

Route 20 hearing ¹⁰⁻¹⁸⁻⁷⁷ draws crowd

MCKOWNVILLE — More than 50 residents attended Tuesday night's public hearing on a controversial state Department of Transportation (DOT) proposal to widen U.S. Route 20 from the Albany city line west to Route 155 in Guilderland.

DOT representatives told the group in Christ Lutheran Church on Western Avenue the plan calls for widening the existing roadway by six feet to 62 feet and adding a 10-foot median, turn lane and a 4-foot-wide bike path. The proposal, which is still in its "preliminary design" stage, according to DOT of-

ficials, also includes placing a traffic signal at the intersection of Route 20 and Church Road.

McKownville residents have opposed the expansion, saying it will cause the loss of some trees and will push the state's right-of-way closer to property lines.

According to DOT officials, two small trees will be cut down on the north side of Route 20 in McKownville. They added five larger trees will be saved by building tree wells around them.

The road widening and repavement

is part of a rehabilitation and preservation program for Route 20, the representatives said. The first phase began last year with the blacktopping of a 6-mile stretch of the 4-lane highway. That stage was to prepare for the more extensive improvements now being proposed, according to a DOT spokesman. It did not include safety improvements.

The spokesman cited DOT statistics that 85 accidents occurred between the Albany city line and Fuller Road from 1974 to 1976. He said the combination of the median and traffic signal will reduce accidents by approximately 36 per cent.