Transportation decisions we make today will have a significant impact on the lives of our communities for years to come and we must ensure that our policy and funding opportunities address, not worsen, the health and social inequalities facing Philadelphians. This is at the heart of Transit Equity Day, a day that is even more important due to several transportation planning processes launching this year.

The City Transit Plan is one of the recommended strategies from the Strategic Transportation Plan, CONNECT, published in 2018. This plan will define Philadelphia’s role in improving public transit into one where residents choose transit first, over other transportation options. The result of the plan could include a long-term vision for transit, rail infrastructure and bus corridor improvements, and policy and funding recommendations. Public engagement will begin in March 2020 and the 18 month planning process should be completed in 2021.

SEPTA's Comprehensive Bus Network Redesign, as recommended by the 2018 Philadelphia Bus Network Choices Report will redesign our bus network to get more people to more places sooner. This process will change some routes, the spacing between bus stops and service patterns. This is a multiyear process: SEPTA will release a Request for Proposals to select a consultant team to assist with bus network redesign, and will also engage stakeholders and the public in goal-setting and reviewing design options.

At the state and regional-level, the Transportation and Climate Initiative is pushing states, Pennsylvania included, to design a regional cap-and-invest program to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector while generating income for transit and clean transportation investments. This process is moving into Phase 5, where states will decide to sign a final Memorandum of Understanding, agreeing to the terms of the policy proposal. Implementation of the program is expected to begin as early as 2022.

With community voices at the center, these opportunities could open the door to more equitable investments in transit to reduce the legacy of harm on low-income communities and communities of color while also increasing connectivity throughout the city and Greater Philadelphia region.