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McKownville Improvement Association

Planning Group

April 18, 2002

To: McKownville Improvement Association Planning Group Members

Date: April 18, 2002

Subject Upcoming Meeting on Tuesday April 23, 2002 at 7 pm at the Holiday Inn Express

The two documents included with this delivery are for discussion at the Tuesday meeting. If you can not attend please call Kathy LeRoux at 438-~~1947~~ 1947

Nominees of residents are needed for the May election of officers. If you have a self nomination or a nomination of a friend, a nomination sheet will be passed around at the meeting.

The two distributed documents will be provided to all McKownville residences for the general meeting on May 21 at 7pm at the Holiday Inn Express. This will be the final opportunity to edit the Western Avenue Report and the Needs Survey before distribution.

Further meetings of the Planning Group will be scheduled after the May meeting .

McKownville Improvement Association Officers, 2001-2002

President	Bill Meehan	7 Country Road	456-4564
Vice President	Don Reeb	5 Norwood Street	489-3909
Secretary	Kathy LeRoux	106 Arcadia Avenue	438-1947
Treasurer	Steve Berg	7 Elmwood Street	438-6795

Board Members

Alice Torda
2 Knowles Terrace
489-3613

Jill Messner
9 Warren Street
482-9125

John Smircich
60 Highland Drive
869-1256

Jim Cameron
15 Glenwood Street
489-2487

Susan Hotchkiss
212 Woodscape Drive
482-8848

Sue Brown
6 Waverly Place
482-2355

McKownville Improvement Association Planning Group

□Western Avenue Corridor Study

□April 18, 2002

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□INTRODUCTION

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□Western Avenue is the 'Main Street' of McKownville, from the City line to Church Road. It is also a major east-west automobile thoroughfare for the Capital region. Over the years, changes to Western Avenue have been made almost exclusively in the interest of motorists. Residents of McKownville have seen their Main Street slowly, but unmistakably, changing into a highway with seeming little regard for how those changes affect the quality of life in McKownville. This report by the McKownville Improvement Association represents an attempt to bring the interests of the people who live in McKownville back in balance with needs of motorists while respecting the need to support a safe and effective flow of automobile traffic. This report focuses on Western Avenue while later reports will focus on other topics possibly including Fuller Road, McKown Road, walking paths, the McKown pond, the historic buildings of McKownville, playground access, and zoning.

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□The goal is to improve the Western Avenue streetscape so that it becomes a place where people take pleasure each time they pass through, whether on foot, bicycle or car. We want a Western Avenue where we can walk safely to mail a letter, visit neighbors, or go shopping, and we want the Western Avenue environment to be such that we will choose to walk rather than drive because it will be a more pleasurable experience. We want a Western Avenue that has safe crossing places, and where motorists understand that they are passing through a residential area. We believe the key to achieving these goals is to bring the McKownville stretch of Western Avenue back to the look of a residential main street, and less like the suburban highway into which it has been evolving.

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□This goal is both realistic and affordable. There are many examples of major state highways passing through cities where these very objectives are attained. We need look no further than Albany to see stretches of Western Avenue, from Colonial Avenue to Allen Street, for example, that have kept a far more residential appearance, and the difference is striking. We believe that McKownville can do even better

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□PROPOSAL

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□First, there is strong agreement among McKownville residents on several fundamental objectives and guiding principles:

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□1. Residential lawns and green strips (the area between the sidewalk and the street) along Western Avenue need be safeguarded. No more encroachment not even one inch anywhere in McKownville.

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□2. "Bicycle Lanes" should not be any more than three or four feet wide. Having wider bicycle lanes wastes valuable space that could be used as a green space buffer to insulate sidewalks from traffic. There are many sections on Western Avenue in McKownville where the bicycle lanes are sufficiently wide for automobile traffic. This is not only a poor use of space, it is dangerous because motorists invariably use them as right hand turn lanes, endangering nearby pedestrians. It should be noted that Western Avenue west of McKownville has bicycle lanes that are usually three or four feet wide and those east of McKownville are nearly universally quite narrow.

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□3. There should be a standard for the Western Avenue roadside in McKownville:

□- a three or four foot bicycle lane next to the outer driving lane, separated with a painted line

□- a significant concrete or stone curb and effective and sufficient storm water drains

□- a wide green strip planted with grass and trees

□- a five foot concrete sidewalk

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□There will be exceptions to this standard but they should be viewed as exceptions that require special justification.

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□The work recently finished by the city of Albany on Whitehall between Manning and Delaware provide a good model