

Montgomery News ([montgomerynews.com](http://montgomerynews.com))

---

Glenside News Globe Times Chronicle > News

## Residents question need for proposed SEPTA parking garage

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

By Thomas Celona  
Staff Writer

---

Cheltenham residents voiced their position loud and clear to SEPTA officials last Thursday: they do not want a parking garage at the Jenkintown-Wyncote station.

Their comments, however, revealed their problems with the garage stem from larger concerns about SEPTA's scheduling policy.

Cheltenham Township Ward 4 Commissioner Kathy Hampton hosted a community meeting at Curtis Hall April 29 to give residents an opportunity to discuss the proposed parking garage with SEPTA officials. The event brought out approximately 50 residents, many of whom were from the Cheltenham Chamber of Citizens.

"I thought it was very important to invite SEPTA to come discuss the Jenkintown-Wyncote station, which is at the forefront of my ward and has been a concern for two, three years," Hampton said.

SEPTA has proposed constructing a four-story, 690-space parking garage at the station, which currently has 527 spaces. The first story of the garage would be below ground level.

In addition to the garage, SEPTA has proposed renovations to address flooding concerns, alleviate traffic congestion, bring pedestrian access into ADA compliance and improve station platforms.

SEPTA officials have said these other renovations would eliminate a portion of the current parking, contributing to the need to construct the garage.

The first step in the process was to conduct a commuter preference and parking needs study of the station, which SEPTA hired Kevin Williams, a planning consultant with HNTB, to complete.

Williams presented his initial draft study at the Jan. 13 township public works committee meeting. His assessment of the demand for parking at the station met with opposition from residents, so Hampton invited him to address some of their concerns at the community meeting.

Williams began by saying the goal of his study, which is still just a draft, was to evaluate the raw demand for parking.

"The lot is not just constrained — it's 100 percent full," he said. "The lot is full as early as 8:15 [a.m.]"

The station sees 1,590 daily boardings — more than three times the number of parking spaces — and sees 600 boardings after 9 a.m., according to Williams.

The study also showed a majority of those who use street parking would rather park at the lot and more than 100 people who park at surrounding stations would rather park at the Jenkintown-Wyncote station, according to Williams.

There is an anticipated demand for 941 parking spots, according to Williams.

The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the residents.

Several questioned the methodology of Williams' study.

Gail Post of Wyncote pointed to a review of the study the Cheltenham Township Board of Commissioners asked Dr. Rachel Weinberger of the University Pennsylvania to perform. Post said Weinberger's review pointed out several flaws in Williams' study and in fact recommended reducing the number of spaces at the lot.

"I don't think it was a good study," Williams responded, saying he believed it was "probably done by her college students."

While residents voiced objections to the study, the majority of their comments were directed at SEPTA officials.

The consensus among those present was SEPTA needs to address what residents feel is the true problem: limited transportation options at nearby stations that force commuters to drive to the Jenkintown-Wyncote station.

"People are telling us they'd like to have more frequency of service and more parking at their home stations," Tom McHugh of Wyncote said.

Residents noted the Glenside and Elkins Park stations also have full lots, while all the surrounding stations have less frequent train stops.

SEPTA officials responded by saying they have placed thousands of new parking spaces at suburban stations over the past 17 years.

"If the frequency of trains was more available from Elkins Park, from Glenside, from Warminster, I guarantee the number of people that would come to Jenkintown would be reduced," Julie Haywood of Wyncote said.

Residents said SEPTA needed to get to the root of the problem by providing better access at local stations within walking distance from people's homes.

"The only way we're going to make transit a part of everyday life is make it closer to people's houses," Olga McHugh of Wyncote said. "What we need at SEPTA are leaders, not followers of the past policies."

"We're arguing about policy, and we're arguing about service," Edie Cerebi of Wyncote said. "That's what it comes down to. The fact of the matter is it's SEPTA policy to bring the cars to the station and not the service to the people."

---

URL: [http://www.montgomerynews.com/articles/2010/05/05/glenside\\_news\\_globe\\_times\\_chronicle/news/doc4bdf4c387ebc1930829781.prt](http://www.montgomerynews.com/articles/2010/05/05/glenside_news_globe_times_chronicle/news/doc4bdf4c387ebc1930829781.prt)

© 2010 MontgomeryNews.com, a **Journal Register** Property