

To the Editor:

While Jenkintown-Wyncote does need a larger parking facility, it does not need to be remade into a supersized “transit center.” Rather Melrose Park, Elkins Park, Jenkintown-Wyncote, Glenside, North Hills, Oreland, Ardsley, Roslyn, Noble, Rydal, Meadowbrook, Lawndale, Cheltenham, Ryers, Fox Chase, Harpers, Walnut Hill, and Valley Falls; each and every one of these station stops, should be given attention as a valuable asset to its locale. Secondary service to any of these stops would consign that community to secondary status.

SEPTA’s proposal to construct an expanded parking facility at Jenkintown-Wyncote is based on out of date automobile culture thinking. Even the proposed, slightly smaller, facility is quite a bit larger than the community needs. The long term planning for parking at all SEPTA rail stations in Cheltenham Twp., Abington Twp., and Jenkintown is based (I suspect) on a 50 year old theory concerning “Heavy Rail Transit”. This out of date thinking assumes that many of the rail commuters can and should drive an additional 3 or 4 miles or more to park at large “Transit Center” parking lots. This is completely contrary to 21st century, forward thinking environmental principles.

Close station spacing encourages development and nurtures revitalization at each of many locations. It keeps the ridership incredibly diverse and makes the system secure to ride at any time of day. For these reasons SEPTA should retain the energy efficient heritage it was given and build on it. Through a little creative scheduling and a mix of local, short turn, and express trains, excellent quality service could be provided.

In the Philadelphia system the standard should be, “provide all stations with adequate parking, ADA access, and interconnection with all local bus and shuttle van services”. The only stations that should even be considered for “Transit Center” status, with parking beyond that needed to generously serve the local community, should be those at the end of a given line.

The SEPTA team currently working on the Jenkintown-Wyncote Parking Facility should incorporate a covered pedestrian / cyclist bridge over the railroad into their design. This bridge, to the south of the proposed replacement Greenwood Ave. automotive bridge, should include ramps down to the new High-Level station platforms. One of the levels of the new, smaller, parking facility should be cleverly placed at the same elevation as the High-Level platforms. These changes provide ADA access without the expense of elevators. This is a gift that will keep on giving for years to come. As we all know, but are slow to admit, the reliability of elevators in this environment is questionable at best, and funding for on-going elevator maintenance is historically even more questionable.

The second Philadelphia system standard should be, “Keep It Simple”. Common sense would say that the lowest level of the parking garage be above the level of the adjacent creek.