

More SEPTA services needed, not less.

To the editor:

It's comical that Ben Burrows (Times Chronicle March 25) gives himself credit for provoking a discussion about the SEPTA fiasco planned for the Jenkintown-Wyncote train station. Ben's first letter on this issue was a response to our letter in this paper (March 4) alerting neighbors about the five story 700 car parking garage that SEPTA wants to build. The problem is Ben's on the wrong side of the tracks on this issue. Hundreds of yard signs calling for our commissioners to save our Township have appeared throughout the area and the number continues to grow. Hundreds of residents have signed the petitions carried door to door by dozens of concerned neighbors. Opposition to the existing SEPTA proposal is growing fast and becoming more determined every day.

Ben should be demanding that SEPTA increase service at Elkins Park and Melrose Park stations instead of suggesting the elimination of "minor stations" to save a few minutes for other riders. It is the height of lunacy to force the good people of Elkins Park and Melrose Park to watch trains run past their own neighborhood stations and have to drive (or ride Ben's imagined small light-rail shuttle) outbound to a mega-station. Presently trains only stop at Elkins Park and Melrose Park once or twice per hour, while the majority of trains just pass through. We would gladly stop for two minutes to provide those residents, many of whom would walk to their station, a much more convenient schedule.

We don't want or need mega-stations. We need mega-service, mega-security and mega-maintenance at our existing stations. The huge parking garage/transportation centers planned for Jenkintown-Wyncote and Glenside are abhorrent to energy conservationists, environmentalists, and the residents of Jenkintown and Cheltenham Township that were smart enough to live close to a train station, and a way for others to maintain their addiction to the excessive use of fossil fuels. Truly intelligent and sustainable public policy would get that traffic off the roads as close to the source as possible by improving bus and rail service up and down every line. For the good of our National security and quality of life, the age of energy waste must end now. The SEPTA attempt to make two Cheltenham Township train stations into new "Fern Rocks" ignores the real problems and solutions. SEPTA and our regional planners and officials need to increase rider miles, not just ridership.

Furthermore, \$45M or more of our taxes being spent to add 336 parking spaces in the form of an ugly garage and an unnecessary new Jenkintown-Wyncote ticket office is immoral. ADA compliant elevated platforms can be added for a tiny fraction of that cost. Local property values will surely decline due to additional traffic, undercover crime associated with parking garages, and the architectural incompatibility with our historic residential community. Is Ben Burrows willing to assume the additional tax burden that he will have to bear when Old Wyncote property tax assessments are reduced?

Tom and Olga McHugh, Wyncote