

Lindsay Childs

From: "Lindsay Childs" <Lchilds1@nycap.rr.com>
To: "Don Csaposs" <csapossd@townofguilderland.org>
Cc: "Sharon Tomeo-Canada" <mumsy@rideau.net>; <ksmith0349@aol.com>; "Philip E." <philmeup1@yahoo.com>; "Barbara Quint" <bquint1@nycap.rr.com>; "Bert Schou" <bschou@nycap.rr.com>; "Bob Stricos" <buddahbob2@aol.com>; "Bruce Sherwin" <brucesherwin@nycap.rr.com>; "Dave Reid" <dread1@nycap.rr.com>; "Hugh Johnson" <quagmired@att.net>; "Lindsay Childs" <lc802@math.albany.edu>; "Martin Gnacik" <gnacik@msn.com>; "Sharon Tomeo" <mumsy@localnet.com>; "Ken Runion" <runionk@guilderland.org>
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2004 7:47 AM
Subject: Re: McKown Road Sidewalk

Don--

Sorry I didn't get back to you on Thursday--my last message to you was written when I was about to leave town for the weekend for a family wedding.

Regarding inaccurate information and lack of research:

I never stated that there was a direct off-road path between Abele Park and the Woodscape Drive/McKown Road intersection. I simply quoted and then restated a statement from the Comprehensive Plan. I always had in mind that south of Woodscape Drive, pedestrians would walk on McKown Road to reach the Town-owned and maintained path between McKown Road and Abele Park.

I explicitly stated that my estimate (20) of the number of houses on McKown Road south of Woodscape Drive was a guess. It would take you a 30 second walk and about five minutes of examination of tax maps to determine the exact number of lots that would generate traffic on McKown Road just south of the Woodscape intersection. It would take me a half-hour of drive time and five minutes to do the same. (Incidentally, if Sand Pine Lane is a cul-de-sac feeding onto McKown Road and has 20 homes on it, then the Planning Board violated its own subdivision regulations in approving that subdivision.)

Whether it is 20 or 50, the AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) on McKown Road south of Woodscape Drive would be under 600. There does not appear to be any recognized national standard that says that a sidewalk should be constructed if vehicle traffic volumes are above a certain level and travelling above a certain speed, but I did find a document on the FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) website that offers the recommendation,

Sidewalks should be constructed along any street or highway in developed areas having an AADT greater than 1200 and not provided with shoulders, even though pedestrian traffic may be light.

Based on that threshold, one could argue that a sidewalk is less critical on McKown Road south of Woodscape than north of Woodscape, where McKown Road serves many more homes.

Pasted immediately below is a report of a field trip I did to McKown Road in the summer of 2000. Please note in particular the traffic count. Below that is a more extended excerpt from the report that contains the AADT 1200 quote. Below that is all previous recent correspondence on this subject.

By the way, my compliments to you and your wife for your support of the Red Cross Blood Drive--I saw both of you on Channel 9 last night.

Please let me know if I can be of further help on a McKown Road application.

Lindsay

II. McKown Road.

McKown Road is a collector street, of 19th century design. It is the only connection in Guilderland between Western Avenue and the Woodscape and Three Hills Terrace neighborhoods. As such, it carries a significant amount of traffic. For example, a visitor on a Wednesday in June around 1 pm counted 29 car trips in and out of McKown Road at Western Avenue within an 8 minute time span.

For pedestrians, McKown Road serves two purposes:

- it connects the Woodscape neighborhood to Western Avenue and the CDTA, Stuyvesant Plaza and the University, and
- it connects the neighborhoods on the north side of Western Avenue east of Fuller Road to Abele Park, via a path between McKown Road and Abele Park. Abele Park is the only public park in McKownville. With the move to Division I, the University's athletic fields are no longer available to the public, so Abele Park is the only active green space in the hamlet.

As a pedestrian route, McKown Road is quite deficient. The pavement is about 21 feet wide, including shoulders, and in June had no paint striping at all. The narrowness of the roadway and the amount of traffic make the roadway uncomfortable for walking. A pedestrian would prefer to walk next to the pavement, rather than on the pavement, but in several places trees, shrubs and topography make that impossible.

Beyond Woodscape Drive, McKown Road is essentially a dead-end street, so traffic is much less than it is north of Woodscape Drive. Pedestrians heading to or from Abele Park could use the roadway in reasonable comfort and safety.

A review of the roadway and its shoulders suggests that north of Woodscape Drive the west side of McKown Road appears to offer an easier location for a sidewalk than the east side. The main obstacles to constructing a sidewalk on the west side are the Krum Kill, where the terrain drops quickly from the roadway to the culverted stream; a large tree next to the road near the southern boundary of Pinnacle Place; and a drainage swale along the frontage of Pinnacle Place. Otherwise there appears to be adequate room and reasonable topography for a sidewalk on the west side.

Near Western Avenue the sidewalk would lie on the parking lot of the paint store.

The environment for crossing Western Avenue at McKown Road is deficient. There are walk buttons on the northwest and southeast corners. There are no crosswalks on Western Avenue or McKown Road. There is no sidewalk on the southwest corner to aim at after crossing Western Avenue. There are no walk/wait signals.

--prepared by Lindsay Childs, 11/00, for the Guilderland Pathways Committee.

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fourthlevel/pdf/Chapter1.pdf>

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Introduction to Pedestrian Facilities

Chapter 1

NJDOT Pedestrian Compatible • Planning and Design Guidelines

a. General Principles for Provision of Pedestrian Facilities

General principles for provision of pedestrian facilities that require consideration include the following:

- All roadways should have some type of walking facility out of the traveled way. A separate walkway is often preferable, but a roadway shoulder will also provide a safer pedestrian accommodation than walking on the road.
- Direct pedestrian connections should be provided between residences and activity areas. It is usually not difficult to ascertain where connections between residential areas and activity centers will be required during the early stages of

However, this little scenario represents another example of what I have told you before is an annoying characteristic of the work product of the Pathways Committee, namely a proposal that sounds good but hasn't had the most elemental of research done to support it. The GPC should not be making recommendations for grant requests for me to write (I have a serious distaste for wasted time), or (in my view, at least) projects, plans, etc. for the Town Board to consider funding unless they've done the homework necessary to insure that their recommendations have a basis in fact.

Don

-----Original Message-----

From: Lindsay Childs [mailto:Lchilds1@nycap.rr.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2004 11:16 AM
To: Don Csaposs
Subject: Re: McKown Road Sidewalk

I have never looked at a path between Abele Park and Woodscape Drive, although I heard there was an informal one. I was thinking of the main path between Abele Park and McKown Road, which reaches McKown Road about 3-4 houses north of the Thruway.

There is so little traffic on the dead end portion of McKown Road that once pedestrians heading from Western Avenue to the park get south of the McKown Road-Woodscape Drive intersection, they could share the road to reach the path to the Park. (I'm guessing that there are maybe 20 house on McKown Road south of Woodscape Drive, and they would generate 200 car trips per day by ITE trip generation standards)

----- Original Message -----

From: Don Csaposs
To: 'Lchilds1@nycap.rr.com'
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2004 11:04 AM
Subject: McKown Road Sidewalk

Lindsay-

Are you certain that Abele Park remains accessible from the old footpath at Woodscape Drive after the construction of the new houses down there? If that path no longer exists, access to Abele would be restricted to the path down bty the Thruway, and we'd be talking in terms of yet another 2,000 or more linear feet of sidewalk before you could access Abele.

The section to Woodscape has merit relative to public transit access and pedestrian safety irregardless, but I'm not submitting any applications anywhere that make inaccurate representations based on stale information.

Please confirm for me one way or another. Thank you.

Don

-----Original Message-----

From: Lindsay Childs [mailto:Lchilds1@nycap.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 2004 7:28 PM

To: Don Csaposs
Subject: Re: McKown Road Sidewalk

7/19/2004

Hi, Don,

The lengths of the segments (725', 780' and 625') and the cost estimate (\$65,000) are quoted directly from the McKownville Corridor Study. See the bracketed comments added to my original message below.

I just came from the CDTC Bicycle/Pedestrian Task Force Meeting. There were two things discussed at that meeting that may be useful in supporting a McKown Road sidewalk application.

One of the two purposes of a sidewalk on McKown Road, as noted in my previous message, is to connect the Woodscape neighborhood to the CDTA stop at Western Avenue and McKown Road. One could add the Three Hills Terrace neighborhood, one of Guilderland's lowest income neighborhoods. (The residents of Three Hills Terrace might, however, reach the CDTA at Western Avenue and Homestead Street, rather than at Norwood Street: from Grove Place, off Monroe Avenue in the heart of Three Hills Terrace, it is .95 miles (according to Mapquest) to reach the Western Avenue-Norwood Street intersection following Monroe Avenue, Woodscape Drive and McKown Road, and .88 miles to use Cross Street to reach the Western Avenue-Homestead Street intersection.)

1. One of the three long-term Goals and Objectives of the Bike/Ped Task Force is "the creation of a well organized and maintained regional bicycle and pedestrian system". Several comments at the meeting interpreted a "regional pedestrian system" to be a pedestrian/transit system. Thus a project that connects neighborhoods to the CDTA would appear to be a very good fit as part of a regional pedestrian system.

2. Another of the long-term Goals and Objectives of the Bike/Ped Task Force is "have a minimum of 25% of all projects with a majority of project funds being used for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations funded by CDTC be multijurisdictional, meaning a lead sponsor and at least one-cosponsor from a different municipality and/or agency that will be impacted by the project." Since the sidewalk would support CDTA use, perhaps CDTA could be induced to be a cosponsor of the application, or at least to write a letter of support. Better yet, there is \$50,000 or more of CDTA money to be spent on intersection improvements in McKownville. If the Western Avenue/Norwood Street intersection were one of the intersections to be improved, then perhaps the McKown Road sidewalk project could somehow be formally linked to the CDTA intersection project. That would insure the multijurisdictional nature of the project.

Lindsay

----- Original Message -----

From: Don Csaposs
To: 'Lindsay Childs'
Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 2004 1:27 PM
Subject: RE: Spot Grant

Do you have the distance involved for McKown Road at your disposal? What is the basis for the cost estimate you're putting forth? I can't lobby the Supervisor for support of that piece without credible information to support the request.

-----Original Message-----

From: Lindsay Childs [mailto:Lchilds1@nycap.rr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 2004 7:06 AM
To: Don Csaposs
Cc: Lindsay Childs
Subject: Re: Spot Grant

Hi, Don,

Pasted below is a draft of a spot improvement application for a piece of sidewalk between

Venezio and Cumberland Farms, based on the application we submitted two years ago. Jan said she has in her files a copy of the submitted application. Also pasted below is some information for an application for a sidewalk on McKown Road.

If I can be of any assistance on these, please let me know.
Thanks, Lindsay

The McKown Road sidewalk project has several advantages:

--a need for this sidewalk has been presented in both the Comprehensive Plan: [the following is pasted in from the Comprehensive Plan as presented on the Town's web site]

Add a sidewalk along McKown Road and a safe crossing of Western Avenue at McKown Road and Norwood Street to facilitate access between residential areas of McKownville and Abele Park off Schoolhouse Road. (Comprehensive Plan, IV-43, IV-54)

and the McKownville Corridor Study: [the following is pasted in from the McKownville Corridor Study as presented on the Town's web site]

SW-7: McKown Road Sidewalk Improvements

Description: Construction of a new sidewalk along the southbound (west) side of McKown Road. A possible segment breakout would be as follows: Western Avenue to Williams Court (~725'); Williams Court to Short Street (~780'); Short Street to Woodscape Drive/Abele Park path access path (~625')

It may be desirable to progress these three segments as a set; if this is not done, there are varying arguments as to which segment would provide the most immediate benefit. That is, while working in the sequence indicated would provide a progression and tie into the existing sidewalk on Williams, the Short-to-Woodscape section arguably merits the earliest effort to provide pedestrians with greater physical separation from traffic.

Estimated Cost: \$65,000

Additional Notes: McKown Road includes several sections along which it may be very difficult to fit a 5' wide sidewalk within the existing right of way. Narrower sections may be in order for short lengths; alternatively, the Town may wish to investigate the potential costs of acquiring easements or additional right-of-way which would enable it to construct a consistent 5'-wide walk for the entire length of the project. Also, it was noted that this sidewalk connection would be quite beneficial to CDTA patrons. *

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--we have an estimated cost;

--the sidewalk would serve a double purpose--recreational, connecting Abele Park to most of McKownville, and transportation, connecting the Woodscape, McKown Road and Three Hills Terrace neighborhoods to the CDTA stop, UAlbany and the retail/office center at Stuyvesant Plaza;

--the project would complement the improvements to the McKown Road/Western Avenue/Norwood Street intersection improvements included as part of the TIP project, and possibly could be done in conjunction with the TIP project, thereby improving its cost effectiveness;

--the McKownville Improvement Association is likely to demonstrate strong support for the project.

The main downside is that the project may be too expensive, unless the Town is willing to do a 50-50 match instead of an 20-80 match.
