

**Comments at SEPTA Public Hearing  
Tuesday, April 21, 2009  
Regarding FY 2010 Capital Budget and FYs 2010-2021 Capital Program**

The SEPTA plan for building a very large parking garage at the Jenkintown-Wyncote train station represents a missed opportunity to bring our regional rail system into the twenty-first century. It is a continuation of accommodation toward an unsustainable culture of energy waste based on automobiles. The proposed SEPTA garage is designed, according to SEPTA documents and statements, to attract riders from outer suburbs; by-passing their local stations and driving through our narrow streets and historic communities. As proposed by SEPTA the nearly \$50 million project will add only 236 parking spaces, and build an unneeded new station building to replace the most elegant train station in the entire region. I am referring to, of course, the Horace Trumbauer designed Jenkintown-Wyncote station building built in 1932. Estimates for this fully taxpayer funded project show that the cost per added parking space exceeds \$100,000 of our federal, state and county taxes. That money should be spent to improve services up and down every line.

Many of the good people of Jenkintown and Cheltenham Township have chosen to buy homes close to the city and an excellent train station because they correctly understand that rail systems are the future of regional transportation. Many of us walk or bicycle to our train station. Outsiders, especially people who chose to live in the outer suburbs, seem to be clinging to the failed policies of a society based almost entirely on the automobile. The proposed SEPTA plan to accommodate those failed policies with a very large garage at the Jenkintown-Wyncote station now threatens our property values and therefore the tax base that supports our local and county governments.

The new March 2009 Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) report on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions states the obvious. Per capita GHG emissions are significantly lower in the inner suburbs than in the outer suburbs due to greater use of automobiles in the outer suburbs. Sustainable solutions, to the inevitable economic and environmental collapse caused by suburban sprawl and the “happy motoring” mentality, all include a concept called “automobile at rest” or reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by the public. We as Americans must learn to access public transportation as close to our residences as possible, and reduce the use of our automobiles. SEPTA must make that transition possible by improving and increasing rail service to the far suburbs, not building large parking garages in established model inner suburban communities.

This SEPTA plan to force more traffic into Glenside, Jenkintown and Wyncote is devoid of good long-term thinking. It rewards the wasteful and punishes the conservative. It subsidizes the foolish and taxes the wise. It supports the unsustainable and devalues the efficient. Jenkintown and Wyncote are model energy efficient inner suburban communities. SEPTA planners must not ignore the facts of physical science that dictate a future with less driving and a much more extensive and modernized rail and bus system

that serves the public in all communities large and small. The future begins now. I strongly suggest that if SEPTA management and planners truly want to see the future of American rail systems, they do as I have done; travel to Switzerland, the most energy efficient developed nation in the western world, and experience their rail system. They will not find a large parking garage like the one SEPTA has planned for the Jenkintown-Wyncote rail station.

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