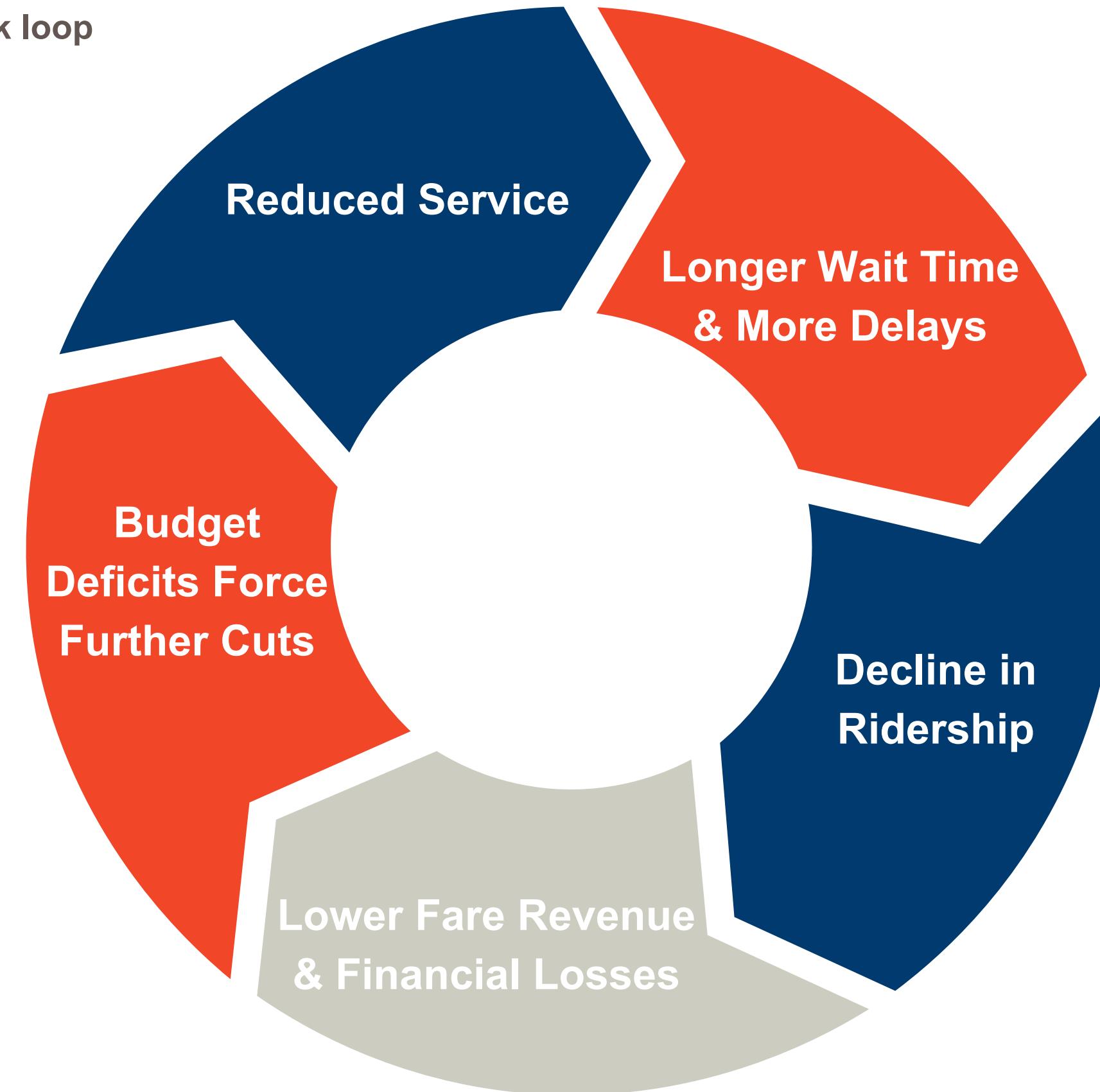


## Analysis

Through these two initiatives, SEPTA will see increased ridership, profitability, and reliability, aligning with SEPTA's mission to provide safe, reliable, and accessible transportation

# Breaking the Cycle

Correcting SEPTA's negative feedback loop



# Regional Rail: Challenges and Key Questions

Current state of the Regional Rail



## Challenges



Designed mainly for suburban, high-income commuters, leaving low-income, non-traditional, and off-peak riders underserved



Regional Rail fare costs are almost 4x higher than bus and trolley fares, leading to low inter-city ridership



SEPTA's aging Regional Rail infrastructure faces capacity limitations, restricting efficiency and service expansion

## Key Questions



Can SEPTA transform the Regional Rail into more than just a commuter network?



How can SEPTA promote inter-city Regional Rail usage and decrease bus congestion?



How can SEPTA leverage its existing infrastructure to improve rider experience?

# Reimagining Regional Rail

The vision: A new and improved lifestyle network that connects commuters, residents, and visitors across Southeastern PA



	INCREASED SERVICE AND FREQUENCY	FARE INTEGRATION	STATION ACCESSIBILITY
GOAL	Transition into a reliable, predictable network offering frequent, all-day, and all-week services.	Simplify the fare system to provide integration across different transit modes.	Enhance infrastructure to ensure accessibility for passengers.
ACTION	During 2024, SEPTA added more weekend and weekday trains, restoring ~80% of pre-pandemic service.	Free transfers on Transit	Implementation of high-level platforms and elevators to accommodate disabled passengers.
NEXT STEP	Introduce more frequent off-peak services, including late evenings and weekends.	Cost of inter-city rail trips is equivalent to subway fares	Prioritize accessibility improvements and establish a clear timeline for system-wide ADA compliance.

# Lessons for Regional Rail's Future

Adapting successful rail strategies from peer cities to enhance growth and service



## Boston (MBTA)



- After ridership dropped 90% during the pandemic, MBTA reworked its service to serve passengers all-day and weekends in 2021
- After adding more night and weekend services, weekend ridership increased 200% compared to 2019
- Saw a 130% increase in ridership after integrating subway card to pay for commuter rail trips

## NYC (LIRR)



- After adding 14,000 more trains in 2024, the LIRR saw its highest ridership since the pandemic
- The LIRR set a new record with 95.65% on-time performance in 2024

## Philadelphia



- As of December 2024, Regional Rail's ridership had recovered to only 63% of pre-pandemic levels
- Off-peak and frequent service can change riders' perception of the Regional Rail
- Lack of integrated fares for inter-city regional rail trips. SEPTA is unable to capture unmet demand

Sources: [MBTA](#), [New York State](#)

# Bus Revolution: Challenges and Key Questions

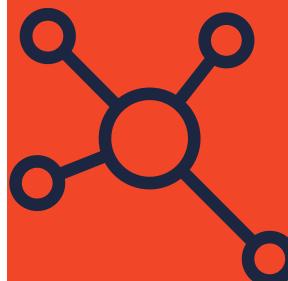
What challenges will the Bus Revolution target?



## Challenges



Several service inefficiencies including redundant underperforming routes



The bus network is intricate, with overlapping routes and confusing transfers



Of SEPTA's 13 busiest routes, only 1 meets their reliability standards



## Key Questions

How can SEPTA optimize and eliminate unnecessary routes?



In what ways can SEPTA simplify the entire bus network to improve user experience?



How can SEPTA provide faster, more reliable service to riders?

Sources: [SEPTA](#)

# Bus Revolution

Improved network connecting commuters, residents, and visitors across the city of Philadelphia



	FREQUENT & RELIABLE SERVICE	IMPROVED SERVICE DESIGN
GOAL	Ensure a fast, predictable, and reliable bus network with frequent service	Make bus routes simpler, more direct, and faster, reducing unnecessary detours and delays
PLAN	Redesigning the network to provide 30% more frequent routes (buses arriving 15 minutes or better between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m.) Increase number of frequent routes from 23 to 41	Reducing the number of routes from 125 to 106 Removing and relocating underused stops
NEXT STEPS	Introduce more frequent off-peak services, including late evenings and weekends, to serve more riders	Implement bus priority lanes to reduce delays and keep buses moving efficiently

Sources: [SEPTA New Bus Network](#), [SEPTA Executive Summary](#), [SEPTA Final Bus Network Proposal](#)

# Why Buses are Key to SEPTA's Growth Strategy

Why buses are a more viable long-term growth strategy



## Resilient Ridership

The five routes with the highest recovery rates include Route 47M (123%), Route 42 (93%), Route 21 (90%), Route 40 (89%), and Route 108 (88%).

Slow and steady recovery to pre-covid ridership within the next two years

## Low Operating Expenses

SEPTA's capital expenses (2007-2016) per unlinked trip:

Regional Rail: \$4.12 per trip  
Heavy Rail (Subway): \$0.85 per trip  
Bus: \$0.51 per trip

## Intra-city Connectivity

"They carry nearly half of all SEPTA riders, and make up the majority of "service hours."

28.5% of SEPTA all weekday trips involved a bus transfer. Bus and rail transit are 10 times safer than driving

Sources: [SEPTA Jan 2025 Ridership](#), [Whyy.org](#)

# Lessons for SEPTA's Bus Future

Adopting successful rail strategies from peer cities to enhance growth and service



## NYC Bronx Bus



- After redesigning routes and stops in the Bronx, speeds on redesigned routes outperformed the systemwide trend by 4%
- Customer satisfaction rose by 2% and total ridership exceeded the rolling baseline by more than 6%

## SEPTA Bus



- Currently SEPTA's mean bus stop spacing is ~700 ft, which is the lowest of major public transit systems
- 2/3 of polled SEPTA bus riders are willing to walk an extra 5 minutes to a bus stop if it meant they could have faster, more reliable service

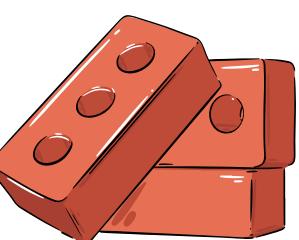
# Special Initiative

Summary



## Tasked

The company has a \$10M budget to implement mid-term initiatives over the course of 5 years aimed at maximizing overall profitability



## Foundation

Given the upcoming boost of tourism in 2026, SEPTA has the opportunity to launch a new partnership campaign that will change its brand image and improve user experience, setting the foundation for a new era of SEPTA 2027-2030



## Strategy

The company should leverage partnerships with online travel booking sites to create a more seamless travel experience. New fare bundles targeting tourists will allow for a better customer experience. These strategies paired with robust marketing will set the foundation for future growth



## Analysis

Through this initiative, the company will maximize profitability by encouraging the use of SEPTA by tourists, eliminating the gap between current and pre-pandemic ridership

# 2026 in Philadelphia

SEPTA can capitalize on several major events of 2026



## TOURISM TIMELINE



**March Madness:**  
Wells Fargo Center  
March 20, 22



**PGA Championships**  
Aronimink Golf Club  
May 11-17



**FIFA World Cup**  
Lincoln Financial Field  
June 14 - July 4



**250th Birthday of the  
United States**  
City-wide  
July 4



**MLB All Star Game**  
Citizens Bank Park  
July



Source: [Visit Philly](#)

# SEPTA Anywhere FleX Pass >>> Philly Phlex Pass



Rebranding SEPTA's Anywhere FleX Pass to target tourists

A screenshot of a smartphone displaying the "Philly Phlex Pass" mobile application. The screen shows a header with the time (9:41) and signal strength, followed by the "Philly Phlex Pass" title and "Buy", "Trip Planner", and "More Info" buttons. Below this is a section titled "Bundles" showing three options: "One Day Philly Phlex Pass" (\$13.00), "Three Day Philly Phlex Pass" (\$35.00), and "Five Day Philly Phlex Pass" (\$55.00). Each bundle is represented by a ticket stub graphic with a city skyline illustration and a red and blue arrow logo. At the bottom of the screen are navigation icons for "Home", "Schedules", "Buy", "Help", and "Account".

Bundle Type	Duration	Cost
One Day Philly Phlex Pass	1 Day	\$13.00
Three Day Philly Phlex Pass	3 Days	\$35.00
Five Day Philly Phlex Pass	5 Days	\$55.00

## Rename the SEPTA Anywhere FleX Pass to the Philly Phlex Pass



More engaging and tourist-friendly name highlighting the city's identity

## Introduce a 5-day pass bundle for tourists staying in the city for a full week



Provides a flexible and cost-effective solution for extended visits

## Post-2026, the Philly Phlex Pass can be marketed to Philadelphians looking for a day or weekend trip to the city



Encourages residents to explore the city using a convenient travel pass

# Initiative Goals

Integrating the 3 pillars of travel in the city



**Integrating these aspects of the travel experience will help SEPTA maximize profitability by encouraging the use of SEPTA by tourists, eliminating the gap between current and pre-pandemic ridership**

Sources: [McKinsey](#)

# Strategic Partnership Targets

Creating strategic partnerships with key players in online travel will allow SEPTA to improve visibility



**Expedia**

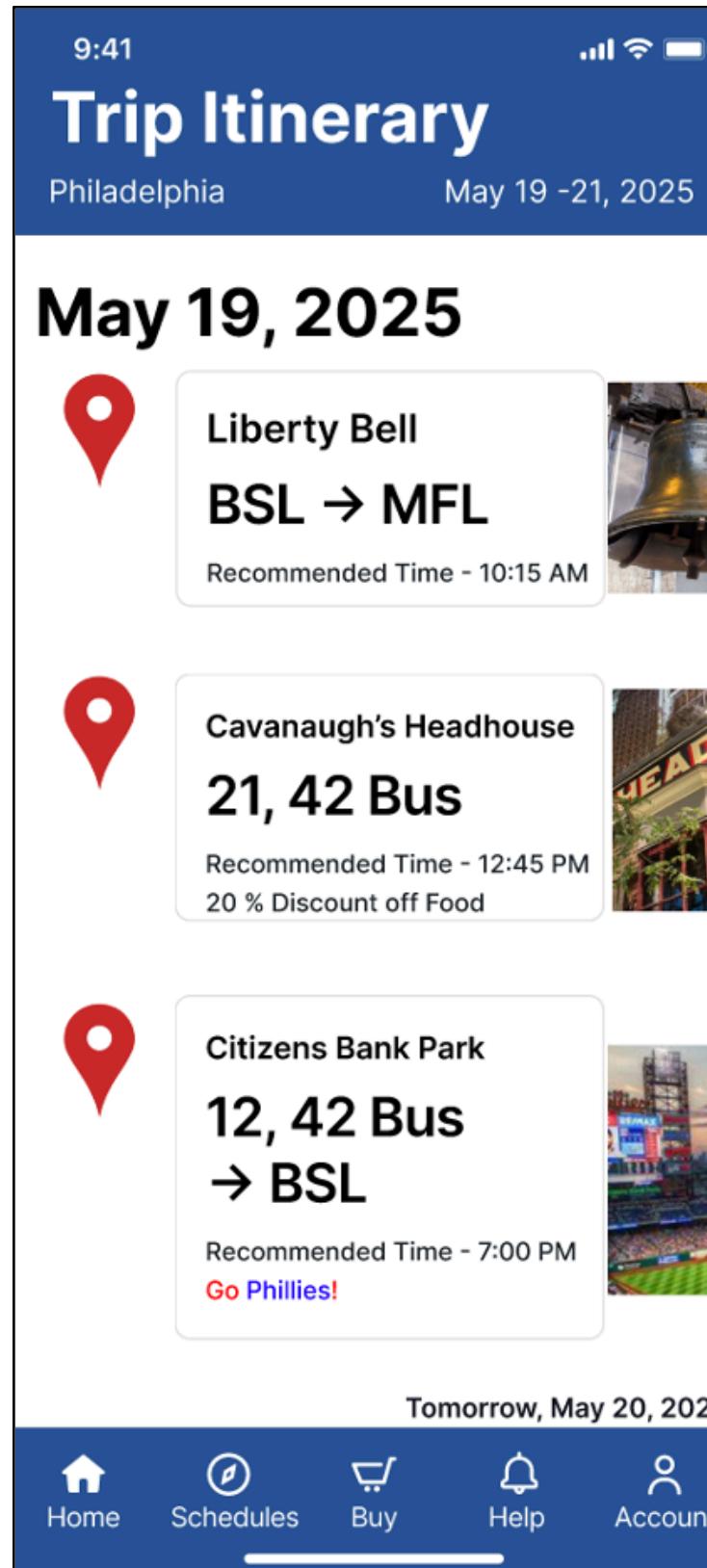


**Tripadvisor®**

**Booking.com**

# Partnership Integration

Reimagining the SEPTA app



When booking lodging in Philadelphia, visitors will receive SEPTA travel information and prompted to download the app for trip planning



Boost app engagement



Educating travelers on Philly public transit option



Users booking activities through SEPTA's strategic partners can view their full itinerary in the SEPTA app



Incentivize app use



Personalized transit route suggestions



Increase usage of SEPTA Perks



# Special Initiative Timeline

Expected timeline to successfully launch the program



## PROJECT MANAGEMENT TIMELINE

### Tasks

2025

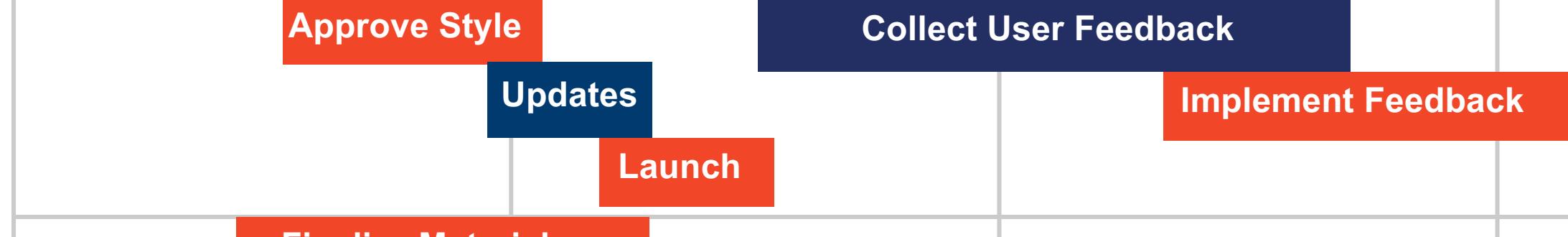
2026

2027 - 2030

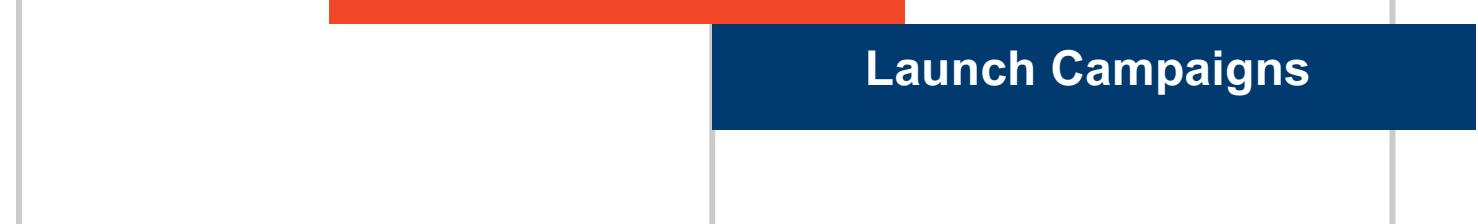
### Partnerships



### SEPTA App Improvements



### Marketing

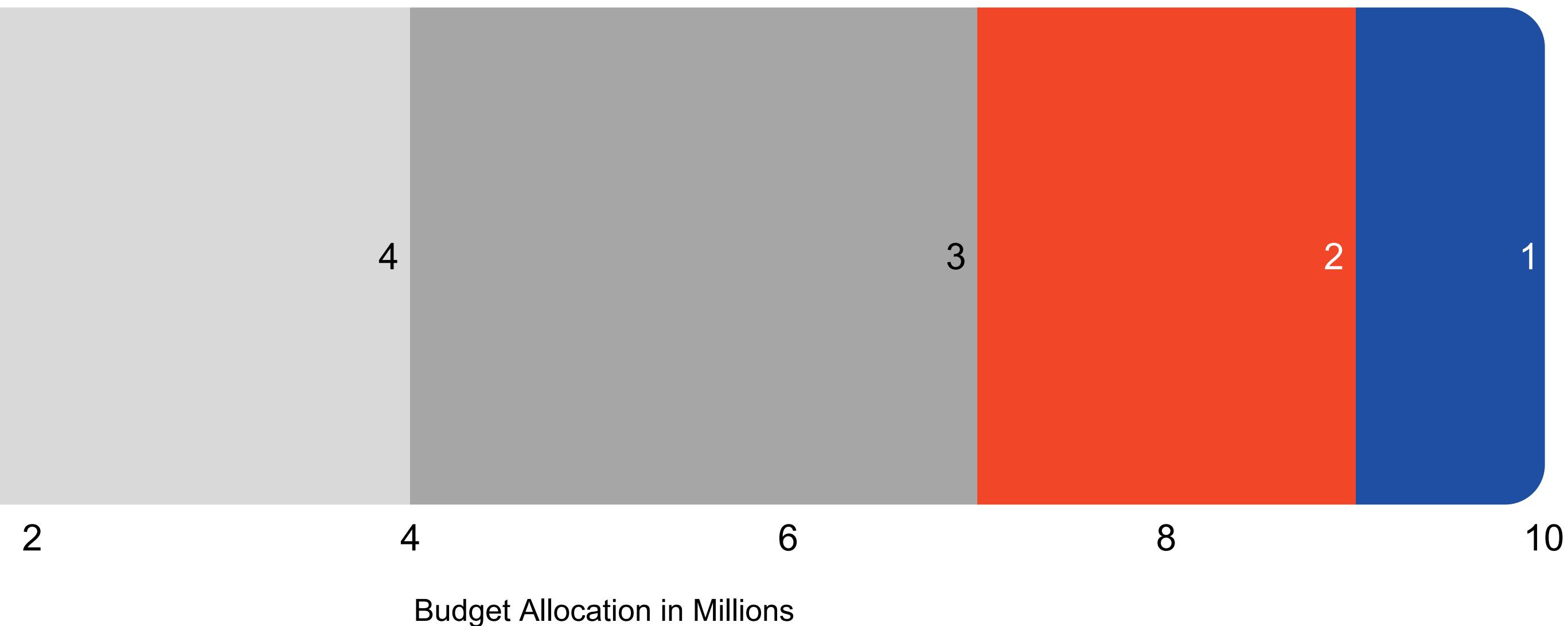


# Initiative Budget

Integrating tourists' travel experience



Marketing   Digital Development   Partnerships   Program Maintenance/Misc



# Questions