

PETITIONS CITE THE INADEQUACY OF PRESENT ROAD

Ask Widening, Improvement Of That Portion Of U. S. Route 20 In Albany Co.

Petitions to the Department of Public Works, Division of Highways, and to the Albany County Board of Supervisors, asking for the improvement and widening of Route 20, are being circulated this week among Town of Guilderland residents. The petitions cite the inadequacy of Route 20 in Albany county, and point out the congestion of traffic and resulting danger.

The first petition, to the Public Works Department, reads:

"Whereas, State Highways Nos. 5155 and 8084, within the County of Albany, forming part of Route 20 and known as 'Western Turnpike,' is a main highway extending west from the City of Albany over a route used for over 200 years, and within the County of Albany is but eighteen (18) feet wide, and totally inadequate to carry the traffic now using said highways, (2,100,644 vehicles during 1939), causing congestion of traffic with resulting danger and injury to persons using said highways,

"Therefore, we, the undersigned property owners and or residents living adjacent to said highways, and persons depending upon said highways as a means of travelling from their homes or places of business to the City of Albany, or to the western part of the State, hereby protest the inadequacy and dangerous condition of said highways, and respectfully petition that your department immediately proceed to do that which the law may require it to do, to effect the improvement of said highways, and particularly that your department will immediately request the County of Albany to proceed to acquire the necessary rights of way or easements for the widening and improvement of said highways within the County of Albany, and that when acquired, your department proceed to widen and improve said highways to the necessary capacity, and maintain their identity as U. S. Route 20."

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The second petition to the Board of Supervisors of Albany County requests that that body act immediately for the improvement and widening of Route 20 as soon as requested by the Department of Highways.

"The drive for the widening of the road is under direction of the Committee for the Improvement of Route 20, of which Harold Fonda is chairman, Otto Gabriel, vice chairman, and Joseph Thearle, secretary-treasurer. Owners of businesses and homes along the thoroughfare and in adjacent areas are disturbed by the belief development of Washington avenue as a new state highway to Saratoga Springs would mean the abandonment of state and county plans for improvement of Western avenue, the Cherry Valley Turnpike.

Agitation for the widening of Western avenue, one of the main-traveled roads between Albany and the west, has been recurrent for years but without avail. Property owners now believe they must make another and more determined effort if they are to prevail on the Board of Supervisors and the State Public Works department to proceed with the widening.

"Statements by the State Highway Bureau that it has plans for the widening and improvement of Route 20 and that it is very much desirous of making such improvements have gotten nowhere because the bureau contends it can do nothing until Albany county acquires the necessary rights of way," reads a statement issued by the committee.

"There have been numerous unfounded statements that the costs of acquiring the rights of way would be prohibitive upon the county. There is no basis in fact for any such assumptions, for the good and sufficient reason that the Board of Supervisors has never attempted to find out what the cost of such rights of way would be," the statement continued.

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Over 1,000 Persons Sign Road Petition

Group Seeks Widening Of Rt. 20 Between Albany City Line And Duaneburgh

Petitions bearing the signatures of 1,121 persons urging the widening and improvement of Route 20, Western Avenue, between the Albany City line and Duaneburgh were presented to Highway Commissioner Harvey O. Schermerhorn by a committee which visited him in State Office Building, Wednesday.

Commissioner Schermerhorn told the group the widening and development of Route 20 long had been an ambition of the Public Works Department and that the project long has been No. 1 on the program for this district. But first, he informed the group, the county must acquire the necessary rights of way—which may be contingent upon the reasonableness of the prices asked for the property.

The point was stressed that property holders must be reasonable in their demands for payment of land required for the improvement project, if the plan is to be approved.

Maps and plans for the improvement as far as McCormack's Corners will be presented to county authorities within a week or 10 days, Commissioner Schermerhorn said. Then it will be up to the supervisors.

Harold Fonda, Otto Gabriel and Joseph Thearle headed the delegation that waited upon the commissioner. They presented petitions also from town of Guilderland, McKownville Fire District, McKownville Fire Department Inc., Altamont Chamber of Commerce, Helderberg Post, American Legion, McKownville Improvement Association, Westmere Fire District.