

To The Editor:

In his letter published last week, Cheltenham Township Commissioner Art Haywood stated "SEPTA has indicated that it does not have the funds for a new station or garage at J-W." It is very tempting to believe that the economy will delay this project indefinitely. Commissioner Haywood's attempt to lull the citizenry into a wait and see mentality may on the surface seem warranted. However, on Thursday August 12th, I, and several other residents of the Wyncote neighborhood, received a certified letter from SEPTA indicating that SEPTA is moving forward with their plans to build a parking garage at the Jenkintown-Wyncote (J-W) station.

The certified letter states that SEPTA is prepared to move forward with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act that they must complete prior to construction. The letter specifically refers to the construction of the "parking garage with attached station amenities" when describing this project. The letter also clearly states that Cheltenham Township is a consulting party for the Section 106 process. It is unclear in the letter whether individual Commissioners were made officially aware of this consulting party status prior to mailing.

I draw two possible conclusions from Commissioner Haywood's letter and the SEPTA letter: 1) Commissioner Haywood is correct and SEPTA has no current plans to construct the parking garage or a new station structure at the J-W station. If this is true, then SEPTA is wasting tax dollars furthering the design and completing Section 106 requirements which will not be needed in the foreseeable future. In this scenario I encourage Commissioner Haywood, the other Cheltenham Township Commissioners, and every citizen to ask SEPTA to save our tax dollars and use them on more immediate and system wide needs such as improving scheduling and service level up and down the line. 2) Commissioner Haywood is incorrect (either because of lack of information or lack of truthfulness) and SEPTA continues its planning process for the garage and station because they have every intention of moving forward with the construction as soon as possible. If this is the case, I encourage Commissioner Haywood and the other Cheltenham Township Commissioners to remove the parking garages from the Cheltenham Township Comprehensive Plan (see pages 78 & 79). I also encourage all tax paying citizens to consider SEPTA's logic in using our money to encourage more people to drive farther from their home stations rather than improving service for all riders.

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