



Borough of West Chester, Pennsylvania
West Chester Borough Council
Committee to Reestablish Rail Service to West Chester

MEETING MINUTES

PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting of the Committee to Reestablish Rail Service to West Chester

LOCATION: West Chester Borough Hall, Room 232

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at 7:00 PM

TEAMS LINK: [MEETING LINK](#)

Meeting ID: 243 349 623 894

Passcode: 7M594X

Dial in by phone +1 814-580-5758,,279105431#

1. Call to Order 7:08 PM

a. **Summary of the Meeting –**

The Committee convened to discuss follow-up items from the September meeting, including coordination with Chester County Planning Commission, updates to the 2025 Pennsylvania State Rail Plan, next steps for the Route 1 pedestrian bridge grant, and continued development of the five-year financial and operating plans. Other major topics included progress on student and community surveys, coordination with DVRPC and SEPTA on ridership updates, engagement with Senator Kane’s office on bridge grant funding, discussion of capital cost estimates and phasing of rail restoration work, developer engagement and funding strategies for rail-related improvements, and sustainability/outreach events including the upcoming West Chester Chili Cook-Off.

2. Attendees

Attendee	Affiliation
Jason Levinn	RR Committee
Jordan Norley	RR Committee
Barbara Clarke	RR Committee
Craig Blizzard -phone	RR Committee
Jim Sargent-absent	RR Committee
Liz Young-absent	RR Committee
Kim Bove - absent	RR Committee
Charlot Barker	RR Committee
Steve Laarkamp	Member of the Public

Alden Richie	Member of the Public
Mikie Linkey	Member of the Public
Scott (Amtrak employee)	Member of the Public

3. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Reminder: Launch **Transcription** to record draft Meeting Minutes.
 - b. The September 10, 2025 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved unanimously by the committee.
4. Business
 - a. Review of Open Action Items

#	Full Description	Due Date	Responsible Party	Comments
8	Confirm the WC-Wawa Rail Service is included in the Chester County Transportation Priority Projects (TPP) (Check with Borough Planning Department and County Commissioners)	10/15/2025	Norley	County leadership supportive; schedule meeting/ lunch
9	Provide comments to include the WC-Wawa Rail Service as part of the 2025 PA State Rail Plan	10/16/2025 10/24/2025	Norley	Draft Plan omits WC-Wawa; public comment period open until 10/24; virtual hearing on 10/16
20	Develop a template for a letter writing campaign	11/30/2025	Barker	Template under review; minimal feedback received; recirculate for comment
22	Coordinate ridership updates with DVRPC	11/15/2025	Norley	Discussion of next grant cycle (July 2026) and ongoing data collection
33	Update West Chester Metro Five-Year Financial Plan	11/19/2025	Levinn	Financial plan and cost estimates in progress; to be presented at November Borough Council meeting

35	Student/Resident Transit Surveys	10/22/2025	Barker	Surveys to be separated by school (WCU, Cheyney, Westtown) final drafts to be circulated
38	Coordinate track upgrades with WCRR (Derek Slifer)	11/12/2025	Levinn	Phasing and capital plan under review; follow-up discussion planned
39	Sustainability Table/Community Outreach (e.g., Chili Cook-Off)	10/19/2025	Clarke	Participation at Sustainability Table confirmed; rail awareness materials to be displayed
42	Quarterly Briefing to Borough Council	11/19/2025	Levinn	Will include financial plan and updated project phasing
43	Meet with Sen. Kane's staff to discuss applying for state grants for the pedestrian bridge	11/30/2025	Bove/ Levinn	Priority item—requires follow-up; staff contact offered to assist with grant application
44	Follow-up with Jody Holton of SEPTA on Wawa Line ridership data	11/30/2025	Levinn	Awaiting data; Jody to advise on optimal schedule integration
45	Quarterly Briefing to Borough Council	1/14/2026	TBD	Maintain standing rotation for presentations

b. Funding and Capital Planning

- i. Jason Levinn presented progress on the five-year financial plan and preliminary capital cost estimates (~\$50M including contingency, rolling

stock, and five years of operations). Discussion of potential phased construction (2–3 mile segments) to minimize interference with West Chester Railroad operations. Private developer coordination (Eli Kahn property) discussed as potential funding and land-use synergy. Strategy remains to avoid local/SEPTA funding requests; focus on RCAP, federal, and private foundation funds.

- c. Website / Communications
 - i. West Chester Rail Committee website remains live. Coordination with WCU students will provide support for updates, social media outreach, and volunteer communications.
- d. Pedestrian Bridge / Route 1 Priority Project
 - i. Committee reaffirmed the pedestrian bridge as the critical first-phase element. Senator Kane’s office has offered staff assistance with preliminary grant applications. Action: Schedule meeting with Senator Kane’s staff to advance funding application.
- e. Community and Institutional Outreach
 - i. Discussion on student engagement via survey and communications with WCU and Cheyney. Potential inter-borough collaboration between West Chester and Media Borough Councils proposed to strengthen regional advocacy. Sustainability Committee events provide strong public outreach opportunities; the West Chester Chili Cook-Off on October 19 will feature committee participation.
- f. Railroad Coordination
 - i. Committee discussed need for track assessment and coordination with West Chester Railroad (Derek Slifer). FRA safety standards and potential quiet zones identified as future considerations. Noted deterioration along portions of track; long-term upgrades needed to achieve Class 3 (50 mph) operations.
- g. Nonprofit Development (501 c(3))
 - i. “Friends of Rail West Chester” nonprofit formally established in February 2025. Organization to assume responsibility for fundraising, grants, and operator procurement. Need for additional board members and administrative follow-up (EIN, bank account, website).
- h. New Action Item
 - i. Presentation to Media, 11/13, appeal to Joy Washington and Bob McMann for support and advocate. The slide deck to be sent to Steve Laarkamp to review with the committee in Media
- i. Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 7:00 PM (Room 232 and via Microsoft Teams)
- j. Adjourn -8:10PM

Committee Membership

- Jason Levinn, Chair
- Jim Sargent
- Craig Blizzard
- John McGee
- Kim Bove

- Jordan Norley

- Charlot Barker

- Liz Young

- Barbara Clarke
