

To the editor:

Regarding the letter on the “badly needed” parking garage at the Jenkintown train station, Mr. Eastwood has clearly demonstrated a view of development and suburbanization more representative of the 1950s than the 21st century. Times however have moved far past his arguments.

He notes there is no dispute over the need for these facilities. In fact, there is considerable dispute over the need for more parking. The population of this area serviced by the train station is not growing; only the far suburbs are growing, representing the continuing sprawl of our region.

The historical background that he provides, while interesting, misses the major point. SEPTA should consider expanding service to areas where people live and to where the population is growing the most rapidly (perhaps even expanding train lines back to NY and other places). Instead, we are given a poorly conceived plan for a white elephant \$50m garage that adds only 230 or so parking places, an incredibly inefficient use of funds. And as was made clear by the alternative proposals to SEPTA, there are numerous ways to add parking spots on both sides of the tracks without this type of investment.

The “hare-brained scheme” of considering reducing the lanes on Old York Road was hardly that; it was commendable. If you only think of a solution to the problem of congestion (whether on 611 or on 63 and 232) in expanding traffic lanes, then you are solving a modern problem with postwar ideas. Instead, we need to think beyond an automobile centric solution – its not simply more lanes and taller parking garages. No urban plan today would turn pedestrian friendly streets into a highway, as Jenkintown unfortunately did. It is the recipe for small town disaster, not a solution.

Finally, as one who opposes the mega-garage, I don't think that I need to “come to my senses.” I do think that those who see development in the form of size and quantity need to look at the larger picture of alternatives within a greater transportation infrastructure and to consider the overall affect on our community. There simply are better ways to invest \$50m than a misplaced unnecessary garage.

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