

UPPER NORTHWEST

Routes: H, L and XH (Also served by Route 23 discussed in North Philadelphia/River Wards profile and Route 65 discussed in West Philadelphia profile)

The Upper Northwest includes the area between Broad Street, Germantown and Chestnut Hill. The routes that primarily serve Upper Northwest also provide connections further north and west to the Plymouth Meeting Mall. The area has strong transit demand, with densities and socio-economic characteristics that can support a high level of service. The existing high ridership on the SEPTA routes in this area underscore the strong transit market.

NETWORK DESIGN

The Upper Northwest routes are anchored to SEPTA’s Broad Street Line, either at Erie Station or the Olney Transportation Center.

Route L also provides a connection northwest of Chestnut Hill to Norristown.

Routes H and XH are more focused on local connections and bringing riders to the Broad Street Line.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Riders use bus routes for local connections, to travel to/from the Broad Street Line and for regional connections. The highest ridership stop on all three routes is the Broad Street Line, but in all cases turnover on the route is high with demand relatively consistent along all routes.

However, it is difficult to travel from Upper Northwest to West Philadelphia; today, passengers must transfer to either Route 65 or Route 1, which are infrequent routes.

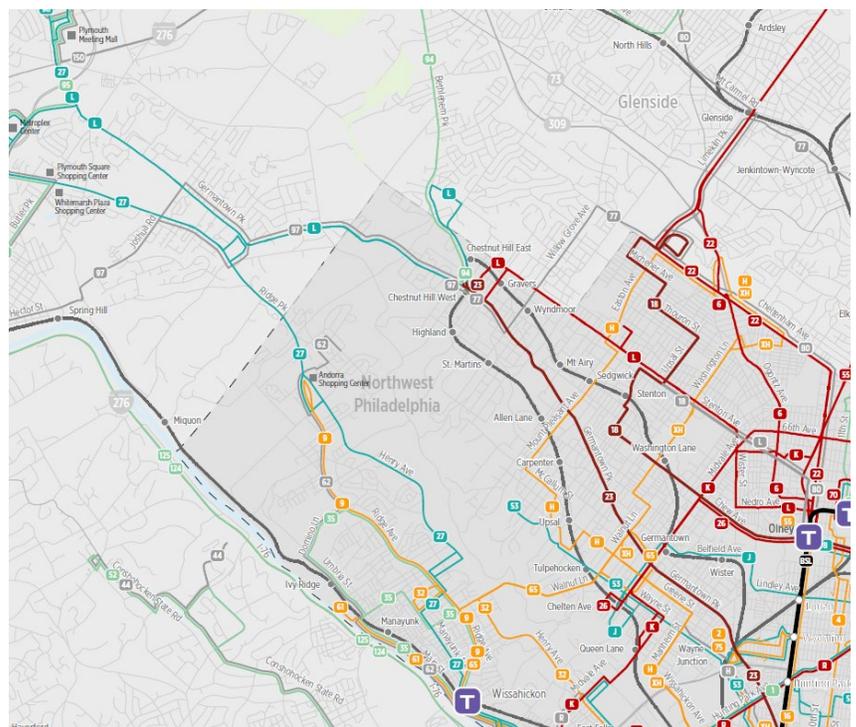
Services are well coordinated and work to provide coverage in Northwest Philadelphia.

Routes H and XH are coordinated to maximize coverage and provide a high level of service to the neighborhoods in Northwest Philadelphia.

Operational constraints along these routes’ alignments are a challenge, especially finding space for layovers at Erie Station and congestion traveling to and from Erie Station. Service improvement opportunities may include consideration of a new SEPTA hub or super stop near Germantown or potentially Wayne Junction to avoid congestion and crowding at Erie Station.

Several routes are complex, which stems from a combination of circuitous routing and multiple service patterns.

Upper Northwest Bus Routes



Norristown Bus Network

Stop spacing and on-time performance are substandard on all three Upper Northwest routes. Weekday service especially suffers from poor on-time performance. They also have consistently close stop spacing which slows down service.

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Use Capital Investments to Improve Service: The three bus routes in this section (H, L and XH) struggle with on-time performance, travel speed and reliability. Challenges are especially acute in the corridors close to the Broad Street Line, where buses travel to and from the Olney Transportation Center or Erie Station. Using traffic signal priority or short bus lanes on the access and egress corridors to the Broad Street Line would help several SEPTA bus routes improve their on-time performance and service reliability. In many cases, investments may be required on short segments only to address “hot spots” and keep buses moving.

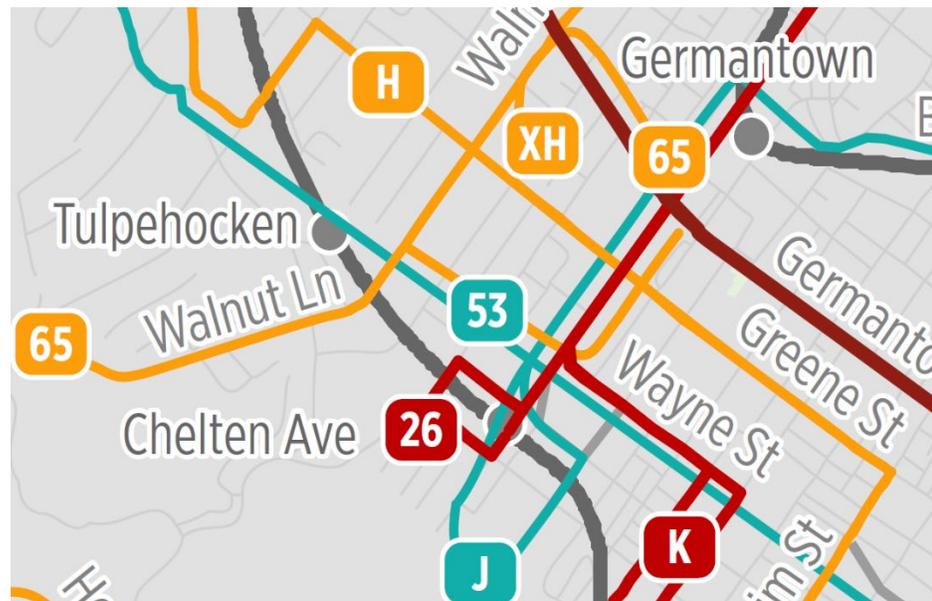
Build a “super stop” or transfer facility in Germantown. Several SEPTA bus routes, including Routes H and XH, converge in Germantown; they also meet several other bus routes. A super stop in Germantown could also help reduce the volume of buses traveling into the Erie Station.

Consolidate Bus Stops: Several bus routes have bus stops spaced closely together, especially in the corridors close to Broad Street.

Reduce service patterns and simplify routes. The three Upper Northwest routes collectively have 23 service patterns. While some of the service patterns help SEPTA match service with underlying demand, others complicate service and make bus routes difficult to understand and use.

Explore Opportunities to Create New Crosstown Service

to West Philadelphia: Route XH could potentially serve as the backbone of a new frequent crosstown route between Upper Northwest and West Philadelphia via the existing alignment of Route 65, Route K, and/or Route 1. This connection could drastically improve regional access and provide a new one seat ride between these two areas of strong transit demand.



Germantown