



Roosevelt Boulevard Subway Brief

The Case for Heavy Rail to Northeast Philadelphia

Document Prepared By

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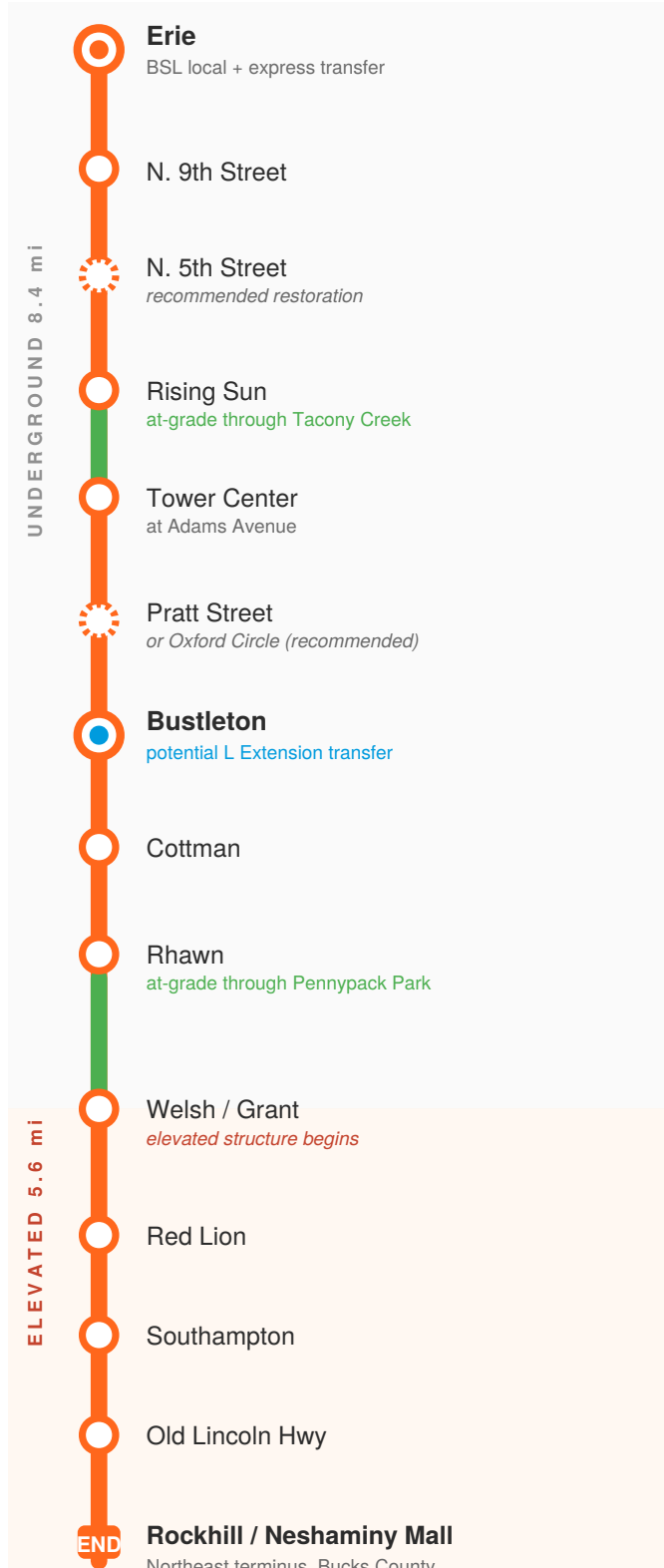
2026 EDITION



The Roosevelt Boulevard Subway

B4 Roosevelt Boulevard Subway

Express to City Hall: 9 minutes via Broad Street Line



At a Glance

Mode

Heavy Rail (Subway)

Stations

14 total (13 new plus Erie transfer)

Total Length

14.7 miles (Broad and Erie to Neshaminy Mall)

Alignment

8.4 mi underground, 0.7 mi at-grade, 5.6 mi elevated

NE Terminus

Neshaminy Mall, Bensalem

SW Terminus

City Hall Station (via BSL express tracks)

Running Time

49 minutes end to end

Avg. Speed

23.2 mph (line capable of higher speeds)

Peak Frequency

6 minutes

Off-Peak Frequency

12 minutes

Service Span

5:00 AM to 11:00 PM

BSL Connection

Express tracks branching north of Erie

Alignment and station locations drawn from the 2040 Route for Change PEL Study (December 2024), refined from the 2003 Roosevelt Boulevard Corridor Transportation Investment Study.



Current Conditions

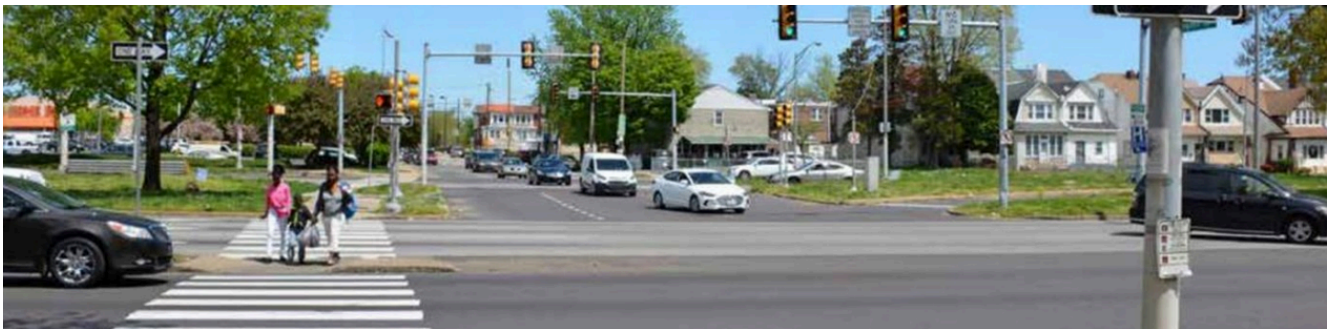
A Century of Waiting

It has been over a century since A. Merritt Taylor first proposed rapid transit to the Northeast. The corridor now holds more than 400,000 residents, a population larger than Pittsburgh, Atlanta, or Minneapolis. One out of every three people in Philadelphia lives within one mile of Roosevelt Boulevard, yet the Northeast remains the largest section of the city without rail service.

A Diverse, Underserved Corridor

Roosevelt Boulevard passes through densely populated neighborhoods with relatively low car ownership and large shares of immigrants, Black households, Hispanic households, and children (Guerra et al., 2024). Eighteen percent of corridor residents were born outside the United States, and nearly one third speak a language other than English at home. Many census tracts along the alignment register among the highest poverty rates in the city.

The Corridor of Death



A 12-lane intersection on Roosevelt Boulevard.

A 2024 University of Pennsylvania study (Guerra et al.) found that 100 people died in car crashes on Roosevelt Boulevard between 2016 and 2022, with 17 more on adjacent local roads. Together, these crashes accounted for roughly 12 percent of all traffic fatalities in Philadelphia. The arterial runs 12 lanes wide with posted speed limits of 40 to 45 mph.

Community Cohesion

Beyond safety, the absence of rapid transit has held Northeast Philadelphia apart from the rest of the city. As Daniel Pearson of the Philadelphia Inquirer has written, residents of Queens feel like New Yorkers because the subway ties them to Manhattan. The Roosevelt Boulevard Subway would do the same for the Northeast, re-stitching the city back together.

100 deaths in 7 years

12% of Philadelphia's traffic fatalities | 12 lanes | 40 to 45 mph posted speed



The 2040 PEL Study: Six Alternatives

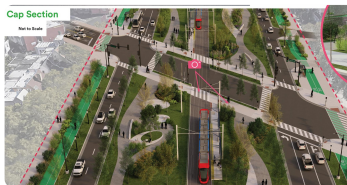
PennDOT, SEPTA, and the City of Philadelphia launched the 2040 Roosevelt Boulevard Route for Change Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study to identify a single build alternative for the corridor. The Tier 1 long list pairs two roadway configurations with three transit modes, producing six candidate alternatives that span 11.6 miles between Old York Road and Southampton Road.

Roadway Configurations

Partially Capped Expressway. Four limited access expressway lanes posted at 50 mph beneath five fully capped segments, paired with four at-grade local lanes at 25 mph, cycle tracks, and widened sidewalks. The cap segments total 4.8 miles of full cap, 3.1 miles of partial cap or trench, and 3.8 miles at-grade.

Neighborhood Boulevard. Six at-grade general purpose lanes posted at 25 mph, with two flex lanes that double as Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes during peak hours, cycle tracks, widened sidewalks, and 28 new signalized intersections.

The Six Candidate Alternatives

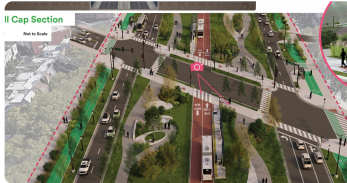


LRT

Alt 1A

Partially Capped Expressway with Light Rail

22 LRT stations, 18.5 miles WTC to Neshaminy Mall. 5.4 mi mixed traffic, 7.5 mi semi-exclusive, 5.6 mi elevated.

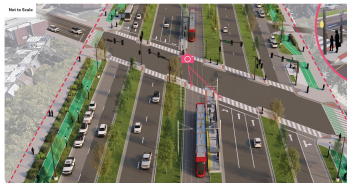


BRT

Alt 1B

Partially Capped Expressway with Bus Rapid Transit

22 BRT stations, 18.7 miles. 8.0 mi mixed traffic, 10.7 mi semi-exclusive. No elevated segments.



LRT

Alt 2A

Neighborhood Boulevard with Light Rail

Same LRT alignment as Alt 1A, but paired with the surface boulevard configuration.

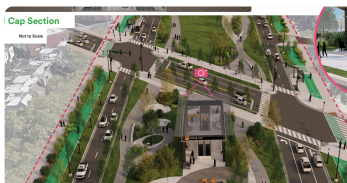


BRT

Alt 2B

Neighborhood Boulevard with Bus Rapid Transit

Same BRT alignment as Alt 1B, paired with the surface boulevard configuration.



RAIL

Alt 3

Partially Capped Expressway with Subway

13 subway stations, 14.7 mile branch of the Broad Street Line. 8.4 mi underground, 0.7 mi at-grade, 5.6 mi elevated. Includes potential L Extension.



RAIL

Alt 4

Neighborhood Boulevard with Subway

Same subway alignment as Alt 3, paired with the surface boulevard configuration. STOPS modeling shows this alternative generates the highest ridership of any combination in the study.



Ridership Forecasts: The Data Speaks

In December 2024, HNTB released the STOPS Ridership Forecasting Report for the 2040 Route for Change Project. Using the FTA's Simplified Trips on Project Software (STOPS), the study compared three high capacity transit alternatives across two roadway configurations, with additional sensitivity runs for the subway alternatives that include a Market-Frankford Line extension at Bustleton. The subway outperforms every other alternative on every metric the FTA uses to award Capital Investment Grant funding.

Daily Ridership Comparison (Weekday Unlinked Trips)

Alternative	2023 Adopted	2040 Adopted	2040 Neighborhood Boulevard	2040 Partially Capped Expressway
BRT (FGS 0.5)	25,100	24,700	38,500	37,000
LRT (FGS 0.8)	37,700	37,300	56,400	54,500
Subway (FGS 1.0)	43,800	43,300	62,200	60,100
Subway + MFL Extension (Underground)	—	—	63,800	61,600
Subway + MFL Extension (Elevated)	—	—	63,800	61,600

Source: 2040 Roosevelt Boulevard Route for Change Project, STOPS Ridership Forecasting Report (Draft, December 2024). Prepared by HNTB. MFL extension figures from PEL Study Network Integration analysis. Dashes denote scenarios where the variant does not apply.

Key Findings

- **62,200 daily riders** projected for the subway under the Neighborhood Boulevard scenario in 2040 (Alt 4), the highest of any base alternative in the study.
- **63,800 daily riders** with the MFL extension (Alt 4.2 or 4.3), the highest performance of any alternative tested in the PEL Study.
- **23,400 new transit trips** generated daily, reflecting significant mode shift from automobiles to rail.
- **47.6 million annual VMT reduction**, the largest of any alternative, yielding meaningful emissions and congestion benefits.
- **"High" Congestion Relief rating** from FTA under both subway scenarios. No other alternative achieves this.
- **"Medium-High" Mobility Improvements rating**, reflecting the subway's ability to serve transit dependent and choice riders alike.
- **60% non-transit-dependent riders** in the subway scenario, demonstrating the line's appeal as a choice mode, not just a safety net.

62,200 Daily Riders | 23,400 New Trips | 47.6M VMT Reduction

2040 Neighborhood Boulevard Scenario (STOPS Model, December 2024)



Ridership by Station

Beyond the 62,200 daily systemwide riders, the December 2024 STOPS Ridership Forecasting Report provides station-by-station projections. The data identifies three high-performing Northeast Philadelphia anchors on the new branch: Welsh-Grant, Bustleton Avenue, and Rhawn Street.

Projected Daily Boardings by Station (2040)

Station	Neighborhood Boulevard	Capped Expressway
City Hall Station	13,460	13,150
Erie Station	5,580	5,390
N. 9th Street	3,680	3,510
Rising Sun Avenue	4,410	4,340
Tower Center (Adams)	1,840	1,800
Pratt Street	3,010	2,950
Bustleton Avenue	6,040	5,830
Cottman Avenue	2,880	2,800
Rhawn Street	4,500	4,330
Welsh / Grant	10,780	10,260
Red Lion Road	2,370	2,210
Southampton Road	1,830	1,720
Old Lincoln Hwy	370	370
Neshaminy Mall	1,480	1,440

Source: 2040 Roosevelt Boulevard Route for Change Project, STOPS Ridership Forecasting Report (Draft, December 2024). Prepared by HNTB. Heatmap shading by Roosevelt Boulevard Subway Movement.

What the Data Shows

- **Three Northeast Philadelphia anchors.** Welsh-Grant (10,780), Bustleton (6,040), and Rhawn Street (4,500) together demonstrate that the heaviest ridership on the new branch is generated within Northeast Philadelphia itself, not at the downtown transfer.
- **Welsh-Grant is the breakout finding.** The station at Northeast Shopping Center projects as the busiest stop on the entire branch outside Center City, validating the 2003 study's identification of Welsh-Grant as a major Northeast activity center.
- **Bustleton confirms the MFL transfer case.** Even without the MFL extension included in this STOPS run, Bustleton generates 6,040 boardings, more than any station between Erie and Welsh-Grant.
- **Neighborhood Boulevard outperforms at every station.** The surface roadway configuration produces higher boardings than the partially capped expressway at all 14 stations, reinforcing Alternative 4 as both the highest-ridership and lowest-cost subway option.

3 Northeast Anchors | 14 Total Stations | 62,200 Combined Daily Riders

Welsh-Grant, Bustleton, and Rhawn lead the Northeast Philadelphia stations (2040 Neighborhood Boulevard Scenario)



Capital Costs: The Investment

In December 2024, HNTB released the Order of Magnitude Capital Cost Methodology Report for the 2040 Route for Change Project. Cost estimates were developed using FTA's Capital Cost Database, drawing on observed costs from heavy rail projects in Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Miami, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. The numbers below include a 40% contingency and escalate from 2024 to 2040 dollars at an annualized inflation rate of 3.5%.

Order of Magnitude Capital Cost Estimates

Alternative	Base Cost (2024, no contingency)	2024 Cost (w/ 40% contingency)	2040 Cost
Alt 1A: Partially Capped Expressway with LRT	\$6.9B	\$9.7B	\$16.8B
Alt 1B: Partially Capped Expressway with BRT	\$4.1B	\$5.8B	\$10.1B
Alt 2A: Neighborhood Boulevard with LRT	\$4.0B	\$5.6B	\$9.7B
Alt 2B: Neighborhood Boulevard with BRT	\$1.4B	\$1.9B	\$3.3B
Alt 3: Partially Capped Expressway with Subway	\$11.3B	\$15.8B	\$27.4B
Alt 4: Neighborhood Boulevard with Subway	\$8.3B	\$11.6B	\$20.2B

Source: HNTB, Order of Magnitude Capital Cost Methodology Report (Draft, December 2024). Base cost reflects construction estimate before the 40% planning-level contingency; 2024 Cost is the reportable figure including contingency; 2040 Cost escalates to year-of-expenditure dollars at 3.5% annual inflation.

Key Findings

- **The lowest-cost subway is also the highest-performing.** Alternative 4 is the least expensive of the six subway variants and generates the highest projected daily ridership (62,200 trips) of any alternative in the study.
- **The MFL extension is a small marginal cost for major network value.** Adding an underground MFL extension to Alternative 4 costs an additional \$533M (2024), a 4.6% increase. The elevated extension adds \$399M (3.4%).
- **The surface configuration saves over \$4 billion.** Choosing the Neighborhood Boulevard configuration over the Partially Capped Expressway reduces subway capital costs by approximately \$4.2B (2024 dollars) with no loss of ridership.
- **Cost basis is rooted in real peer-city heavy rail projects.** Unit costs were drawn from federally funded projects including SEPTA Frankford Rehabilitation, Washington Metro Glenmont and Greenbelt extensions, Baltimore Metro, MARTA Red Line, MBTA Orange Line, and Miami Metrorail.

\$11.6B (2024) | \$20.2B (2040) | 62,200 Daily Riders

Alternative 4: Neighborhood Boulevard with Subway. Lowest-cost subway option, highest-ridership alternative in the study.



Construction Methods Along the Alignment

Each segment of the 14.7-mile alignment uses the construction method best suited to its geography. Cut-and-cover covers the longest stretch, bored tunnel is confined to a single mile near Center City, and the entire Bucks County extension is elevated for cost efficiency.

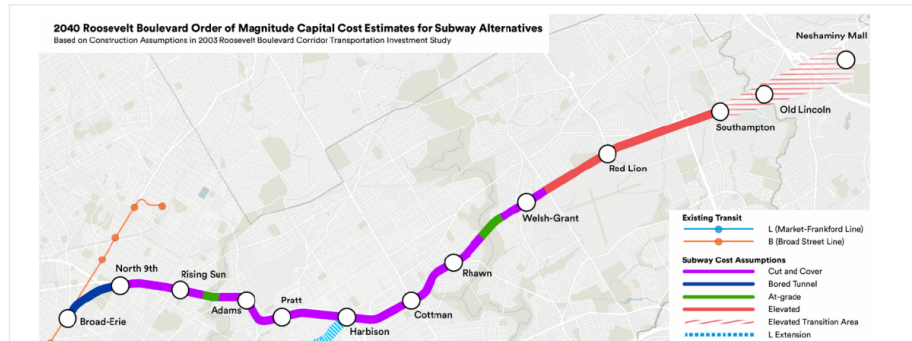


Figure 1: 2040 Roosevelt Boulevard Order of Magnitude Capital Cost Estimates for Subway Alternatives. Source: HNTB, December 2024.

By the Numbers

Method	Length	Where	Why
 Cut and Cover	7.3 mi	Broad-Erie to north of Rhawn (underground)	Median of Roosevelt Blvd permits trench construction; lowest underground cost.
 Bored Tunnel	1.0 mi	Broad-Erie to N. 9th Street	Connects to existing BSL express tracks; deep tunneling required.
 At-Grade	0.7 mi	Tacony Creek and Pennypack Park crossings	Avoids environmental impact to creek and park; surfaces in median.
 Elevated	5.6 mi	North of Welsh-Grant to Neshaminy Mall	Roadway narrows north of Southampton; elevated costs less than tunneling.

Mileage figures: HNTB cost estimate, December 2024 (5,332 LF bored tunnel; 38,785 LF cut-and-cover; 3,889 LF at-grade; 29,590 LF elevated).

What These Methods Look Like in Practice



Cut and Cover (7.3 miles)

Modern cut-and-cover subway construction in a decked median. Roosevelt Boulevard's wide median makes the same approach viable from Broad-Erie to north of Rhawn, allowing the street to be restored above while station boxes and tunnel are built below. Lowest unit cost of any underground technique.



Elevated (5.6 miles)

The Washington Metro Silver Line elevated viaduct at Leesburg Pike in Tysons, Virginia. Comparable elevated construction would carry the line from Welsh-Grant into Bucks County to Neshaminy Mall, at a fraction of the per-mile cost of tunneling.



The Subway Alignment

The subway alignment in Alternatives 3 and 4 extends the Broad Street Line as a branch from just north of Erie Station to the Neshaminy Mall in Bensalem. Total length is 14.7 miles, with 13 new stations along the corridor.

Three Operating Environments

Underground 8.4 mi	At-grade 0.7 mi	Elevated 5.6 mi
■ Underground (Broad & Erie to north of Rhawn)	■ Tacony & Pennypack crossings	■ Elevated (north of Grant to Neshaminy Mall)

Alignment in Detail

From Walnut-Locust and City Hall to Erie Station, service operates via the existing Broad Street Line express tracks. Just north of Pike Street, the alignment branches northeast into a new tunnel beneath Roosevelt Boulevard, with the first new underground station at 9th Street.

Continuing north through Hunting Park, North Philadelphia, and Olney, underground center-platform stations are proposed at Rising Sun Avenue, Tower Center (Adams), Pratt Street, and Bustleton Avenue. Between Rising Sun and Tower Center, the alignment briefly surfaces to cross Tacony Creek at-grade, consistent with the 2003 study.

From Bustleton, the line continues under the median of Roosevelt Boulevard through Lower Northeast neighborhoods, with center-platform underground stations at Cottman Avenue and Rhawn Street. North of Rhawn, the alignment ascends to surface level in the median to cross Pennypack Park, avoiding environmental impacts to the creek before returning to tunnel structure. An underground Welsh-Grant Station is proposed in the vicinity of the Northeast Shopping Center.

North of Welsh-Grant, the alignment ascends onto an elevated structure in the median of the roadway near Northeast Philadelphia Airport. From this point to Neshaminy Mall, the line travels on elevated guideway with stations at Red Lion (near the Red Lion Shopping Center), Southampton, Old Lincoln Highway, and a final terminus at the Neshaminy Mall property. The Southampton transition area will require additional study because the boulevard narrows to six lanes north of that point.

Service Concept

The subway operates as a branch of the Broad Street Line, connecting through the existing BSL express tracks to Center City and South Philadelphia. From the Erie Avenue transfer, an express rider reaches City Hall in approximately 9 minutes. Peak frequency is 6 minutes, off-peak frequency is 12 minutes, and the service span runs from 5:00 AM to 11:00 PM. End-to-end running time is 49 minutes at an average speed of 23.2 mph, though the line is capable of higher operating speeds. The M-4 rolling stock and modernized signaling can support faster service in longer-spacing segments; running times will be refined in Tier 2 simulation.



Station-to-Station Running Times

The December 2024 STOPS Ridership Forecasting Report provides projected station-to-station running times for the Subway Alternative across the full operating pattern, from the Rockhill / Neshaminy Mall terminus through the new Roosevelt Boulevard branch, transferring onto the existing Broad Street Line express tracks at Erie and continuing south to NRG Station. End-to-end running time is 1:01:59 across 14 station-to-station segments.

Full Alignment: Rockhill to NRG Station

From	To	Running Time (mm:ss)
Rockhill	Old Lincoln Hwy	4:59
Old Lincoln Hwy	Southampton Rd	2:04
Southampton Rd	Red Lion Rd	5:10
Red Lion Rd	Welsh Rd / Grant Ave	3:53
Welsh Rd / Grant Ave	Rhawn St	4:24
Rhawn St	Cottman Ave	2:35
Cottman Ave	Bustleton Ave	3:06
Bustleton Ave	Pratt Street	2:51
Pratt Street	Tower Center	1:49
Tower Center	Rising Sun Ave	3:22
Rising Sun Ave	N. 9th Street	2:51
N. 9th Street	Erie Station (BSL)	2:55
<i>Erie Station (BSL)</i>	<i>City Hall Station</i>	<i>9:00</i>
<i>City Hall Station</i>	<i>NRG Station</i>	<i>13:00</i>
Total Running Time		1:01:59

Source: 2040 Roosevelt Boulevard Route for Change Project, STOPS Ridership Forecasting Report (Draft, December 2024). Prepared by HNTB. *Italicized rows denote service on existing Broad Street Line trackage south of Erie Station.*

Reading the Schedule

- **The new branch.** The first 12 segments (Rockhill to Erie Station) cover the new Roosevelt Boulevard Subway branch. Combined running time on the branch alone is 39 minutes, 59 seconds.
- **Express through Center City.** From Erie Station, trains continue south on existing BSL express tracks. The 9-minute Erie to City Hall leg validates the express figure cited on page 1.
- **Rockhill to City Hall in 48:59.** The 14.7-mile corridor delivers a sub-50-minute run from the Bucks County terminus to Center City, consistent with the brief's 49-minute figure.
- **Tier 2 refinement.** The line is capable of higher speeds in longer-spacing segments; final timings will be refined in Tier 2 simulation.

14 Segments | 1:01:59 End-to-End | 9-Minute Express to City Hall

Rockhill to NRG Station via the Broad Street Line (STOPS Model, December 2024)



Network Integration: The MFL Connection

The 2040 PEL Study includes a focus area for a potential Market-Frankford Line extension that would link the Frankford Transportation Center directly into the Roosevelt Boulevard Subway at Bustleton Station. This 0.7-mile addition would knit the subway into Northeast Philadelphia's existing rapid transit network and create one of the most consequential transit transfers in the city.

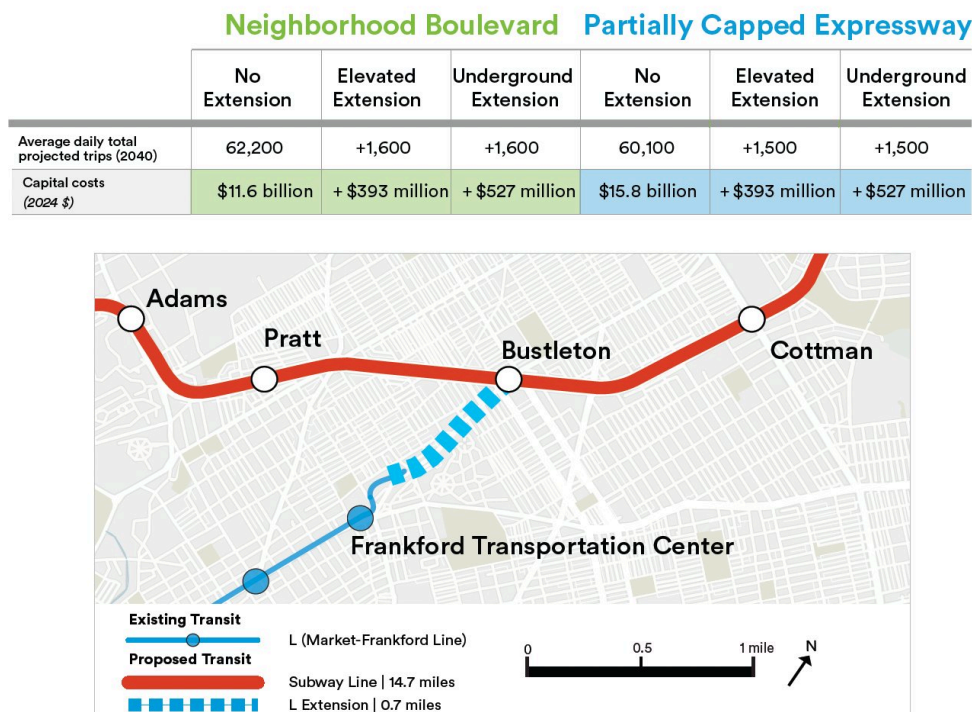


Figure 2: MFL Extension ridership and capital cost scenarios across Neighborhood Boulevard and Partially Capped Expressway configurations. Source: 2040 Roosevelt Boulevard Route for Change Project (HNTB, December 2024).

Two Construction Options

Underground. The MFL would extend from the existing FTC station, descend into a portal within Bridge Street Yard or the footprint of the existing FTC parking garage, then run northeast under Bustleton Avenue. An underground Bustleton Avenue Station at Roosevelt Boulevard would potentially provide cross-platform transfers between MFL service and Roosevelt Boulevard Subway service.

Elevated. The extension would continue from the FTC platform on an elevated structure centered over Bustleton Avenue. Both approaches require modifications to the FTC parking garage and reconfiguration of trackwork connections to Bridge Street Yard.

Six Iterations Under Evaluation

- **Alternative 3:** Capped Expressway with Subway, no MFL extension
- **Alternative 3.2:** Capped Expressway with Subway, underground MFL extension
- **Alternative 3.3:** Capped Expressway with Subway, elevated MFL extension
- **Alternative 4:** Neighborhood Boulevard with Subway, no MFL extension
- **Alternative 4.2:** Neighborhood Boulevard with Subway, underground MFL extension
- **Alternative 4.3:** Neighborhood Boulevard with Subway, elevated MFL extension

Why It Matters

A cross-platform transfer at Bustleton would convert two parallel rail lines into a unified Northeast network. Riders on the Market-Frankford Line could reach Roosevelt Boulevard stations without backtracking through Center City, and Northeast residents would gain direct access to West Philadelphia and University City through both lines. The transfer would also relieve pressure on the 9th Street and Erie connection points.



Station Refinements: 2003 to 2024

The 2024 PEL Study refined the subway station program from the 2003 Roosevelt Boulevard Corridor Transportation Investment Study to reflect updated land use, ridership patterns, and an expanded terminus at Neshaminy Mall.

Why the Terminus Moved

The 2003 study terminated the subway at Southampton Road, with a proposed maintenance facility on the former Byberry State Hospital site. The PEL Study extends the alignment to Neshaminy Mall in Bensalem. This mirrors the BRT and LRT termini, enabling apples-to-apples ridership comparison and creating a logical Bucks County endpoint at a major regional shopping center.

Summary of Station Changes

Station	2024	2003	Adjustment
Broad / Erie	1	1	Unchanged. BSL local transfer.
9th / Roosevelt	2	2	Unchanged.
5th / Roosevelt	—	3	Removed. ~2,000 ft spacing with 9th.
Rising Sun	3	4	Unchanged.
Tower Center (Adams)	4	5	Unchanged.
Pratt / Roosevelt	5	—	Shifted from Oxford Circle to create FTC connection.
Oxford Circle	—	6	Replaced by Pratt Station.
Bustleton	6	7	Unchanged. Potential MFL transfer point.
Cottman	7	8	Unchanged.
Rhawn	8	9	Renamed from Pennypack Circle.
Welsh-Grant	9	10	Unchanged.
Red Lion	10	11	Unchanged.
Comly / Roosevelt	—	12	Removed. Spacing with Red Lion and Southampton.
Southampton	11	13	Unchanged. Was 2003 terminus.
Old Lincoln Hwy	12	—	Added. Expanded scope to Bucks County.
Rockhill / Neshaminy Mall	13	—	Added. New northern terminus.

Source: Table 6, 2040 PEL Definition of Alternatives Report (December 2024).



Two Open Station Decisions

Two station-level choices within the Subway Alternative remain open as the PEL Study advances to Tier 2. Each affects ridership, network connectivity, or cost. The positions below reflect the Movement's recommended approach.

Decision 1: Restore Both 9th and 5th Street

The 2024 PEL update removed the 2003 study's 5th Street station, citing roughly 2,000 feet of spacing with 9th. The Movement recommends restoring 5th and building both stations. Each anchors a distinct ridership case.



Logan Triangle, aerial view (Google Earth). The 35-acre vacant parcel, bounded by Roosevelt Boulevard, Loudon Street, 6th Street, and 11th Street, is the largest single redevelopment opportunity in Philadelphia. Roughly 1,000 homes were demolished here in the 1980s and 1990s after the underlying soil destabilized. The site is owned by the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority and has been the subject of four redevelopment proposals over the past decade, including Mayor Cherelle Parker's February 2026 modular housing factory proposal. The proposed 9th Street subway station sits directly along the triangle's southern edge.

9th Street.

Directly anchors the Logan Triangle redevelopment site, the largest vacant parcel in Philadelphia. Direct subway access would substantially improve the economics of any future redevelopment scheme and catalyze long-stalled investment in the surrounding neighborhood.

5th Street.

Lies along a major north-south arterial and provides a transfer to SEPTA's Route 47 bus, one of the highest-ridership routes in the Philadelphia network. Serves a dense residential walkshed distinct from 9th.

Inner-city heavy rail routinely operates at 2,000-foot spacing in dense urban corridors where transfer connectivity and walkshed overlap with multiple high-demand land uses. Tier 2 modeling should test the combined ridership impact of restoring 5th Street rather than treating spacing as a disqualifying constraint.

→ Decision 2: Pratt Street vs Oxford Circle, next page.



Two Open Station Decisions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Decision 2: Build at Oxford Circle, not Pratt Street

The 2024 PEL update shifted the Northeast Philadelphia station from the 2003 study's Oxford Circle location to Pratt Street, primarily to create a potential Frankford Transportation Center connection. The Movement recommends restoring Oxford Circle as the preferred station location for three reasons.



Oxford Circle, looking northeast. Roosevelt Boulevard's express lanes already run below grade through an open-cut median, visible at center. A station built within this existing depressed footprint avoids the cut-and-cover station construction required at Pratt Street. Aerial imagery: Google Earth.

- **Bus connectivity.** Oxford Circle is a critical transfer point with SEPTA's Route 59, a trackless trolley running through the circle along Castor and Oxford Avenues, connecting to the Market-Frankford Line at Arrott Transportation Center. A heavy rail station here integrates the subway into one of Northeast Philadelphia's busiest north-south transit corridors, a connection Pratt Street cannot match.
- **Transit-oriented development.** PennDOT's \$27 million Castor Avenue Safety and Streetscape project, breaking ground in 2027, will narrow Castor from four to three lanes, upgrade transit stops, and add separated bike lanes, positioning the corridor for major TOD investment. A subway anchor at Oxford Circle would amplify those returns.
- **Constructability and cost.** A station built within the existing depressed footprint at Oxford Circle (shown above) avoids the construction of the cut-and-cover station required at Pratt Street. The cost savings could be material, and the existing right-of-way already accommodates the station envelope.

PennDOT and SEPTA should run a side-by-side bus connectivity and constructability analysis at both candidate locations in Tier 2 before finalizing the Northeast Philadelphia station.

The Movement's Position

Restore the 5th Street station. Shift the Pratt Street station to Oxford Circle.



Impacts of Building the Subway

Building the Roosevelt Boulevard Subway would deliver compounding benefits across the region. Beyond ridership and cost figures, the line reshapes how Northeast Philadelphia connects to jobs, services, opportunity, and the rest of the city.

Jobs

Construction creates thousands of direct jobs and supports local businesses along the entire corridor, while permanent transit access expands regional employment markets for Northeast residents.

Property Values

Areas around subway stations experience increased property values, catalyzing private investment, new business development, and transit oriented development along the corridor.

Equity

The subway connects underserved neighborhoods to the broader transit network, improving access to healthcare, education, and essential services for the communities most dependent on transit.

Sustainability

STOPS modeling projects 47.6 million annual VMT reduction under the Neighborhood Boulevard scenario, shifting tens of thousands of daily trips from cars to electric rail.

Safety

By offering an alternative to driving on one of the city's deadliest corridors, the subway reduces road congestion and fatalities. Fewer cars on the Boulevard means fewer deaths.

Business Activity

Improved transit reduces transportation costs and improves supply chain efficiency, making it easier and cheaper for businesses to operate and contributing to regional economic growth.

Green Space

The capped expressway alternatives include five fully capped segments totaling 4.8 miles, opening opportunities for parks, plazas, and community space directly above the subway.

Tourism

Enhanced transit infrastructure makes Philadelphia more attractive and accessible to visitors, supporting the hospitality industry and connecting tourists to Northeast attractions.

Network Effect

Integration with the Broad Street Line via Erie, and potentially the Market-Frankford Line via a 0.7-mile Bustleton extension, multiplies the value of every existing SEPTA rail station.

Climate Resilience

Heavy rail provides reliable, electrified, weather-resilient service through the climate disruptions ahead. A subway runs when surface transit cannot.

62,200 Daily Riders | 23,400 New Transit Trips | 47.6M VMT Reduction

2040 Neighborhood Boulevard Scenario (STOPS Model, December 2024)



A Century of Promise, Politics, and Persistence

From A. Merritt Taylor's 1913 proposal to today's PEL Study, the Roosevelt Boulevard Subway has been envisioned, costed, and shelved across more than a century of Philadelphia planning. The current effort is the closest the city has come to construction.

- 1913 Taylor's Plan**
A. Merritt Taylor, Director of the Department of City Transit, publishes Philadelphia's first scientific transit study. Roosevelt Boulevard appears among the proposed lines.
- 1929 Civic Coalition**
Mayor Harry A. Mackey and Northeast Chamber president William Disston rally civic leaders behind a Roosevelt Boulevard subway. The Great Depression halts momentum.
- 1948 Postwar Reassessment**
First postwar cost survey estimates the line at \$56 to \$59 million. Northeast suburbanization accelerates without rapid transit.
- 1960 Klauder Report**
A detailed engineering study by Louis T. Klauder and Associates recommends a Roosevelt Boulevard alignment from Broad Street to Adams Avenue and Fox Chase.
- 1964 \$87M Bond Approved**
Philadelphia voters approve an \$87.3 million bond issue for subway extensions, including the Northeast Extension along Roosevelt Boulevard.
- 1967 The Phantom Station**
Adams Avenue Station is completed under the Sears Roebuck parking garage. 483 feet of tunnel was built, but no tracks were ever laid.
- 1971 Subway Removed**
Mayor Frank Rizzo redirects funding to the Center City Commuter Connection. The Roosevelt Boulevard Subway is removed from Philadelphia's six-year capital budget.
- 1995 Needs and Preferences Study**
SEPTA confirms feasibility and recommends evaluating an LRT alternative and a Broad Street Line extension.
- 2003 Feasibility Study**
The Roosevelt Boulevard Corridor Transportation Investment Study proposes an elevated subway connected to BSL express tracks. Projected daily ridership: 124,500. Estimated cost: \$2.5 to \$3.4 billion.
- 2022 Movement Founded**
The Roosevelt Boulevard Subway Movement is co-founded after the rediscovery of the 2003 study. First town hall held August 27, 2022.
- 2024 PEL Study and STOPS**
PennDOT, SEPTA, and the City advance the 2040 Route for Change PEL Study. December 2024 STOPS report confirms the subway as the highest-performing alternative at 62,200 daily riders.
- 2025–26 Short List and Build Alternative**
Public Meeting Round 2 (Spring 2025) identifies the short list. Round 4 (Winter 2025–26) presents a single build alternative, advancing to NEPA.



Public Support and Federal Competitiveness

Public Support

"Extend the Broad Street Subway up Roosevelt Boulevard?"

May 7 to 9, 2023 Emerson College poll of 600 primary voters

72% Support

16%
Unsure

12%
Oppose

FTA Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Ratings

Alternative	Roadway Scenario	Congestion Relief	Mobility Improvements
Subway	Neighborhood Blvd 2040	High	Medium-High
Subway	Partially Capped Expy 2040	High	Medium-High
Subway	Adopted 2040	Medium-High	Medium-High
LRT (FGS 0.8)	Neighborhood Blvd 2040	Medium-High	Medium-High
BRT (FGS 0.5)	Neighborhood Blvd 2040	Medium	Medium

National Competitive Context

Heavy rail subways are getting built across North America after decades of waiting. Four peer projects illustrate the pattern, and Philadelphia's Roosevelt Boulevard Subway is positioned to join them.

- **LA Metro D Line Extension (Section 1).** Opened May 8, 2026, after twelve years of construction. Three new stations extend the line beneath Wilshire Boulevard from Koreatown to Beverly Hills, with Sections 2 and 3 reaching Westwood and the VA Hospital in 2027. The full project represents the first westward subway expansion since 1996.
- **Second Avenue Subway Phase 2 (New York).** The MTA awarded its largest-ever tunnel contract (\$1.972 billion) in August 2025 to extend the Q train three stations into East Harlem, a neighborhood without rapid transit on Second Avenue since 1940. The project is projected to have the lowest cost per rider of any active heavy rail project in the United States.
- **BART Silicon Valley Phase II (San Jose).** The six-mile, four-station extension from Berryessa through downtown San Jose to Santa Clara secured a \$5.1 billion federal Capital Investment Grant commitment, the second-largest CIG award ever issued. Tunneling on the five-mile underground segment begins in 2028.
- **Broadway Subway Project (Vancouver).** The 5.7-kilometer, six-station extension of the SkyTrain Millennium Line opens Fall 2027, replacing the 99 B-Line bus, the busiest bus route in North America, with three times its capacity.

Each of these projects spent decades on the drawing board before construction began. Roosevelt Boulevard's case is no different: A. Merritt Taylor proposed the line in 1913, voters approved an \$87 million bond in 1964, and 483 feet of tunnel was completed before the project was canceled in 1971. Of the heavy rail projects pursuing or recently securing federal funding, only the Second Avenue Subway Phase 2 would carry more daily riders than the Roosevelt Boulevard Subway. With 62,200 daily trips (63,800 with the MFL extension), the highest VMT reduction of any alternative tested in the PEL Study, and "High" Congestion Relief ratings, the project is positioned to compete successfully in the CIG pipeline.



Looking Forward

The Path Ahead

The 2040 Roosevelt Boulevard Route for Change PEL Study is advancing through Tier 1 analysis, with subway, LRT, and BRT alternatives being comparatively assessed. The ridership forecasts confirm what advocates have argued for over a century: Northeast Philadelphia needs and deserves rapid transit. The subway delivers the strongest performance across every metric that matters to the FTA and the communities along the corridor.

Funding Opportunity

Federal infrastructure funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law represents a once in a generation opportunity. By the early 2030s, nearly 90% of BIL allocated funding will be spent. Philadelphia must move decisively to secure federal Capital Investment Grant funding before these resources are exhausted. Increased local funding for SEPTA can provide the 50% local match required for federal grants.

Community Engagement

Elected officials and advocates have hosted numerous well attended town halls across the Northeast. The 72% public support documented in the 2023 Emerson College poll reflects broad, bipartisan enthusiasm for the subway.

What Must Happen Next

The STOPS model will be updated in the next phase with 2024 ridership data, which shows SEPTA approaching 800,000 daily unlinked passenger trips across all modes, up significantly from 580,000 in 2023. As ridership recovery continues, the case for the Roosevelt Boulevard Subway only grows stronger.

Four Decisions That Matter Most

- **Mode selection.** The PEL Study's Tier 1 analysis should advance the subway alternatives (3 and 4) to Tier 2 on the strength of the December 2024 STOPS results.
- **MFL integration.** Including at least one MFL extension variant (3.2, 3.3, 4.2, or 4.3) in the short list preserves the network value proposition that distinguishes this corridor from peer projects.
- **Local match commitment.** Pennsylvania and Philadelphia must demonstrate a credible local funding plan before the FTA New Starts pipeline opens for projects of this size.
- **Advance to Environmental Impact Statement.** Following Tier 2 selection of a single build alternative, the project must move immediately into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and complete an Environmental Impact Statement to make the subway shovel-ready for federal Capital Investment Grant funding.



Build the Roosevelt Boulevard Subway.

Learn more and get involved:

BlvdSubway.com | [@BlvdSubway](https://twitter.com/BlvdSubway)



ONE STATION, EVERY SEASON

The Future We're Building

Year-round, accessible, electrified rapid transit for every neighborhood along Roosevelt Boulevard.



Conceptual rendering of the proposed Rising Sun Station entrance, shown across spring, summer, fall, and winter. One station, four seasons, one network connecting the Northeast to the rest of Philadelphia.

*A subway that runs **when surface transit cannot.**
A station that welcomes **every rider, every day.**
A corridor reconnected to the rest of the city.*

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BUILD THE ROOSEVELT BOULEVARD SUBWAY