SEPTA launches plan to reduce deadly falls and jumps onto tracks

Darryl C. Murphy

SEPTA Police Chief Thomas Nestel stopped at the corner of 15th and Market streets last week on the west side of City Hall.

He was on the scene after a man jumped in front of a Market Frankford Line train at 15th Street Station and died — the third reported suicide in Philadelphia in 2021.

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While track falls may be a result of a mental health crisis, or stems from the Covid-19 pandemic, they can also be mundane reasons, such as when riders lean too far to read a poster, or when they're unable to find a seat on an overcrowded train.

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The authority also plans to include a more comprehensive data collection, such as the number of falls that did not result in injuries.

The authority’s Watch Their Step campaign, SEPTA officials said, aims at reducing the number of falls by increasing awareness.

The authority is currently looking to create a Citizens Police Oversight Commission, including investigating police use-of-force incidents; recommending policy changes and discipline, and subpoena power to compel officers to participate in meetings.

This story originally appeared on WHYY.org, a local nonprofit that has citywide coverage.

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The proposed resolution to eliminate the so-called “rule of two” that regulates the filling of city civil service vacancies and promotions by limiting the eligibility pool to the two candidates with the highest score on examinations.

Other candidates who may fall onto the tracks because they’re under the influence of drugs.

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The legislation lays out broad powers for the commission, including investigating police use-of-force incidents; recommending policy changes and discipline, and subpoena power to compel officers to participate in meetings.

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