

IMPROVING WESTERN AVENUE

The improvement of Western Avenue is of concern to each of the 700 or so McKownville homeowners and their families. As our community's MAIN STREET, it is used daily and it does need improvement!

The New York State Department of Transportation has scheduled new construction for Western Avenue, including a fifth lane for turning (like Central Avenue), new sidewalks for the northside, bicycle lanes, and repaving. This planned construction does not meet our needs.

Our families need a safe place to walk and wait for buses as well as a way to bicycle to friends and to the stores. They also need to be able to cross the streets safely and to be able to turn onto and off of Western Avenue with safety. The NYSDOT proposal with its 5th lane decreases the safety of persons walking by reducing the buffer zone between the cars and the sidewalks. With narrower shoulders on Western Avenue, the cars and trucks will have no place to stop and load and unload and the snowplows will be pushing the snow onto the sidewalks making them impassable for the winter.

But a lower speed limit -- to 30 miles per hour which is the speed limit in the communities of Albany County--would improve the safety of the pedestrians as well as make it easier and safer for those driving on Western Avenue as well as those turning onto or off of it. Curbs and gutters along the present roadway, together with proper road drainage, would make the sidewalks even safer and more usable. Walk-lights installed at some of the 14 sidestreets would make it easier for everyone to cross Western Avenue.

Many residents of McKownville work for the State; they are very aware that a "routinized response" often takes the place of a better solution. NYSDOT's routine response to an improved Western Avenue will cause great harm to McKownville. The Officers and Board members of the McKownville Association urge that a committee of interested residents and urban analysts from area colleges and a representative from NYSDOT be convened and ~~to~~ evaluate the two proposals.

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McKownville Improvement Association, J. Esler, Chairman
Transportation Committee
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