

ROUTE 26

Chelten Av Station to Frankford Transportation Center

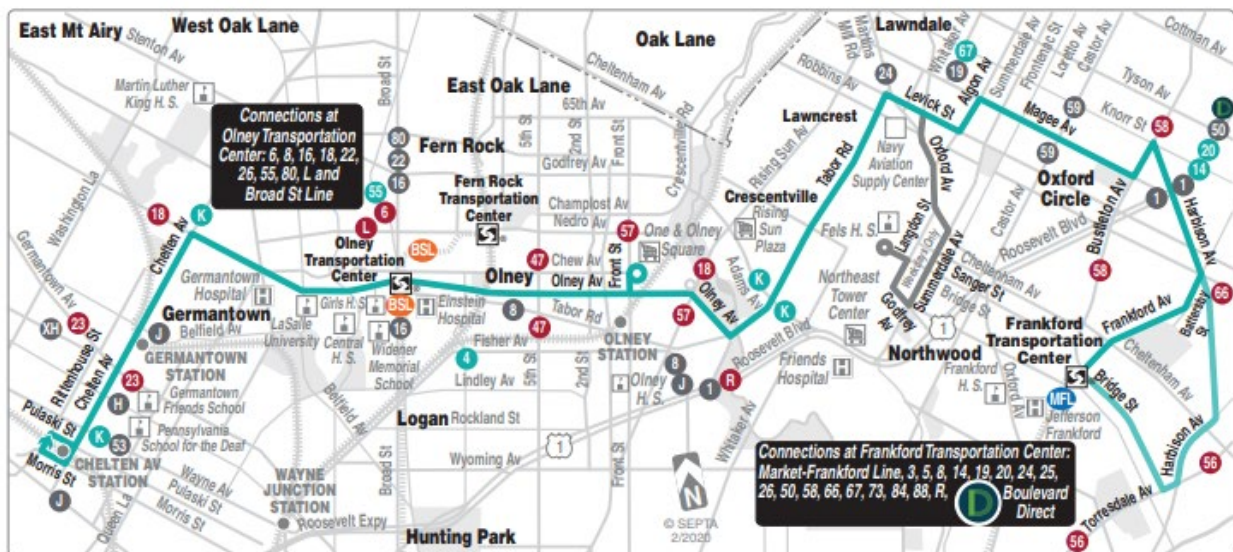
KEY SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Route 26 provides east-west service between Chelten Avenue Station and Frankford Transportation Center via Olney Transportation Center. Weekday ridership is high, with just over 11,000 per day and the route has very strong productivity. Route 25 operates frequently throughout the day on weekdays.*
- *Many trips on Route 26 involve a transfer to or from the Broad Street Line. The two halves of the route on either side of the Broad Street Line function almost as separate routes – the very productive western half has high ridership but duplicates other service while the eastern half has much lower ridership and a circuitous alignment.*
- *Possibilities for strengthening service include consolidating Route 26 with other nearby routes, combining each half of this route with other routes, reducing the number of service patterns, and straightening the alignment on the eastern end.*

ROUTE OVERVIEW

Route 26 travels east-west between Chelten Avenue Station and Frankford Transportation Center (see Figure 1). About 85% of ridership activity occurs on the western portion of the route between Chelten Avenue and the One & Olney Square Shopping Center. Weekday ridership is over 11,000 and heavily weighted to peak periods.

Figure 1 | Route Map



SERVICE OVERVIEW

Schedule

Route 26 operates for about 22 hours on all days of the week, with service beginning at approximately 5:30 AM and ending just after 2:00 AM. Frequencies vary by time of day (see Table 1):

- On weekdays, service is frequent during peak periods with average headways of 7 minutes. During middays service operates every 11 minutes on average.
- On weekends, service frequencies average every 26 minutes during the day and every 30 minutes during weekend nights.

Table 1 | Schedule Statistics

Service Day	Span Of Service	Frequency (Range)	Frequency (Average)
Weekdays	5:28 AM to 2:07 AM		
Early AM	5:28 AM to 5:59 AM	19	19
AM Peak	6:00 AM to 8:59 AM	4-21	7
Midday	9:00 AM to 2:59 PM	5-15	11
PM Peak	3:00 PM to 5:59 PM	5-10	7
Evening	6:00 PM to 9:59 PM	8-27	14
Late Night	10:00 PM to 11:59 PM	26-30	29
Owl	Midnight to 2:07 AM	29-33	31
Saturdays	5:37 AM to 2:08 AM		
Day	8:00 AM to 5:59 PM	21-32	26
Night	Before 8:00 AM & After 5:59 PM	21-50	30
Sundays	5:34 AM to 2:06 AM		
Day	8:00 AM to 5:59 PM	20-31	26
Night	Before 8:00 AM & After 5:59 PM	24-50	30

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

Service Patterns

Route 26 has 14 service patterns: eight in the eastbound direction and six westbound (see Table 2). These many service patterns make the route complex. Virtually all trips begin and end at the Cheltenham Avenue Station western terminal. There are various eastern termini including the One & Olney Square Shopping Center, Olney Avenue at Rising Sun Avenue, and the Frankford Transportation Center (FTC). Some service patterns use two distinct alignments near the FTC, and there are additional service patterns for school tripper services.

Table 2 | Service Patterns

Pattern	Origin	Destination	Unique Feature	Unique Stops	Trips Per Day		
					Wkd	Sat	Sun
Eastbound							
229433	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Olney Square - 1 Conway	Primary Pattern	0	31	16	16
229427	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Frankford Transportation Center (FTC)	Cheltenham Av to FTC	47	25	15	16
229423	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Olney-Rising Sun Av Loop	Short turn	2	17	14	13
229429	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	FTC - Rts 8 & 26	Cheltenham Av to FTC (incl Harbison Av & Bridge Street)	61	19	0	0
229428	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	FTC	Cheltenham Av to FTC (Main Dropoff)	60	8	0	0
229425	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Langdon St & Sanger St	Samuel Fels High School	19	5	0	0
229426	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	FTC - Main Dropoff	Cheltenham Ave to FTC	46	4	0	0
229424	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Robbins St & Langdon St	Short turn to Lawncrest	19	3	0	0
Westbound							
229442	FTC - Rts 8 & 26	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Primary Pattern	0	32	18	19
229435	Olney Square - 1 Conway	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Short turn from Olney Sq	5	30	16	15
229437	Olney Av & Arbor St	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Olney & Arbor to Cheltenham Av Sta	0	25	11	11
229434	FTC - Rts 8 & 26	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	FTC & Cheltenham Ave Station	18	20	0	0
229441	Bustleton Av & Magee Av	Cheltenham Av & Morris St	Short turn	0	2	0	0
229436	Olney Av & Arbor St	Olney Av & 13th St	Short run along Olney Ave	0	1	0	0

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

RIDERSHIP

In Fall 2019, Route 26 carried 11,051 passengers on weekdays, 3,625 on Saturdays, and 3,153 on Sundays (see Table 3). Weekend trips use proportionately more of the shorter service patterns than weekdays, which contributes to Route 26 being one of the most productive routes

in the system on Saturdays and Sundays, as measured by passengers per revenue vehicle hour.

Table 3 | Fall 2019 Ridership and Productivity

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays
Daily Ridership	11,051	3,625	3,153
Rank	8	25	16
Passengers per Revenue Vehicle Hour	63.0	68.1	61.9
Rank	15	3	6

Transfer Patterns

About a quarter of trips on Route 26 transfer to or from the Broad Street Line, and some passengers also continue onto the Market-Frankford Line. The largest transfer rates are to and from:

- Broad Street Line (25.6% of all trips)
- Market-Frankford Line (6.6%)
- Route 18 - Fox Chase to Cedarbrook Plaza (6.0%)
- Route 47 – Whitman Plaza to 5th-Godfrey (4.1%)
- Route 23 – Center City to Chestnut Hill (3.9%)

Weekend transfer patterns are similar.

Ridership by Stop

Ridership is heavily concentrated on the western portion of the route which is also served by more trips per day (see Figure 2). Notably, 85% of all ridership activity occurs between the western terminus at Cheltenham Avenue and the One & Olney Square Shopping Center located at the northeast corner of Olney Avenue and Front Street. For eastbound weekday trips, some highlights include:

- 185 passengers boarded at the origin (Cheltenham Avenue at Morris)
- 615 passengers boarded and 104 alighted at Cheltenham Avenue and Germantown Avenue
- There were 244 boardings and 176 alightings at Cheltenham Avenue and Chew Avenue
- 1,382 passengers boarded and 1,375 alighted at Broad Street at Olney Avenue
- 205 passengers boarded and 404 alighted at 5th Street at Olney Avenue
- 90 passengers boarded and 271 alighted at Front Street at Olney Avenue
- 436 passengers alighted at the Frankford Transportation Center (2 combined stops)

Figure 2 | Weekday Eastbound Ridership by Stop



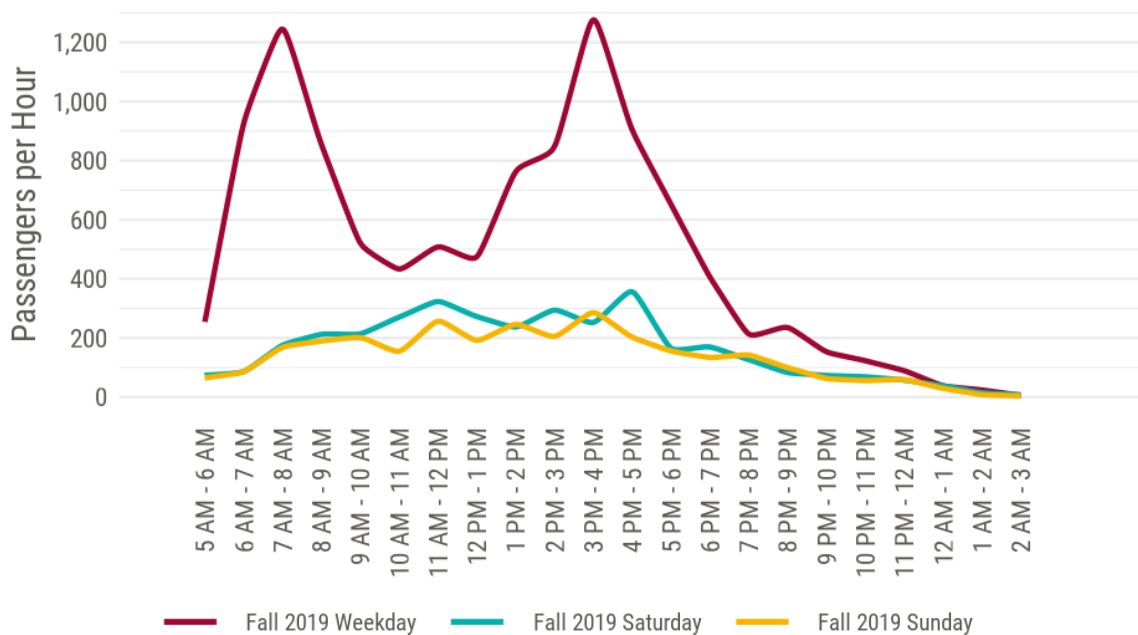
Ridership by Time of Day

Ridership by Hour

In Fall 2019, weekday ridership was heavily weighted to peak periods which include many students as well as commuters (see Figure 3). Midday ridership per hour was less than half of the peak period ridership. Ridership decreases quickly after 5:00 PM.

Weekend ridership was steadier throughout the day and much less than on weekdays, with most ridership between about 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Figure 3 | Ridership by Hour: Fall 2019



Ridership and Maximum Loads by Trip

In Fall 2019, weekday ridership per trip was fairly consistent throughout the day, due to the mix of service patterns and frequencies (see Figure 4):

- Most trips between 6:00 AM and 3:00 PM carried between 60 and 80 passengers with a few trips having more riders probably due to students
- PM Peak trips carried 80 to 100 passengers
- After 6:00 PM, ridership decreased from 60 passengers to about 40 riders per trip
- After midnight ridership was 10 or fewer riders per trip

Since ridership is concentrated in the western route segments, some peak trips had loads which exceeded seated capacity (see Figure 5). Students were likely a contributing factor. Off-peak trips had maximum loads within the seating capacity.

Ridership on weekends was steady with most trips carrying between 50 and 80 riders, and Sunday ridership per trip is slightly lower than Saturdays. All weekend trips had maximum loads within the seating capacity.

Figure 4 | Fall 2019 Weekday Ridership by Trip

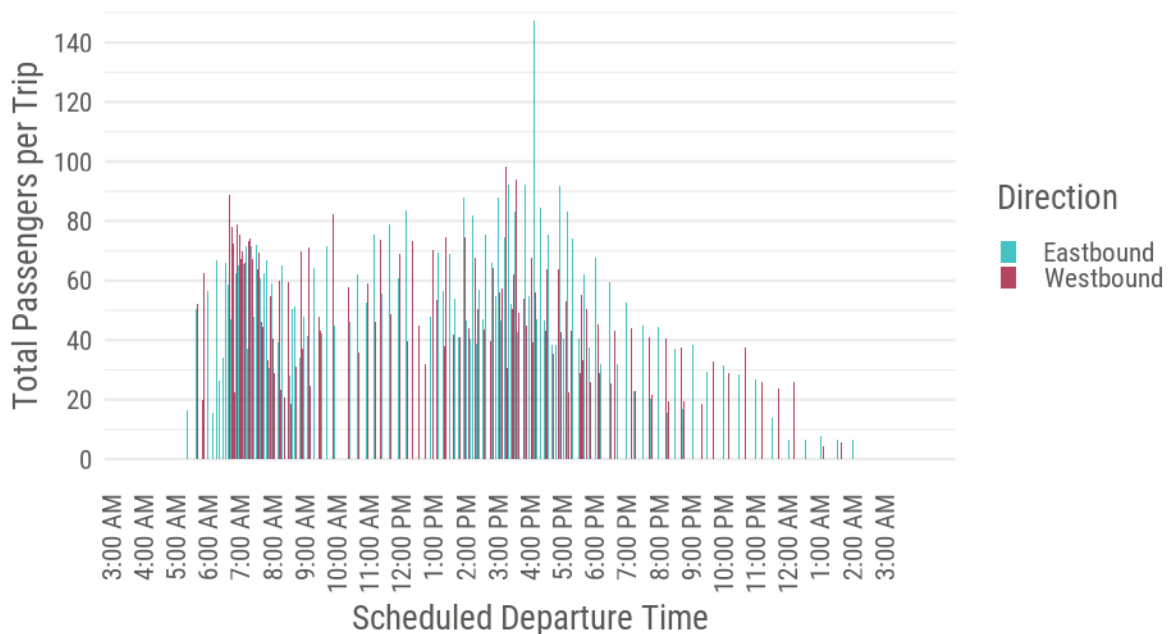
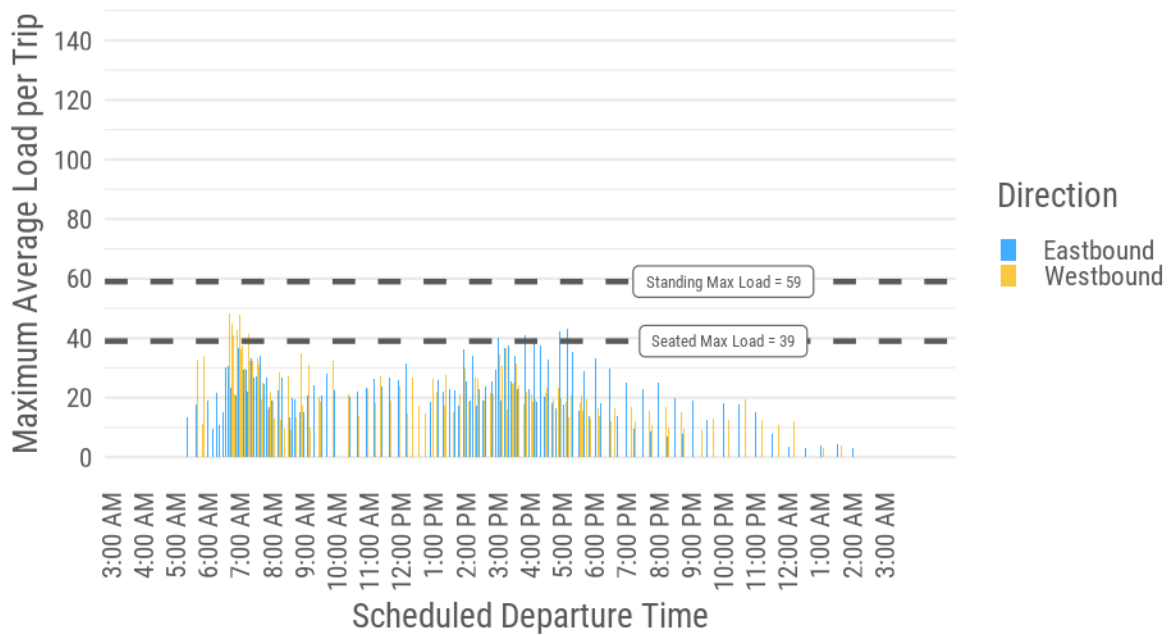


Figure 5 | Fall 2019 Weekday Maximum Loads by Trip



ON-TIME PERFORMANCE AND RUNNING TIMES

On-Time Performance

In Fall 2019, Route 26 had an on-time performance of 69% of weekday trips meeting SEPTA’s standard. Saturdays and Sundays had an on-time performance rate of about 74% (see Table 4). Trips were more likely to be late than early on weekdays, while weekend trips that were not on-time were more evenly split between being early and late.

Table 4 | Fall 2019 On-Time Performance

	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	11.0%	68.7%	20.3%	2.7%
Saturday	11.7%	73.7%	14.6%	5.3%
Sunday	14.6%	74.4%	11.0%	1.3%

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

AVERAGE SPEEDS AND STOP SPACING

Weekday speeds on Route 26 are slow, with buses traveling most of the route at less than 10 mph during the PM peak and somewhat faster speeds on the Tabor Road segment (see Figure 6).

Slow speeds result in part from stop spacing. Stops on Route 26 average 9 per mile along the entire corridor but some segments average more than 10 stops per mile (see Figure 7).

Figure 6 | Fall 2019 PM Peak Westbound Speeds



Figure 7 | Stop Spacing by Route Segment



RIDER CHARACTERISTICS

As compared with SEPTA's entire service area, Route 26 riders are similar in most respects but are much more likely to be Black (see Table 5).

Table 5 | Rider Characteristics

	Route 26 Riders	Systemwide Average
Median Household Income	\$28,496	\$32,713
Share in Poverty	34%	30%
Ethnicity		
White	21%	38%
Black	63%	46%
Hispanic	12%	10%
Other	4%	7%
Without a Vehicle	38%	37%
Seniors	16%	15%
With a Disability	2.6%	2.4%

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities to strengthen Route 26 are listed below. Some suggestions may be contradictory, as there is usually more than one approach to improving a route.

- Simplify Service:** The number of service patterns makes this route hard to understand. Consistent service to one or two eastern termini along a single alignment can encourage ridership by reducing complexity.
- Straighten Alignment on Eastern Segments:** Between Olney Avenue and Frankford Transportation Center, the existing service is circuitous which contributes to the low ridership on these segments.
- Split Route and/or Combine with Other Routes:** The productive western segments of this route on Cheltenham, Chew and Olney Avenues are duplicated by other service including Routes K and 18. Since so many riders board and alight at Olney Transportation Center, Route 26 functions almost as two separate routes. The eastern and western halves of this route could be split and consolidated with or paired with other routes.
- Adjust Frequency:** Route 26 pre-COVID ridership was weighted more to peak periods than most other routes, but post-COVID peak ridership is likely to be less. Meanwhile, off-peak trips had excess capacity, so there may be opportunities to reduce frequency.