

The McKownville Improvement Association

June 14, 1979

Mr. William C. Hennessy, Commissioner
New York State Department of Transportation
1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12232

Dear Mr. Hennessy:

We are writing you with the hope that you will personally intercede to quickly eliminate a dangerous and possibly tragic situation.

On Friday, June 8, 1979, the traffic signal on Western Avenue at McKown Road and Norwood Street in McKownville was removed by Region 1 D.O.T. employees.

It took several years of effort by our Association and four deaths, including an eight year old boy, at this intersection to get the light installed in 1965. This was the only intersection in McKownville with a traffic signal affording pedestrians some safety in crossing Western Avenue.

Prior to the removal of the signal, a traffic count was made at the intersection. We understand that the count has not been analyzed, but your Department does not expect the signal to be reinstalled. We submit that the traffic count is not the most significant factor in the overall determination of whether or not to re-install the traffic signal.

The following points are of importance and we are sure they will lead you to agree with us that a pedestrian activated signal should be reinstalled:

- with no sidewalk on the predominantly commercial south side of Western Avenue, residents cross at McKown Road and walk along the sidewalk on the north side;
- residents of both sides of Western Avenue use the intersection to cross when getting on and off CDTA buses;
- school buses stop on McKown Road for students crossing Western Avenue;
- since the signal has been in place, the State University has grown considerably. Faculty, staff and student members of the University community live on the south side of Western and cross at the light and walk to the campus;
- residents of McKown Road, Norwood Street, Waverly Place, Glenwood Street, and all of McKownville look to that traffic light to slow down and break up the pattern of traffic on Western Avenue to allow them to turn onto and off of Western Avenue;
- in the near future, a racquetball court on McKown Road and the State Bank of Albany headquarters at 1450 Western Avenue will be opening, thus increasing the traffic on and off Western Avenue considerably.

Mr. Hennessy

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We are aware that the equipment removed had been damaged on at least two occasions and as a consequence should have been replaced; it should never have been removed. D.O.T.'s Region 1 office has been taking calls complaining about the removal of the signal. I am sure that if you check you will find that over 100 calls have been received, a significant number considering the small size of McKownville.

We hope that we have been able to persuade you to take immediate action to reinstall a traffic signal on Western Avenue at McKown Road and Norwood Street. We are sure that both of us wants the maximum feasible amount of safety to be available to both pedestrians and automobiles using Western Avenue.

Sincerely,

Donald Reeb
President

cc: Senator Howard C. Nolan, Jr.
302 Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12247