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BETTER TRANSPORTATION NOW
THE NUTTER PLAN TO GET
PHILADELPHIA MOVING

We inherited a transportation system that other regions would pay billions of dollars to have, and many are doing just that. But we treat this asset as a burden rather than as a foundation for 21st Century prosperity.

--Michael Nutter

Transportation affects everything, from the obvious things like the **time it takes to get to work** or the **number of riders on SEPTA** to subtler things like the **value of a house** or the **amount of time adults spend with children**. No aspect of our lives is immune to transportation: work, play, schooling, shopping, safety in crossing the street everyday or a chance to avoid a hurricane that may never come. At the same time, different parts of the transportation system affect all the others: the price of gas at the pump affects the level of ridership on SEPTA, the price of parking meters affects how much double parking blocks a traffic lane, the connections between railroads and ship docks affect the amount of trucking on our highways.

Cities stop functioning when transportation stops moving. The economic value of that movement is enormous. But it is also a huge factor in quality of life and personal satisfaction. Time in traffic or waiting for a bus is an aggravating waste of time. On the other hand, easy access to distant amenities, especially for those too young or too old (or too smart!) to drive, is one of the great attractions of city living.

We have an asset in our transportation infrastructure that could **be competitive with any city** and region in the world and far beyond the reach of any U.S. region but one or two. As Mayor, I will lead the region in the transformation of this system from a common complaint into a foundation for prosperity.

As Mayor, I will:

- **Create** a new Department of Transportation to build a shared vision and coordinated decision-making among Streets, Commerce, Public Property, Traffic Police, City Planning, the School District, Fairmount Park, the Airport, the waterfront and ports agencies, SEPTA, PATCO, PennDOT, Amtrak, and DVRPC in order to save money and improve conditions throughout the City's transportation system.
- **Establish** priorities for the Department, including enhanced pedestrian safety and improved walkability, maintenance and extensive in the bicycle network, reversing the steep decline in local street maintenance since 2000, modernizing the governance of SEPTA to better represent City interests and resources, improving the service and customer orientation at SEPTA, improving parking and signage throughout the City, increasing the share of federal transportation funding that comes to the City and region, and more.
- **Lobby** for dedicated and sufficient funding for SEPTA along the lines proposed by Governor Ed Rendell's Transportation Funding and Reform Commission.
- **Convene** a Regional Mobility Commission modeled on San Francisco's Metropolitan Transportation Commission to enhance the ability of the region to cooperate for the benefit of everyone who lives and works in the region.

A NEW DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

It's time to bring direction back to Philadelphia's transportation bureaucracies.

--Michael Nutter

For the past eight years, Philadelphia has had no clear authority on transportation policy. This absent management structure reinforces the dynamic of lurching from one crisis to the next. SEPTA's annual budget woes generate a dutiful press release from the Mayor's Office but no real contingency planning let alone a proactive agenda for breaking the annual cycle of crisis. Little planning or policy development can occur without a City department, but what does occur is done by private or civic groups whose interests and scope are necessarily narrower than a City department. While I praise the efforts of such groups to fill gaps created by absent City government, they are only second-best solutions to the more appropriate policy vehicle of a re-established City Department of Transportation.

Three examples illustrate transportation's central role in many City issues.

- The 2001-2205 Center City District's study to improve the **Ben Franklin Parkway** focused on traffic lanes and flows. Transportation is central to efforts to make lively public spaces and to improve on the vitality of cultural and recreational institutions.
- The current efforts led by PennPraxis to improve the **Central Delaware Waterfront** are defined in many ways by PennDOT's plans to rebuild I-95. Transportation involves budgets that are larger than almost any other government spending in cities.
- The long-time efforts of the Philadelphia Unemployment Project to place city residents in existing job opportunities led PUP to develop programs in support of **reverse commuting** to suburban workplaces. Transportation is a critical element in programs that have nothing to do with transportation itself.

Transportation affects effectiveness of City policies, ranging from arts and culture to planning and development to workforce programs and unemployment.

As Mayor, I will re-establish the Department of Transportation and make the head a member of my Cabinet.

The Department would **conduct** formal planning, **coordinate** decision making, and **articulate** a shared vision among all the entities that comprise the City's transportation including Streets, Commerce, Public Property, Traffic Police, City Planning, the School District, Fairmount Park, the Airport, the waterfront and ports agencies, SEPTA, PATCO, PennDOT, Amtrak, and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

The new Department would save money through coordination, increase the share of existing resources going to the City through better advocacy, and increase the total amount of resources going the Philadelphia metropolitan area by developing a shared vision for regional investment. **Boston, New York, Washington DC, Chicago, and Los Angeles** all have departments that are implementing focused and integrated agendas for their cities and regions.

TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES FOR PHILADELPHIA

We have a long list of deferred transportation goals and only a new Department of Transportation can make priorities and see them through.

--Michael Nutter

The new Department of Transportation will tackle issues that have been neglected for at least eight years and return transportation to a central role in local government planning, decision making, and action. By serving as a liaison among many departments and coordinating the aspects of each that touch on the transportation needs of Philadelphians, the Department will make improvements that now languish without a champion.

As Mayor, I will direct the Department to design, fund, and implement directly or in cooperation with relevant operating departments priorities including the following.

- **Enhance** pedestrian safety and improved “walkability” throughout the city. It is easy to think of this as strictly a Center City issue, but that is a mistake. Safe pedestrian crossing are an issue in Center City but also in neighborhood business districts, school zones, and park, playground, and recreation areas in all sections of Philadelphia. Crosswalks are often poorly marked, walk signs poorly timed, and traffic laws rarely enforced. The new red light cameras at dangerous intersections of Roosevelt Boulevard have demonstrated that technology and new funding are available for pedestrian safety when a well-articulated need is put on the table. The Department will work with the Streets Department and others to raise the profile of this issue and identify federal and state funding opportunities available for safety.
- **Maintain and extend** the City’s bicycle network of lanes and signs. As demonstrated by the Chicago 2010 Plan, much of the planning and implementation of bicycle transportation can be funded by federal programs in support of congestion mitigation and transportation enhancements. By capitalizing on the presence of the nation’s largest one-day bicycling event, the City can leverage the expanded bicycle network into Recreation and Health policy goals.
- **Improve** parking and signage throughout the City. From the annoying “Central Philadelphia” highway signs to the number of intersections with no street signs, the City needs to improve this basic information system. We are developing one of the best pedestrian and transit sign systems in the country through the efforts of the Center City District, but it needs to be extended to other parts of the City as well. While our parking troubles have been the subject of several expert studies, there needs to be a partner in government capable of following through on those findings and bringing public authority to bear on a dysfunctional and anti-competitive network of surface, structured, and street parking. Both the commercial and the residential parking system need to be modernized. Furthermore the enforcement of existing delivery and rush-hour no –parking regulations will be improved as an immediate way to improve traffic congestion on city streets.
- **Revolutionize** the governance structure of SEPTA. I will direct the Department to work with Philadelphia’s Harrisburg delegation to develop and advocate legislation that would

strengthen the voice of the City within the SEPTA board. The City has only 2 of the 15 seats on the board, approximately 13% of the votes. Philadelphia has the same number of seats as each of the other four counties of Southeastern Pennsylvania, but it provides four times as much operating subsidy as the other four combined (80% of the five-county operating subsidy). Last September, when I testified before the commission, I recommend reducing the overall size of the board and increasing Philadelphia's relative representation while preserving the Commonwealth's one-third as follows:

	Current	Proposed
Philadelphia	2	2
Four Suburban Counties	8	4
State Majority Party	2	1
State Minority Party	2	1
Governor	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	15	9

With the proposed configuration, Philadelphia will have 2 out of 9 or 22% of the votes on the board. I recognize that Philadelphia would still have less than its proper share of the board, but the City's share would be larger than it is today greatly increasing the voice of the citizens of Philadelphia.

- **Improve** the customer service orientation of the SEPTA system. This is both a frontline and a strategic planning issue. Employee morale is difficult to maintain in a system that lurches from crisis to crisis and that frustrates its ridership on a daily basis. We need to create a virtuous cycle of continuous improvement that gives people a reason to keep smiles on their faces. By providing a reliable partner in City government, the Department of Transportation can build the political support for change at SEPTA and turn an often adversarial relationship into a productive partnership to secure funding, improve working and riding conditions, and develop a constituency for a better transit system among riders and non-riders alike.
- **Increase** the amount of federal funding that comes to the City by being a vigorous advocate for City investments and operations at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. The DVRPC is the region's "metropolitan planning organization" and is responsible for allocating and making recommendations for allocating hundreds of millions of dollars in federal transportation funding. The City is severely under-represented in this governance structure but even that representation could be better with a Department staffing our participation in these high-level negotiations and long-range plans. As demonstrated by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project's Job Access and Reverse Commute grant, the City has enormous local capacity to improve our share of competitive federal grants. We need to break the lazy habit of relying on legislative earmarks and mature into a region that can compete and win on the basis of our intelligence, assets, and cooperation.
- **Develop** a coherent City position on transportation conflicts as they arise. For example, issues such as Delaware dredging, the Produce Market relocation, closing Chestnut Street in front of Independence Hall, cell phone waiting lots at the Airport, and so on inevitably arise and involve many issues and often other levels of government. It is inefficient and confusing to treat each of these as crisis demanding a press release from the Mayor's Office. My Department of Transportation will be a party to these and similar emerging issues as they develop and will address each in proactive ways that prevent crisis management.

DEDICATED AND SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR SEPTA

The time has never been better to bring public transit in Pennsylvania into the modern era by giving it a dedicated funding stream, just like every other major system in the world can rely on.

--Michael Nutter

As it tries to serve the Greater Philadelphia area, SEPTA faces a fundamental obstacle that is not of its own making. SEPTA has faced operating shortfalls of hundreds of millions of dollars per year over the last several years. SEPTA has been struggling to cover these shortfalls with capital funds that are desperately needed to maintain and invest in the system. Every year SEPTA has to beg Harrisburg for short-term financial assistance so it can survive another year. Long-term planning has become a luxury that SEPTA cannot afford.

This vicious cycle continues to weaken the SEPTA system and adds to the general perception that our transit infrastructure is a burden rather than a valuable asset. In the long run, public transit is successful only if people and businesses believe that it will be viable year after year. Otherwise, they will not invest in residential and firm locations that depend on public transportation and will make changes their lives that rely on cars. The periodic budget crises and associated threats of service reductions undermine that belief in SEPTA's long run viability.

Nowhere in the U.S. or Europe are transit operations funded entirely through fares and SEPTA's farebox recovery ratio, that amount of operations paid for by fares, exceeds the national average significantly. Public transit needs and deserves a public subsidy beyond what is paid at the farebox because the benefits of transit go not only to transit users but also to auto users in the form of reduced congestion and to the entire community in the form of improved environmental quality and increased economic activity. The only way to solve the problem is to establish an ongoing, steady source of financial support for SEPTA, a solution that received strong support from the Pennsylvania Transportation Funding and Reform Commission. With a Democratic Governor and a Democratic majority in the House, the prospects are much brighter for providing transit with a dedicated and sufficient funding stream.

There are many proposals on the table for raising the \$760 million annual increase in revenues for transit across the State. The Governor's Reform Commission recommended a 1 percent increase in the State portion of the Realty Transfer Tax and a bundle of increases in local taxes. The Turnpike Commission suggested a \$1 toll surcharge in the Philadelphia area to provide a portion of the funds needed just for SEPTA. And the Governor recommended an Oil Company Gross Profits Tax to raise the entire \$760 million. There are merits to each of these approaches.

As Mayor, I will lobby tirelessly on behalf the dedicated funding proposal that has the best chance of bringing needed funds to SEPTA and the Philadelphia region

This is a rare alignment of political and economic interest for the benefit of the entire region and especially the City. I will add Philadelphia's voice and clout to help ensure that sufficient and reliable transit funding happens in Pennsylvania.

A REGIONAL MOBILITY COMMISSION TO IMPROVE EVERY MODE OF TRAVEL IN EVERY COUNTY

We have a portfolio of assets in this region that can enrich us all—if we can just stop squabbling like heirs at an estate sale.

--Michael Nutter

Regional problems are best addressed with regional solutions. My experience as the Chairman of the Pennsylvania Convention Center Authority has demonstrated the power of regional cooperation. With a clear mission and committed leadership, the City and Counties can provide a powerful conduit for change and development. No problem that Philadelphia faces today is more clearly a regional issue than transportation.

Auto and transit traffic cross county and state boundaries every day. People residing all over the Greater Philadelphia area use auto and transit transportation systems throughout the area. People residing all over the Greater Philadelphia area use Philadelphia International Airport. Improving transportation systems anywhere in the area will stimulate economic activity and improve the quality of life throughout the area. We need to take a regional approach – a dramatically different regional approach.

As Mayor, I will work with state legislators from the Greater Philadelphia area to establish a Regional Mobility Commission that will:

- Have responsibility for at least the five counties of Southeastern Pennsylvania and, if possible, the four New Jersey counties in the Greater Philadelphia region.
- Allocate control (votes) on the basis of population and use of transportation systems.
- Have authority to impose and collect tolls on the major arteries and bridges in the Greater Philadelphia Region
- Direct the operation of Philadelphia International Airport and use toll and airport revenue for matching funds for federal highway or transit monies and for local street projects, and as a reliable source of ongoing public funding for SEPTA, PATCO, and other transit agencies.

Another candidate has proposed leasing the Airport as a funding mechanism to fight poverty in Philadelphia. This proposal is flawed in both theory and practice. In practical terms, the experimental leasing program authorized by the FAA is slow (the only lease obtained took 34 months to approve and it was for the airport in Newburgh, New York!) and uncertain (if Midway Airport in Chicago receives its expected lease approval, then federal legislation will be needed to allow a second “major hub” lease, which is now prohibited.) But beyond the practical limitations, generations of experience has shown that confronting social challenges like poverty requires the resources of the state and federal governments. It is simply misguided public policy to use limited local resources to meet the responsibilities of higher governments. Democrats since FDR and LBJ have understood that it is wrong to ask orphans to build their own orphanages, and that it is just as wrong for cities to spend down their limited assets to provide limited help for the nation’s poor.

The Airport, however, is a valuable asset that can leverage regional cooperation for comprehensive transportation planning and investments. I propose putting the Airport's considerable value on the table as an inducement to form a powerful Regional Mobility Commission that could make investments that would benefit all residents and workers in the metropolitan area. In addition to the Airport, the City also owns the tunnels and tracks used by SEPTA's Market-Frankford El, Broad Street Subway, and the Subway/Surface Routes to West Philadelphia. The leases for these tunnels with SEPTA expire in 2007. They provide a second enormously valuable asset that could facilitate the negotiation of a whole new governance structure for transportation in the metropolitan area.

This approach has been used successfully elsewhere. The California state legislature created the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to be the transportation planning, coordinating, and financing agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Commission performs the functions of the federally-required metropolitan planning organization as does our Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, but it also collects large amounts of local taxes and tolls (projected to equal more than \$65 billion over the period 2002-26) and spends those funds for operating and capital needs. (For more, see http://t2030.mtc.ca.gov/library/citizens_guide/revenues.htm)

With Democratic governors and legislative majorities in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey, this is a good time to propose a new approach and use our assets get the two states to help address the Greater Philadelphia region's transportation challenges and opportunities. Such a governance system would allow the region to capture and retain the benefits of our transportation assets and investments. Those resources would be sufficient to allow the region to build and maintain an integrated transportation network of roads, rail, ports, air service, and public transit that would be the envy of any city in America.