



The Enterprise — Nicole Fay Barr

Road work planned: *In the next few years, several county roads in McKownville will be reconstructed. Plans for this year include repaving Schoolhouse Road, above, and adding sidewalks and wider shoulders.*

County to rebuild local roads

By Nicole Fay Barr

GUILDERLAND — The county has announced plans to reconstruct three streets in Guilderland — Schoolhouse, Fuller, and Johnston roads — and the Grant Hill Road bridge.

Starting this year with Schoolhouse Road and ending in 2008 with Johnston, the four projects are expected to cost at least \$22.7 million, according to Michael Franchini, Albany County's commissioner of public works.

The work, ~~part of 30 projects~~ planned in Albany County, will be paid for through bonds passed by the county legislature and executive, he said.

Last week, Franchini gave the McKownville Improvement Association an overview of the county's plans.

"We were very pleased," Don Reeb, president of the association, told *The Enterprise* this week.

Albany County has a capital program and, each year, the county legislature has a committee that reviews roadwork plans, Franchini said. Recently, the legislature approved a five-year capital plan that includes much work in McKownville and Guilderland, he said.

Within the plan are building projects and highway and bridge projects. The highway and bridge work is controlled by Franchini's department, he said.

Much of the highway work is determined by pavement ratings, Franchini said. Roads are rated from 0 to 10, he said, based on how often roads are traveled.

Reeb's group was satisfied, he said, with the roads that are going to be improved. The McKownville Improvement Association will stay involved in the planning process, he said.

"The association now has to get a better idea of what the preliminary engineering proposals are," Reeb said. "We have to be

careful; putting in a sidewalk can take down a tree."

Route 204

The first road scheduled to be reconstructed in McKownville is County Route 204, which begins in Guilderland on Schoolhouse Road, becomes Russell Road, and then turns into Krumkill Road.

"We're looking to reconstruct portions of the road, from the sub-base up to the pavement," Franchini said. "It will get all new pavement."

The county will also take measures to improve the intersections of Schoolhouse and Russell roads and Russell and Krumkill roads, he said. Ideas for making traffic run more smoothly there include adding stop signs, traffic signals, or a roundabout, he said.

"We're looking at the possibilities," Franchini said. "We mostly have to look at the amount of traffic. Does it warrant a signal? A stop sign? And, we're looking at a roundabout. It was successful in Voorheesville."

In each project, Franchini said, the county is looking to improve bike and pedestrian access.

"We don't have the preliminary design yet, but we're going to put a sidewalk on one side," he said.

Reeb and other members of the McKownville Improvement Association often attend town meetings, trying to get more paths and sidewalks in their neighborhood. (See related story.)

Engineers are working on the preliminary design now, Franchini said of Route 204. A public meeting will be held in the spring so residents can have input on the plans, he said.

"We always consider the residents," he said. "They know more about the road; they live there."

Franchini hopes construction of Route 204 will begin later this year. It will take two construction

seasons, he said, and will probably be finished by the fall of 2006.

He estimated that the construction will cost about \$4.5 million.

Other projects

The second Guilderland project, tentatively scheduled for 2006, is the demolition and reconstruction of the Grant Hill Road bridge, which runs over the Normanskill.

The bridge was built in 1936 and spans 141 feet, Franchini said.

"It's pretty old. Basically, it's met its useful life and we'll be replacing it," he said.

The county is seeking proposals for design now, Franchini said, and plans should be drawn up this summer. Work should take one construction season, he said, and should be complete by the end of 2006.

The reconstruction is expected to cost \$1.3 million.

Fuller Road, running from McKownville to Colonie, should be rebuilt in 2007, Franchini said. New pavement will be added, along with sidewalks and wider shoulders for bicycles, he said.

"In Guilderland, there is a very stable, long-time residential community here," Franchini said. "One of our objectives is to not have a negative impact on the community.... We always have public-information meetings, always."

The Fuller Road work is far in the future; it has no engineer or plans designed yet, he said. Still, Franchini estimated that the work will cost \$10.3 million.

Finally, in 2008, the county will reconstruct Johnston Road from its intersection with Route 155 in New Scotland to Route 20 in Guilderland. Like Fuller Road, Johnston will be repaved with some sidewalks and bike paths, Franchini said.

Work on Johnston Road is expected to cost \$6.6 million, he said.