

## SEPTA ON WRONG TRACK

To the Editor:

Cheltenham citizens are being railroaded by SEPTA while our Commissioners and Township officials sit in the caboose and go along for the ride. SEPTA is going full speed ahead with plans to build a five story 700 car parking garage at the historic Jenkintown-Wyncote train station. Cheltenham Township residents are blowing the whistle loud and clear in an attempt to slow the momentum at which the SEPTA plans have been developing and changing with little or no community input. It seems our officials have been asleep at the switch. How did this project ever build up such a head of steam?

The SEPTA plan for the new garage will transform Jenkintown-Wyncote Station into a "transportation center" and encourage more riders to drive into Cheltenham Township from outlying suburbs. Some of the issues creating concern are; increased traffic, public safety, visual conflicts with the historical character of the neighborhood, increase in crime, and a poor track record of property maintenance by SEPTA.

We chose to live near a truly beautiful train station that, due to its' location and the train routes that run through it, has a high frequency of scheduled stops. The convenient train schedule draws riders from outer suburbs and from neighborhoods that have their own SEPTA rail stations. Encouraging hundreds of more cars from the outer suburbs to drive to and park at the Jenkintown-Wyncote train station is bad public policy. SEPTA needs to expand and improve their service up and down every line to fulfill the important roll our rail system must play in building a more environmentally and economically sustainable region and decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels. Instead, SEPTA will decrease property values and the quality of life in Cheltenham Township; a historic community with a well established rail service.

We are not trying to derail progress. To the contrary, we want SEPTA to provide good rail service throughout the entire region, not huge parking garages to destroy neighborhoods. We want our Township officials to uncouple themselves from this runaway SEPTA locomotive, put their ears to the rail and get on the right track.

Tom and Olga McHugh  
Wyncote