

R8 Preservation Depends Upon Budget Deal,
Mt. Airy Times-Express and Germantown Courier

August 6, 2003

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The R8 Chestnut Hill West Train is still in danger. Although the recently approved SEPTA budget for the current fiscal does not eliminate the R8, further cuts are likely if SEPTA does not receive substantial additional funding from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Moreover, the new budget calls for severe cuts in services on R8 line, beginning in September. About Half all R8 Chestnut Hill West trains will be eliminated. SEPTA proposes to cut off-peak, weekday service on the line from twice an hour to once an hour. Inbound trains to Center City will run only once an hour beginning at 9:11 am. Outbound trains from Center City will run only once an hour except between 4:17 and 6:33 pm. Moreover, on weekends, trains will run only once every ninety minutes.

The Northwest Campaign for Public Transportation believes that these cuts are, for four reasons, profoundly foolish and destructive. First, the amount of money saved by such a reduction in service is miniscule. Second, reduction in off-peak service would be a terrible blow to many users of the R8, especially the children who take the train home from school, the elderly who take the train to and from Center City, and the many people who work non-traditional hours. Third, these service reductions will undermine on-peak as well as off-peak ridership. Many people travel during off-peak hours on one leg of their round trip and on-peak hours during the other. Fourth, this proposal is based upon the myth that the R7 and R8 duplicate one another. The two lines are close only at the top of Chestnut Hill. The vast majority of riders on both the R7 and R8 lines come from lower Chestnut Hill, Mt. Airy, Germantown and, for the R8, East Falls. Parallel stations on the two lines are typically over a mile, and in some cases, close to two miles apart.

We urge all who care about public transportation to protest these cutbacks. Phone or write to members of the SEPTA board and to our local and state politicians. Names and addresses are on the back of this leaflet. Further information can be found on our website: www.wman.net/ncpt. Further information can be found on our website: www.wman.net/ncpt.