Sprawl mentality

Not long after he was named CEO of the Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA in 2015, Shaun Elliott successfully proposed closing the decades-old Hatboro and Abington YMCA branches, to be replaced with a new $30 million Y to be constructed on 40 acres in Upper Moreland Township.

Both the Hatboro and Abington communities were built on a pedestrian scale, and the current Ys are within walking distance of thousands of households. The new YMCA in Upper Moreland will only be accessible by car.

The Hatboro Y will be closed and sold less than 10 years after it received a $500,000 state grant for physical improvements — your tax dollars at work! Meanwhile, the Pottstown YMCA, which is within easy walking and bicycling distance of thousands of residents of all ages and incomes, will be closed because necessary repairs are “cost-prohibitive.”

The need for elaborate sprawling campuses is more important than the Y’s avowed mission of healthy living and social responsibility.

Commentary by Thomas Hylton

SPRAWLING CAMPUSES — Both the Upper Perkiomen YMCA, above, on 48 acres, and the Spring Valley YMCA, below, on 28 acres, are designed to be accessible only by car. Both have parking spaces for hundreds of cars.