

To: Editor, Schenectady Gazette, Art Clayman  
P.O. Box 1090  
2345 Maxson Road  
Schenectady, New York 12301

From: Don Reeb, President McKownville Improvement Association  
5 Norwood Street  
Albany, New York 12203-----518-489-3909  
Subject: New York State Thruway Re-Construction--The Albany Corridor Study  
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I spoke with John Cropley, your Albany County editor, and he suggested that a letter to the editor would be the best way to get the following issued addressed

The New York State Thruway is conducting a study to improve the Thruway in the Capital District. The Draft Plan includes re-paving existing lanes as well as adding lanes, especially between Exit 23 and Exit 24. But there are tie-ups at the toll plazas or exits as well as along the Thruway. Exit 24 is horribly congested which not only wastes the time of commuters but also leads to many many accidents as drivers try to "weave" through the traffic.

At hearings conducted by the Thruway about a dozen Concepts or plans were presented to reduce congestion at the toll booths. One set involved constructing high speed EZPass lanes, but it need be noted that many people do not use EZPass.

An alternative plan by the Thruway is to remove the tolls booths at Exit 24. Round trip tolls would be collected at Exit 23 and Exit 25 instead. Rather than stopping four times, to collect a Thruway ticket and then to pay it every morning and then very afternoon, the driver would stop but once. The round trip toll collected at Exit 23 would be equal to the toll from Exit 23 to Exit 24, even though you might travel to Exit 25. At Exit 23, the round trip toll would be equal to that for traveling to Exit 24 even though you might travel to Exit 23. EZPass users would continue to pay the tolls electronically. The four stops necessary now each day would be reduced to one.

The obvious time savings would be huge. Moreover, with some modifications to what the Thruway refers to as their Two Barrier Concept--that is, the round trip toll concept--the Thruway at Exit 24 could be improved to reduce the "weaving" and remove the portion of the plan that involves the construction of a Western Avenue Flyover--which is a bridge crossing over the top of Western Avenue near Crossgates.

The Flyover is opposed by my neighborhood because it would cause too much noise for Woodscape and Woodlake residents and others in McKownville as well as cause other problems. The McKownville Improvement Association has collected nearly two hundred signatures on its petition in opposition to the Flyover. And our elected officials, Senator Breslin, Assemblyman McEneny, Supervisor Runion, County Legislators Commisso and Bartolotta--and many others--have joined us in our opposition to the Western Avenue Flyover.

The Thruway has come up with a superior notion in changing the toll collection system. Round trip tolls make sense for all of our commuters. You can read more about the plans by going to your library or by going to the internet--<http://www.thruway.state.ny.us/studies/albany/pac.html>. Round trip tolls and the elimination of the Western Avenue Flyover would benefit not only McKownville but all who use the Thruway--and more Capital District residents need to become aware that it is possible to significantly reduce the congestion at the exits--not just for EZPass users but for everyone.