

Regional Citizens Committee Urges A Moratorium On Parking Garages

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's (DVRPC) Regional Citizens Committee (RCC) has made a recommendation to the DVRPC Board.

Here is the resolution RCC adopted on 5/18/10;

We believe that the DVRPC Board should seek to avoid concentration of capital expenditures, facilities, service levels, and station-area automobile traffic at a few locations. A larger number of much-lower-cost, interrelated infrastructure and service improvements at diverse locations will sooner bring us a more capable and efficient transportation system.

In the meantime, we urge a moratorium on construction of regional rail parking garages in favor of return to just-in-time incremental and economical expansion of the current parking stock.

RCC welcomes DVRPC's participation in the Jenkintown-Wyncote Region Commute Preferences and Parking Needs Study. Beginning in that neighborhood, discussions have expanded concerning how our rail system and its parking should best develop and expand to meet our needs at a time of difficult energy and environmental issues.

Data from that study in conjunction with other data show that:

1. Jenkintown and Glenside stations, which have much higher service levels than surrounding stations, have diverted some 400 passengers from those other "home stations".
2. The largest diversion is from stations of the Warminster line, about 134. Since 1976, Warminster line service levels have been reduced from 50 weekday trains to only 43, despite large increases in tributary population. This reduction matches the 14% average cut on all regional rail lines which were operated then and now. As we know, only one line (to the Airport) has been added while five others have been partly or completely discontinued.
3. Peak service levels in several cases do not meet the minimal requirements of SEPTA's service standards, every 30 minutes in the peak traffic direction during peak travel hours.
4. A projected parking garage near the present Jenkintown-Wyncote station would increase the parking supply there to further divert passengers from nearby stations. The cost would approximate \$100,000 per added parking space. Currently, extensions of existing parking lots can cost about \$5000 per space. In fact, some surrounding stations with low service levels have a total of 200 vacant paved spaces which are now available for use.
5. The average number of parking spaces added yearly on four nearby lines has declined, according to a map from the Montgomery County Planning Commission. In the 1993-2009 period, an average of 163 spaces was added annually. Over the last four years, that average has declined to 44 new spaces yearly.

All of these figures from available official data sources.