

To: Letter to the Editor, Altamont Enterprise
From: Don Reeb, McKownville Improvement Association (president, 489-3909)
Date: September 6, 2004
Subject: Recent Article by Nicole Fay Barr, Altamont Enterprise September 2, 2004

The news article by Nicole Fay Barr in the Altamont Enterprise, September 2, 2004 concerning the Western Avenue Flyover--Activists plan flyover alternate--was wonderful and much appreciated.

Two points--one clarifying and one correcting--need be made. The proposal by the Thruway Authority to remake the Thruway in the Capital District involves a fundamental change--a change that other thruways in the nation are now making because many thruways are intensively used by commuters for short repetitive trips. There are gigantic savings in time (and air pollution) if round trip fares are collected and thruway tickets are abolished for short trips.

The New York Thruway has proposed that Exit 24 toll booths be eliminated completely and round trip tolls be collected at Exit 23 and Exit 25, the tolls or charges in each case would be for the distance from Exit 24 even though longer distances may have been traveled. Three of the four stops that commuters usually make when using the Thruway would thereby be eliminated--a great savings in waiting time to get through the exits or toll plazas. Hopefully, all residents of the Capital District--especially the daily commuters using the Thruway--will support changing the one way tolls to round trip tolls and the elimination of Exit 24. The Thruway terms this the Two Barrier plan. (The plans are available at local libraries and at the Thruway web site).

Hopefully all will also follow the lead of our elected officials who have been very supportive of the McKownville Association's efforts to stop the construction of the Western Avenue Flyover. The Association has studied the Two Barrier and other plans and have concluded that the Two Barrier plan has the greatest benefit for the Capital District. It need be redesigned, however, to move the Western Avenue Flyover away from the McKownville community. By doing so the Thruway would likely reduce the taking of land in the area of Exit 24 and reduce the noise that would be caused by having an overpass (Flyover) passing near Woodscape and the other residential neighborhoods near Exit 24.

Secondly, it was not me but rather Ken Runion, the Town of Guilderland Supervisor, who first brought the proposed Western Avenue Flyover to the attention of the McKownville Association. And it was Ken who wrote the first letter to the Thruway objecting to the Western Avenue Flyover. And it was Ken at our meeting at Thruway headquarters who brought to everyone's attention that the estimated "costs" in the Thruway plans did not account for the "costs" to businesses, such as Stuyvesant Plaza, and residences from increased noise and decreased property values.

While the Thruway will be increasing the number of lanes between exit 23 and 24, the Town of Guilderland elected officials--all of them, without exception--are opposed to the Western Avenue Flyover as are our elected State officials, Senator Neil Breslin and Assemblyman John McEneny--and we thank all of them for their support.

Sincerely

Don Reeb