

## Opinion

# A kick in the seat for county seat

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How do you get people to come to the county seat?

We've been asking, and trying to answer, that question for several years.

Norristown was on a downward spiral for a while, but signs of revitalization are springing up all over town. Main Street has been repaved.

There are new sidewalks and new facades along DeKalb Street, and there are two new parking garages for visitors and patrons.

However, some key questions still remain, not the least of which is stated above.

Norristown has but one destination point, and unfortunately for most of the businesses in town, the Elmwood Park Zoo sits just on the edge of the border with East Norriton.

There are a lot of people working on a new destination point for Norristown, and it will be right in the heart of the downtown business district. The Montgomery County Cultural Center is being transformed into the new Centre Theater in Norristown.

Once complete, the theater will be a 200-plus-seat destination point, but that solves just one piece of the puzzle.

Visitors must be able to reach the new theater.

For as long as the Pennsylvania Turnpike has been in existence, there hasn't been a true Norristown exit.

That has to change.

The Lafayette Street Corridor has been in the planning stages for many years, and the project is about to begin, but now we're hearing rumblings that some turnpike projects are on the chopping block.

The proposed Norristown exit must remain on the table.

The proposed exit is the impetus for the Lafayette Street Corridor.

A Norristown exit will be a boon for the entire area, and it is the only project on the turnpike's agenda that is actually a profitable proposition. In other words, it will make money for a business (the turnpike) that desperately needs money.

When the turnpike raised tolls a few years back, they said they were doing so to fund projects — specifically the Norristown exit — so the increase should be considered an investment in the future.

Well, the future is here.

The toll roads in our area are the most heavily traveled of all the turnpike roads in the state, and the new exit will take a lot of pressure off the current Norristown exit, which is really in Plymouth, and the King of Prussia exit.

The county seat is changing, for the better, and now we need to make sure people have a way to get here.