PHILADELPHIA (April 23, 2021) – SEPTA today released a proposed $1.52 billion Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2022. This plan would provide funding for SEPTA to increase service levels in support of the region’s recovery from COVID-19, with no fare increases for customers.

There will be four virtual public hearings about the budget, with sessions on May 24 at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., and on May 25 at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. The SEPTA Board will consider the proposal at its June meeting. If approved, it will go into effect with the start of Fiscal Year 2022 on July 1.

SEPTA’s Operating Budget funds the everyday expenses of running the system, such as labor, energy, fuel, cleaning and security. With ridership still only about 38 percent of pre-COVID levels, the Authority continues to lose approximately $1 million a day in fare revenues. Federal COVID relief funds are providing critical, but temporary, operating assistance.

“There are many reasons for optimism as we head into the new fiscal year, but we are also continuing to face difficult realities,” said General Manager Leslie S. Richards. “This budget proposal would provide resources for ramping up service as more customers return, and advance efforts to make our operations sustainable in the long-term by finding savings and efficiencies.”

Under the proposal, there would be funding to increase service on Transit modes (buses, subways and trolleys) to 96 percent of pre-COVID levels, and to 80 percent on Regional Rail, as needed during Fiscal Year 2022. SEPTA is closely monitoring ridership patterns and will modify service as demand increases.

SEPTA would also build on successful initiatives to enhance safety and security for customers and employees. And, while overall, SEPTA would reduce its headcount by not filling selected vacancies, the budget proposal would allow the Authority to add up to 200 new cleaners who would be assigned to stations and vehicles.

There would be no fare increases, and riders will continue to benefit from fare adjustments enacted during the pandemic, including one free transfer per trip on Transit modes, free rides for children 11 and under, and new three-day passes.

“We have a lot to build on,” Richards said. “SEPTA has been the backbone of this region during the pandemic, providing access to essential jobs and services. We are looking forward to welcoming more customers back, and we are working hard to make SEPTA an attractive option for new riders.”

The Operating Budget proposal also reflects a number of initiatives SEPTA has launched as part of its first-ever Efficiency and Accountability Program. This effort includes a comprehensive look at all facets of SEPTA's operation to determine what practices can be improved upon to operate more efficiently and enhance the employee and customer experience, while others may produce significant cost reductions that position the Authority for a sustainable future.

To read the full Operating Budget proposal and for details on the virtual public hearings, click here.