PETITION TO DIRECT PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

December 22, 2009

VIA Overnight Delivery

Ms. Letitia A. Thompson, Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration, Region III
1760 Market Street
Suite 500
Philadelphia, PA 19103-4124

RE: Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)
Proposed Parking Garage/Transportation Center at Jenkintown-Wyncote Station
MPMS #84642

Dear Ms. Thompson:

Cheltenham Chamber of Citizens (CCC)[1] is a member-based non-profit organization concerned with the health, safety and welfare of its members and of the communities in and adjacent to Cheltenham Township. CCC members, approximately 500 strong, live, work and recreate in the communities and areas adjacent to the garage and transportation center SEPTA is proposing for the Jenkintown-Wyncote (JW) commuter rail station. The proposed project borders public parkland, a bird sanctuary, and the National Register-listed Wyncote Historic District. The Tookany Creek flows along the entire western edge of the project site.

CCC and its members will be substantially, specifically and directly affected by the outcome of this controversial project. As such, we, the undersigned, respectfully request that your office direct the preparation of an EIS. We believe SEPTA has not justified the need for this project, has not seriously and comprehensively considered all reasonable

[1] See http://www.cheltenhamchamberofcitizens.com/

alternatives, nor has it fully evaluated the environmental and social impacts. In the absence of the hard look afforded by an EIS, the environmental and social consequences of the proposed project cannot be fully understood.

CCC's interests are as many and varied as its members. CCC favors public transportation solutions that serve our communities and fully support the expansion and effective deployment of public transportation as a way to take cars off already crowded streets, reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases, and as a consequence, lessen dependence on non-renewable energy. However, each of these conditions, as well as others, will be exacerbated by SEPTA's plan for a 700-car, multi-story parking garage and transportation center at the JW commuter rail station. The proposed project violates progressive public transportation and energy policies. Instead, it encourages more people to drive farther to a new JW "hub," bypassing their local stations because of insufficient service. The net effect is that rather than increasing rail passenger miles, the proposed project would actually increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT) throughout the region.

Our concerns are as follows:

1. The proposed project consists of development within a floodplain and is subject to Executive Order 11988,[2] which restricts Federal support of such development and mandates, in part, the preparation of environmental impact statements.

2. CCC is concerned about the methodology, inputs and theory behind SEPTA's parking demand forecasting used to justify the proposed project. Cheltenham Township is fully built-out. We are not in a high growth area; rather, the Township and its communities are well established with a traditional neighborhood fabric.[3] Based on data provided by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), regional population and ridership growth in the last 25 years has been concentrated in the distant suburbs.

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[2] Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management, May 24, 1977, 42 FR 26951, 3 CFR, 1977 Comp., p. 117.

[3] Montgomery County Planning Commission, *2008 ANNUAL REPORT*, p. 14.

Between 2000 and 2005, outer suburbs have experienced a 9% increase in population, while the city has seen a 2% decrease in population. Developed communities, such as Cheltenham Township, have remained stable.[4]

It has been documented that this project was not conceived of as a means to increase rider service at JW, a residential neighborhood, but rather, as part of an economic re-development plan for the Glenside commercial district.[5,6,7] From various discussions with Township officials and residents, it appears SEPTA has made construction of a garage and transportation center at JW a prerequisite for the proposed 2013 Glenside garage project, presumably so that riders displaced during construction of the Glenside project will have a place to park. SEPTA has made clear that it will not proceed with the Glenside garage, located approximately 1 mile away from JW, without first having constructed the proposed JW project.[8]

The feasibility study,[9] produced to justify the project need and thus secure funding, was flawed and included a biased survey that only asked respondents if they would park at JW or Glenside if more parking were provided at either or both of those stations. No attempt was made at discerning parking demand at the other stations located within the identified ridershed. Based on year 2000 figures, at least 150 (29%) of the 527 existing parking spaces at JW are occupied by cars driven from outside Abington Township, Cheltenham Township and Jenkintown Borough. That number rises to 220 (41.5%) when passengers that have by-passed their local stations[10] are included.

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[4] Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), *Tracking Progress Toward 2030: Regional Indicators for the DVRPC Long Range Plan*, August 2008.

[5] "Glenside Parking Garage Plan Buoyed by Feasibility Study," *Montgomery Newspapers*, 13 September 2000.

[6] "County Approves $15,000 for Glenside Parking Garage," *Montgomery Newspapers*, 11 October 2000.

[7] Jeffrey Knueppel, SEPTA, at All Hallows Church meeting, 6 April 2009.

[8] Id., with further elaboration indicating SEPTA agreed to consider building a garage at Glenside provided that SEPTA gets to build a garage at Jenkintown-Wyncote station.

[9] DVRPC, *Parking Demand Study - GLENSIDE AND JENKINTOWN SEPTA STATIONS*, October 2000.

[10] Local stations are those regional rail stations closest to one's home residence.

SEPTA has subsequently agreed that the 2000 data was flawed and agreed to a new survey, which was conducted May 2009. Preliminary analysis of that data indicate the number of passengers who bypass their local stations has nearly doubled from 2000 – nearly 80% of the passengers who park at the JW station do not consider JW to be their local train station. Many of those riders are driving from as far away as Doylestown, Willow Grove, Warminster and other locations in Bucks and Northern and Western Montgomery Counties. As was indicated in the new survey results, the number one reason those riders do not use their local stations was inadequate frequency of service. Lack of parking at their local stations ranked second. By neglecting to adequately serve those stations, SEPTA has created an artificial demand for parking at JW, where service levels just happen to be higher.

3. SEPTA's actions regarding siting the proposed project are arbitrary and capricious. SEPTA has continued to proceed with the project despite public acknowledgment that data driving the project is flawed[11] and in contravention to its publicly stated rationale for sitting parking projects in general and the JW project in particular.[12]

According to the DVRPC FY 2009 TIP Public Comment Response Document, when questioned about existing passengers bypassing their local stations and driving to Jenkintown and how the project would exacerbate this trend, SEPTA responded:

> The attractiveness of the Jenkintown station is in fact the number of trains that stop there. If passengers shift from other stations, this will create additional parking spaces at these stations for new transit customers who may be interested in parking there ...there is no where to expand parking at stations such as Roslyn, Ardsley, Noble and Rydal. The large parking lot at Jenkintown is ideal for locating a garage.

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[11] SEPTA, as stated at the Cheltenham Township Public Works Committee meeting held at Cheltenham High School, 14 April 2009.

[12] DVRPC, *Fiscal Year 2009 Transportation Improvement Program*, Volume IV, Part C - Public Outreach Documentation. See public comment items F.48, G.8, G.10, G.11 and SEPTA's response.

Responding to a question about the reason for parking garages not being considered for the Gwynedd Valley station, SEPTA stated:

> Parking garages have not been considered for this station because of the small scale of the station where a garage would not appear to fit into the context. Additionally, it is SEPTA's belief that local residents will not accept a garage at that station.

When questioned about the criteria used to determine parking enhancements, SEPTA responded:

> The process is primarily driven in two ways: 1) availability of land and 2) parking capacity at a particular station and its surrounding stations. If an opportunity to purchase land presents itself and there is a need for parking at that particular station, the acquisition is analyzed and, if feasible, pursued. Second, if there is a station at full capacity, and the next station or two inbound (towards Center City) are also filled to capacity, the area around that station is viewed to see if any opportunities for parking expansion might exist. If a suitable location is found it would be analyzed and pursued in further detail.

By its own admission, SEPTA's criteria for identifying stations suitable for parking "enhancements" are based on availability of land, parking capacity at a particular station and its surrounding stations, the physical context of a particular station and public acceptance. Notwithstanding the above, SEPTA has apparently chosen to ignore the facts pertaining to the proposed project as they relate to its stated project-siting criteria.

For example, SEPTA's Noble station, the first outbound station from JW on the West Trenton line, is located in the Route 611 corridor. The corridor is comprised of PA Route 611, a four-lane highway fronted by mixed-use, large-scale commercial development. Availability of suitable land does not appear to be an issue. Approximately 4 acres of vacant commercial land abuts SEPTA's Noble station parking lot. Approximately 3 more acres are located within 100 feet of the station's Old York Road frontage.[13] Siting a

[13] Former Foy Buick and gas station sites, combined 2.87 acre parcel, Montgomery County parcel ID 30-00-49280-00-1, 30-00-49288-00-2, and 30-00-49284-00-6; former Eckenhoff Cadillac site, 4.14 acre parcel, Montgomery County parcel ID 30-00-66656-00-4.

700-car, multi-story garage and transportation center on any portion of that land is entirely consistent with the physical context, scale of existing development and transit-oriented/mixed-use redevelopment. In addition, those parcels' locations provide easy access – they are located on the 611 corridor. JW, on the other hand, is located in a primarily residential area, is served by narrow and winding residential streets and is adjacent to a National Register-listed historic district, public parks and a nature preserve. There are other examples of alternatives[14] that CCC has developed and presented to SEPTA; however, SEPTA has given no indication, nor has presented any evidence, that it ever seriously considered any other alternative other than the proposed JW project.

Furthermore, there is substantial opposition to the JW garage and transportation center from local residents, despite the apparent support given to the idea by the Cheltenham Township and Montgomery County Commissioners. As an indication of how strongly the local residents resent this project and its lack of transparency, two of the Commissioners up for re-election were voted out in this past spring's primary election. Residents have also born the expense to form a non-profit community organization, the CCC, and to retain legal counsel. The CCC itself has obtained approximately 500 signatures petitioning against the proposed JW project.[15] In addition, another community organization obtained over 3,000 signatures supporting a voter initiative against the project and others like it. There can be no clearer expression of public disapproval regarding this project.

4. SEPTA has a history of reducing and eventually abandoning service at many local stations.[16,17] This is most evident at adjacent stations subsequent to the completion of major transportation centers.[18] For any particular station, reduced service results in low

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[14] In one alternative, a group of local architects demonstrated to SEPTA how an ADA-compliant high-level platform could be incorporated into the existing station without the need for a new garage/station complex.

[15] See attached copies.

[16] SEPTA, *Regional Rail Ridership Census*, 1978 – present.

[17] "Missing the Train," *NorthEast Times,* 17 July, 2003.

[18] Mark D. Sanders, "SEPTA's Proposals to Construct Multilevel Parking Garages at Glenside and Jenkintown Stations," Letter to the Editor, *Times Chronicle,* 22 April 2009.

patronage of that station. Once passenger boardings fall below 50 per day, SEPTA actively considers that station for abandonment.[19] Closing low activity stations has been, and appears to continue to be, a part of SEPTA's strategy for reducing on-board travel time.[20] However, that aspect of its strategy needs to be examined, particularly as it relates to the proposed project, especially since SEPTA has not been forthcoming regarding its long-term plans regarding reductions in service and station closures.[21]

Station closures negatively affect not only those who use the station, but also the surrounding community. At the very least, station closures add travel time to displaced riders and increase VMT. Of those displaced riders who own a vehicle, those that were previously walk-ups would now have to drive and those previously driving would now have to drive further to an alternate station. In some cases, displaced riders would wind up skipping regional rail altogether. The Regional Rail Closure Study estimated that each passenger displaced would, on average, experience an additional 20 minutes in travel time. Conversely, it was estimated that each non-displaced passenger would save a little over 1 minute for every station skipped. The study made no attempt to make a full accounting of the costs associated with station closures;[22] however, it did note that some of the costs would be shifted to local and county transportation programs.

Closures, as well as reduced service levels, will affect parking demand conditions at adjacent stations as those displaced riders who do not abandon regional rail, seek out other stations.[23] We are already seeing such effects at JW station, as the May 2009 survey indicate nearly 80% of the JW ridershed do not consider JW their local station and their patronage of JW is driven by inadequate service at their local station.

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[19] DVRPC, *Regional Rail Stations Closure Study*, November 2003.

[20] Id.

[21] SEPTA would not rule out closure of stations immediately adjacent to JW, nor did they comment on closure of any other nearby stations. As stated at the Cheltenham Township Public Works Committee meeting held at Cheltenham High School, 14 April 2009.

[22] Personal time cost/benefit, pollution costs due to increased VMT and GHG and other externalized costs.

[23] SEPTA, *A New Look at Restoration of Rail Service to Newtown*, January 1991. Copy available at http://www.r8newtown.com/documents/1991_NewtownStudy.pdf

Despite being framed as "increasing passenger convenience," reducing on-board travel times via reductions or elimination of local service benefits SEPTA significantly more than the public.[24] The capital, operating and maintenance savings associated with station closures appear to be the driving force behind service reductions – a deliberate effort to reduce patronage, thereby providing the justification necessary to close targeted stations. What has not been made clear is how the social and environmental costs will be borne by the public and region as a whole.

5. The proposed project conflicts with the Clean Air Act[25] (CAA) and federal climate change and economic policy, which favors a low carbon economy and strong leadership in Congress and Administrative agencies regarding climate policy and actions. The EPA's Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases (Finding),[26] affirms that, in both magnitude and probability, climate change is an enormous problem and that the mix of atmospheric concentrations of six key, well-mixed greenhouse gases that are responsible for it endanger the public health and the public welfare of current and future generations within the meaning of the CAA.

The Finding identifies the six key greenhouse gasses as: carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF6), and goes on to state that:

> Emissions of wellmixed greenhouse gases from the transportation sources covered under CAA section 202(a)3 contribute to the total greenhouse gas air pollution, and thus to the climate change problem, which is reasonably anticipated to endanger public health and welfare.... The transportation sources covered under CAA section 202(a)—the section of the CAA under which these Findings occur—include passenger cars, light- and heavy-duty

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[24] DVRPC, *Regional Rail Stations Closure Study*, November 2003.

[25] The Clean Air Act as amended through P.L. 108–201.

[26] Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases Under Section 202(a) of the Clean Air Act, 7 December 2009. To be published in the Federal Register (www.regulations.gov) under Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2009-0171.

> trucks, buses, and motorcycles. These transportation sources emit four key greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons. Together, these transportation sources are responsible for 23 percent of total annual U.S.greenhouse gas emissions, making this source the second largest in the United States behind electricity generation.

Pursuant to the CAA, "effects on welfare" include, but are not limited to, effects on manmade materials, climate, damage to and deterioration of property, as well as effects on economic values and personal comfort and well being. Public health is endangered by GHG through a wide range of pathways, including an increase in regional ozone pollution and the associated negative impact on respiratory health. The Finding notes that substantial challenges remain with respect to achieving national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ozone and that those challenges will be exacerbated by climate change.

The link relationship between VMT and vehicle emissions is self-apparent. Likewise, the contribution of vehicle emissions to GHG has been well established, as noted by the U.S Supreme Court.[27] A recent study[28] examined various policy scenarios for reducing GHG and energy consumption in the U.S transportation sector. Using variations of the National Energy Modeling System, the researchers concluded that even the most stringent policy scenario modeled failed to prevent an increase in oil consumption and greenhouse-gas emissions, mainly due to the persistent trend of rising VMT, noting that:

> A critical underlying challenge for oil security and greenhouse-gas emissions from the transportation sector is the persistent historical trend of growth in vehicle-miles traveled in the United States.

In 2005, VMT constituted approximately 30% of the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e)[29]

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[27] Massachusetts v. EPA, 549 U.S. 497, 525 (2007). "[j]udged by any standard, U.S. motor-vehicle emissions make a meaningful contribution to greenhouse gas concentrations and hence, ... to global warming."

[28] Gallagher, Kelly Sims, and Gustavo Collantes, "Analysis of Policies to Reduce Oil Consumption and Greenhouse-Gas Emissions from the U.S.Transportation Sector." Discussion Paper 2008-06, Cambridge, Mass.: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, June 2008. Copy available at http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/2008_Gallagher_Collantes_AutoPolicyModelingResults.pdf

[29] CO2e is a greenhouse gas's 100-year warming potential normalized with respect to that of CO_2.

emissions in the Delaware Valley region.[30] As previously noted above, the cumulative effect of SEPTA's policy of creating regional transportation centers and reducing local service will increase VMT, resulting in an increase in GHG emissions throughout the region, to the detriment of our region's health and welfare. It cannot be any clearer that reducing VMT appears to be most significant thing we can do to reduce GHG from the transportation sector and reduce our dependence on imported oil.

6. CCC is concerned about the project's financing, including projected costs and sources of capital. SEPTA has budgeted $57.2[31] million on improvements at JW station – nearly $30[32] million is for the garage alone. Eighty percent of that money comes from federal tax revenue, the remainder from state and local sources.[33] We believe that money – approaching or exceeding $100,000 per new parking space – could and should be much better spent to upgrade parking and service at all local stations and especially at stations where population has been growing – the distant suburbs – and should in no way be used to support projects that would likely result in increased VMT and GHG emissions.

7. CCC and its members' interests are directly and negatively affected by the proposed project. Our membership consists of residents of Cheltenham Township and Jenkintown Borough and include adjacent property owners. We are concerned because the proposed project will significantly increase traffic and congestion, air, noise and light pollution, as well as increase crime[34] and flooding.[35,36] As such, CCC members will be physically

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[30] R. Graff, A. Choate & P. Groth, *Conducting a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory at the Metropolitan Level, Allocated to Municipalities and Counties.* Paper presented at the 18th Annual International Emission Inventory Conference, Baltimore, Md., 15 April 2009.

[31] DVRPC, TIP Search for MPMS # 60540. SEPTA Systemwide Parking Expansion - Jenkintown Parking Garage and Station Improvements - $57.2 million, 15 April 2009.

[32] Id., also see MPMS #84642, which indicates $27.5M for the garage portion of the project. David Koerner, SEPTA, indicated an approximate project cost breakdown as $25M for the garage alone during a public information session held at Cheltenham High School, 24 February 2009.

[33] SEPTA presentation at Cheltenham High School, 24 February 2009.

[34] Mary S. Smith, "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in Parking Facilities." *National Institute of Justice Research in Brief*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, April 1996.

[35] Increased storm intensity and flooding resulting from GHG emissions. See U.S. EPA Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases.

and materially harmed through declining property values,[37,38,39] the negative health and welfare effects due to increased pollution, including noise pollution,[40] increased GHG,[41] decreased pedestrian safety, and the direct and spillover effects of increased crime.

8. CCC has concerns with the impact on Historic Resources. The National Register-listed Wyncote Historic District is a 108-acre area developed as a residential district between 1865 and 1938. The majority of dwellings are two and one-half story stone and wood, structures primarily in the Queen Anne architectural style, set back from tree-lined streets. The houses and overall district retain much of their original appearance and integrity. The district includes 178 contributing structures and only 14 non-contributing buildings.[42] The district also includes the existing JW station, accessory buildings and the adjacent Ralph Morgan Park. The resultant intrusion of a 700-car parking structure, proposed to be over four stories tall, would severely compromise the integrity of the historic district and would set a precedent for further intrusions. In addition, the proposed channelization of the Tookany Creek, including placement of riprap, would be a further affront to the Ralph Morgan Park.

The traffic increase associated with the project will increase air and noise pollution, both of which have the potential to impact the district's historic structure envelopes. Noise and other vibrations, both during and after construction, could have an effect on the

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[36] Due to proposed hydromodifications/channelization.

[37] Gordon Bagby, "Effects of Traffic Flow on Residential Property Values," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 46, No. 1, APA (www.planning.org), January 1980, pp. 88-94.

[38] D. Haling & H. Cohen, "Residential Noise Damage Costs Caused by Motor Vehicles," *Transportation Research Record*, Issue 1559, 1996, p. 84-93.

[39] William Hughes and C.F. Sirmans, "Traffic Externalities and Single-Family House Prices," *Journal of Regional Science*, Vol. 32, No. 4, (www.blackwellpublishing.com/), 1992 pp. 487-500.

[40] M. Nathaniel Mead, "Noise Pollution: The Sound Behind Heart Effects," *Environ Health Perspective*, 115(11): A536–A537, National Institutes of Health - National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, November 2007.

[41] U.S. EPA Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases

[42] National Register of Historic Places, Wyncote Historic District, # 86002884. Recorded with the Keeper of the National Register, U.S Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 16 October 1986.

historic structures within the district.[43] Construction activities such as blasting, soil compaction and pile driving, can also create harmful ground vibrations that may affect adjacent and remote structures.[44] Increases in VMT will also result in an increase in various forms of pollution, including GHG. This is of concern because, as a recent International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) report states, the deleterious effects of global climate change and airborne pollutants on historic resources is mutually reinforcing. Increasing levels of atmospheric sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides (a GHG) are producing higher incidences of acid rain, which combine with the effects of climate change to hasten processes of decay.[45]

9. CCC has concerns with the impact on riparian areas and flooding. The proposed project includes channelization and/or other hydromodifications to the Tookany Creek.[46,47] The potential for increased flooding affects the National Register-listed JW station, the immediately upstream National Register-listed Ralph Morgan Park, the immediately adjacent Cliff Terrace residences and the riparian habitat within the immediately-downstream Edward Parry Hicks Bird Sanctuary.

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[43] Walter Sedovic, "Assessing the Effect of Vibration on Historic Buildings," *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*, Vol. 16, No. 3/4, National Park Service 1984, pp. 53-61

[44] Mark R. Svinkin, M.ASCE, "Minimizing Construction Vibration Effects," *Practice Periodical on Structural Design and Construction*, American Society of Civil Engineers, May 2004, 108-115.

[45] Jeff Adams, "Global Climate Change: Every Cultural Site at Risk?," *Heritage at Risk World Report 2006/2007*, US/ICOMOS Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management.

[46] Gannett Fleming, Inc. report to Cheltenham Township obtained from PA Open Records Act discovery.

[47] SEPTA acknowledgement of 401 and 404 permits made via public meetings and private email.

The U.S. EPA[48, 49] recognizes that stream channelization can cause adverse impacts, such as:

- Threats to human safety, especially in concrete channels where banks lack measures for people and animals to escape;
- Damage to public roads and bridges due to undercutting;
- Damage to utilities and pipelines from uplifting;
- Increased flooding, upstream or downstream, due to decreased flow capacity;
- Damage to public or private property resulting from bank erosion and increased flooding; and
- Decreased property values in areas where flooding is more frequent.

While stream channelization may provide relief at a specific location, it drastically alters the stream flow characteristics and may cause additional problems both upstream and downstream of the project site. This is because the channel-straightening projects tend to focus on one stream function—water transport—without adequately accounting for other functions, such as energy dissipation and sediment transport and impact on riparian ecosystem.

It is noted that a sewer interceptor is located in portions of the Tookany Creek bed located adjacent to and downstream of the proposed project.

10. The proposed project conflicts with local, state and federal efforts, pursuant to the Clean Water Act[50] (CWA), to restore and preserve the Tookany Creek watershed, namely the Tookany Creek Watershed Management Plan[51] and the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford

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[48] U.S. EPA Region 7, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act/Wetlands Program, *Fact Sheet Number 1 Stream Channelization*, February 2005.

[49] U.S. EPA, Office of Water, *National Management Measures to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution from Hydromodification*, EPA 841-D-06-001, July 2006.

[50] The Clean Water Act as amended by the Water Quality Act of 1987, Public Law 100-4.

[51] Heritage Conservancy, *Tookany Creek Watershed Management Plan*, September 2003.

Integrated Watershed Management Plan.[52] The EPA has listed the Tookany/Tacony - Frankford Creek watershed as impaired and has included eight unnamed tributaries in its 303(d) listing[53] and the PADEP has also placed the Tookany Creek on the Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation Registry.

The Tookany Creek section of the watershed (north of Cheltenham Ave.) contains 25.37 total linear miles of stream. These include the headwater tributaries in Abington and Cheltenham Townships, as well as in Jenkintown and Rockledge Boroughs, all in Montgomery County. The Tookany Creek's six main tributaries are: Baeder Creek; Jenkintown Creek; Leeches Run; Main Stem; Mill Run; and Rock Creek. Tookany Creek is renamed the Tacony Creek as it leaves Montgomery County and enters Philadelphia at Cheltenham Avenue. The Tacony-Frankford section of the watershed (south of Cheltenham Ave.) contains 6.8 total linear miles of stream. Tacony Creek then becomes Frankford Creek when it joins the historic Wingohocking Creek at I Street and Ramona by the Juniata Golf Course. The creek flows into the Delaware River just south of the Betsy Ross Bridge.

Tookany Creek Watershed Management Plan

The goals of this plan, funded through Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) "Rivers Conservation Program" and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) Coastal Zone Management Program, include:

- Improving environmental and land conservation efforts by preserving open space, sensitive environmental areas and habitats by promoting concepts such as riparian buffer preservation and restoration, reforestation, floodplain preservation, water quality, streambank maintenance, and improve water quality by reducing nonpoint source pollution.

[52] Philadelphia Water Department & Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, *Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Integrated Watershed Management Plan*, December 2005.

[53] Id., listed pursuant to Section 303 of the CWA.

- Designing non-engineering best management practices and techniques aimed at reducing flooding and improving soil and sedimentation controls.

The plan concludes that habitat loss, landscape fragmentation, flash flooding and extreme fluctuations in stream water levels are the most significant threats to wildlife in the watershed and its riparian areas. The watershed was last inventoried for fish in 2000 by the Philadelphia Water Department and the presence of Northern water snake and Box turtles were noted.

Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Integrated Watershed Management Plan

The U.S. EPA provided funding under its Wetland Program Grant to help assess existing wetlands within the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed and provide basic data for developing wetland restoration projects. Through the Act 167 Stormwater Management Program, PA DEP provided funding to PWD for modeling and analysis to support stormwater planning, as well as to initiate the creation of an Act 167 Plan for this watershed. Initial planning efforts and the development of planning goals were embodied in two River Conservation Plans (one for the Montgomery County portion and one for Philadelphia portion of the watershed) funded by PA DCNR.

As stated in the plans, the goals of the initiative are to protect, enhance, and restore the beneficial uses of the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford waterway and its riparian areas, including those portions of the Tookany Creek adjacent to the project site. The plan concludes that stream aesthetics, accessibility, and safety are compromised due a number of factors, including litter and illegal dumping, trash from stormwater discharges, channelization of portions of the stream, and bank deterioration along stream corridors. It is also noted that the existing aquatic and riparian habitats have been degraded by urban runoff, thereby limiting the diversity of fish and other aquatic life and preventing the development of healthy living resource conditions.

Also to be noted is that PWD has expended over $1 million for the development of the plan, and will commit an additional $2-3 million or more per year towards implementing

the plan's recommendations through 2025. The proposed channelization is antithetical to the scope and nature of the above-described efforts and demands further study.

Therefore, in light of EO 11988 and the other above-stated concerns, Cheltenham Chamber of Citizens believes that it has demonstrated the need to take a hard look at the proposed project's justification and to comprehensively consider and assess all reasonable alternatives, including environmental and social impacts. Furthermore, we reserve the right to raise other issues and to supplement and amend this petition as necessary. As an interested party, Cheltenham Chamber of Citizens requests that it be copied on all correspondence, determinations or decisions made by your office regarding this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Olga McHugh, President
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Jeffrey Olawski, Resident
127 Webster Avenue, Wyncote PA 19095

Ronald C. Dunbar, Resident
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Gail Post, Resident
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Dorothy Stone, Resident
221Maple Avenue, Wyncote PA 19095

Susanne Whitehead, Resident
219 Summit Avenue, Jenkintown PA 19046

Attachment

c: Peter M. Rogoff, Administrator, FTA
Shawn M. Garvin, Administrator, EPA Region III
Frank J. Cianfrani, Chief, Philadelphia District, USACE
John Hanger, Secretary, PADEP
Cathy Curran Myers, Deputy Secretary, Water Management, PADEP
James Newbold, Regional Director, SE Regional Office, PADEP
Barbara Franco, Executive Director, PHMC
Hon. LeAnna M. Washington, PA Senate
Hon. Josh Shapiro, PA House of Representatives