

Thoughts on a Green Roof

1. The EAC's proposal for a green roof was not recommended for the top of this five story 700 car garage. Instead we were recommending a smaller garage that only increased the parking spaces by 100 cars, with the top level being a green roof that was even with the Greenwood Avenue Bridge so that pedestrians and bikers could have access to the garden and have a safer upper route into the station.
2. You falsely assume that the weight of a green roof will increase structural materials and costs. Installing a green roof can cost the same as building a normal commercial roof and the weight of a green roof can be less than the full capacity of cars presently proposed for the garage roof top.
3. The principal advantage is that a vegetated roof system can control rainwater runoff by absorbing and filtering rainwater before it goes into the Tookany Creek or, ideally as recommended by the EAC, is stored and used for gray water use in the station's toilets. Also a green roof can provide less black top exposure to the sun and maintain the same temperature as a typical planted front lawn, keeping the surrounding area in the hot summer weather cooler, especially and including Cliff Terrace. It can also trap dust, dirt and absorb air pollutants, such as carbon monoxide, while creating a habitat for insects, birds and butterflies-- something the present parking lot, or a car filled top garage level, does not provide. It can also provide a sound barrier to the neighboring community-- muffling cars noises within the garage and the noises from the trains entering and exiting the station.
4. The added advantage for SEPTA is that the green roof will extend the life of the parking deck.
5. Other attractions could include a walking track made of recycled rubber paving. This could be incorporated into the green roof design for use by the community and SEPTA staff. Some folks have asked if the roof top garden could be set up as a "Community garden", where neighbors could participate in the planting and tending to the garden. Adding beauty and recreation can also increase use of the space, community commitment to the area, and decrease crime.

These five points only address the environmental advantages of a green roof. The EAC also recommended other considerations, such as increasing bus routes and van service during rush hour, especially from large nearby businesses, to the station. Creating incentives to riders for walking, riding their bike or taking the bus. We support "Smart Transportation" and advocate that SEPTA incorporate "sustainable transportation" which means examining its present policies that actually discourage folks from using alternate modes of transportation to the station and their scheduling policies that force people who live close to other train stations to actually drive to a farther away station where there is more frequent service. SEPTA should be encouraged to look at their ineffective policies in order to increase it's ridership and decrease car use and congestion around the Jenkintown Station . We have advocated that they do not stress our already congested (during rush hours) small neighborhood streets of Wyncote with an unreasonable increase in car spaces available to riders.

I also urge that everyone get the details and not consider something an "impractical possibility" until you know what the details and facts are. It is my opinion that there are many advantages to having a smallgarage with "state of the art" environmental components at the Jenkintown/Wyncote station, but some people are not opening their minds to what advantages there may be. Shouting and demanding that the garage not be built is not helping us to work with SEPTA to design something that does compliment and help our community, as well as our watershed and airshed. We could be paving the way for future garage designs in our area. The "feasibility" study was already completed and many community people, including myself, participated in that long process. At this point, especially with ridership up by 14%, SEPTA deems the garage necessary and feasible and now SEPTA is onto the "design" part. They are not asking us if we want the garage-- they are asking for our comments on the design. By ignoring the process some people are sabotaging the ability to have our community work effectively with SEPTA and my fear is that the result may be that SEPTA will just do what it wants without hearing any reasonable input from the community. I had hoped that the meetings prior to tonight's meeting were to organize the community around a solid design plan that everyone could live with and advocate for together. I left the Friday night meeting discouraged and disappointed-- and, of the 70 attendees, there were other people who left feeling the same way, but emotions were high and some folks commented to me that "it was not worth arguing with people who don't want to listen, who won't accept compromise or who can't accept change."

Sincerely,

Barbara Duffy

Wyncote resident and EAC Chair