

# LANTA mulls public transit options

SEPTA taps capital funds to avoid service cuts

**By Evan Jones**  
The Morning Call

While the state's largest transit agency has found a funding source to keep its services intact in and around Philadelphia, the near future is still murky for bus and van service in the Lehigh Valley.

Last week, SEPTA and Pittsburgh Rapid Transit both received permission from Gov. Josh Shapiro's administration to tap funds allocated for capital projects for operating expenses instead, to preserve existing service with fare increases.

Both agencies were forced to make the move as the state Legis-

lature is unable to agree on a new budget that includes transit funding.

Meanwhile, LANTA Executive Director Owen O'Neil said Monday that it has not yet submitted a similar request.

"We have reached out to PennDOT to discuss what options are available to LANTA," O'Neil told The Morning Call. "In the meantime, we are continuing to prepare for all scenarios, which include a significant service reduction in January without any new funding."

In May, LANTA released a draft budget for the 2026 fiscal year, which starts July 1, that doesn't include any extra money from the state. It instead includes a 20% service cut, a 25% fare increase on fixed routes and a 25% fare increase on shared ride services for seniors.

It also includes an unfunded deficit of approximately \$8 million on the bus system and an additional \$3 million for shared ride services.

Cuts could include half of service after 7 p.m. daily, half of Saturday service and 75% of Sunday service. Service to northern destinations in the Valley, including the Slate Belt, Walnutport and Slatington, could be eliminated. Any cuts would begin in January.

The 2026 LANTA budget includes an operating cost of \$66.8 million, a \$2.8 million increase from 2025. Government subsidies make up a lot of that money, including \$9.5 million from the federal government, \$36.8 million from the state and \$1.4 million

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A LANTA bus on the 103 route is seen March 7, 2023, at Eighth and St. John streets in Allentown. **APRIL GAMIZ/THE MORNING CALL**

## JORDAN SKATEPARK



Pablo Garcia of Allentown rides a skateboard on Tuesday at Jordan Skatepark in Allentown.

## NEW PLACES TO CATCH AIR



People enjoy Allentown's Jordan Skatepark on Tuesday.



Josiah Drummond, 11, of Allentown rides a scooter. The second phase of construction at the skate park, which opened in November 2021, was recently unveiled, including overhead light fixtures. **APRIL GAMIZ/THE MORNING CALL PHOTOS**

## Shapiro: Nation must 'turn tide'

Pa. Gov. rallies against political violence, rejects vengeance

**By Marc Levy**  
Associated Press

HARRISBURG — Gov. Josh Shapiro said Tuesday that the nation must "turn the tide" against political violence and the belief that government can't solve problems while also rejecting vengeance.

Shapiro, a Democrat, delivered the remarks as the keynote speech at the Eradicate Hate Global Summit in Pittsburgh, days after the assassination of conservative political activist Charlie Kirk.

Shapiro said political leaders must condemn all forms of political violence and reject the "rhetoric of vengeance."

"It is all wrong, and it makes us all less safe. During moments like these, I believe we have a responsibility to be clear and unequivocal in calling out all forms of political violence,

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## Kirk killing suspect faces charges

Evidence released includes messages, note left in advance

**By Jesse Bedayn, Hannah Schoenbaum and John Seewer**  
Associated Press

PROVO, Utah — Prosecutors brought a murder charge on Tuesday against the man accused of assassinating Charlie Kirk and outlined evidence including a text message confession to his partner and a note left beforehand that said he had the opportunity to kill one of the nation's leading conservative voices "and I'm going to take it."

DNA on the trigger of the rifle that killed Kirk also matched that of Tyler Robinson, Utah County Attorney Jeff Gray said while outlining the evidence and announcing charges that could result in the death penalty if Robinson is convicted.

The prosecutor said Robinson, 22, wrote in one text that he spent more than a week planning the attack on Kirk, a prominent force in politics credited with energizing the Republican youth movement

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## INSIDE



### Robert Redford dead at 89

A Hollywood golden boy who became an Oscar-winning director, liberal activist and godfather for independent cinema under the name of one of his best-loved characters, died Tuesday.

## STEM Squad helps take on science standards

**By Elizabeth Deornellas**  
The Morning Call

The STEM Squad at Lehigh University is sending engineering students and faculty into the community in an expanding effort to support local teachers as they tackle new science standards.

The Pennsylvania STEELS Standards — short for Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability — are fully in effect for the first time this school year, prioritizing inquiry-based, hands-on instruction, and providing an opportunity for Lehigh to model what such instruction looks like.

"One of the scariest things for teachers is when we're introducing new standards," said Chayah

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Chayah Wilbers, right, of Lehigh's STEM Squad builds a UV sensor bracelet with a young future maker and his mother at the Lehigh Lounge during Musikfest in Bethlehem. **MAEGAN ANDERSON/LEHIGH UNIVERSITY**