

# Widening Route 20 Draws Concern for McKownville

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**GUILDERLAND** — State Transportation Department Officials returned last night with their proposal for widening and repaving Route 20 from Albany City Line west to State Farm Road, but McKownville residents continued to express concern for how the proposal would affect their hamlet.

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Another public meeting is set for 7 tonight at the Westmere Fire House.

Final approval of the project will await residents' comments at these two meets and any other comments the department receives from residents or officials. Estimated to cost \$3 million, the project may go to contract late next year.

The department proposes widening the existing roadway west to Gipp Road from its current 56 feet to 62 feet, curb to curb. From Gipp Road to State Farm Road, only resurfacing is proposed. The divided section near the Northway would be unchanged.

The roadway now includes two 11-foot travel lanes in each direction and six-foot shoulders on each side. There is a sidewalk in portions of the north side.

The department proposes inserting a 10-foot flush median between the opposing travel lanes and adding four-foot bike paths on each side and a five-foot sidewalk along parts of the south side.

The Capital District Transportation Authority (C D T A) has requested bus stops out of the way of traffic at yet to be decided spots, and these would add to the width of the proposed roadway.

Rear-end collisions with cars turning left are the most serious traffic safety problem the improvements seek to reduce, the state officials said, and they calculate the improvements to cut all accidents by 39 percent.

Left-turn stacking lanes would be added at McKown, Fuller, Schoolhouse, Church, Johnston and Gipp Roads, and signal locations and timings would be improved, officials said.

The project also would seek to correct drainage problems of long concern to McKownville residents, they added. The Hillcrest Avenue drainage problem would require a separate contract, however.

The state proposes to acquire 65 small parcels of land along the route for the project. The "vast majority" would be only one to two feet wide, officials said, but some could be as

wide as 12 feet or more. Property owners may discuss with Region One transportation officials the details of the proposed land acquisitions. Walter Kippen is the Region One real estate officer.

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John Esler, president of the McKownville Improvement Association, called for a committee of residents, town and state officials and university experts in urban problems to consider alternatives to widening the road in McKownville. Such an improvement, he said, may increase the threat of commercial growth in the residential community.

He also proposed cutting the speed limit to 30 mph and providing for pedestrian crossings at Fuller Road to what may become a recreational area.

Others suggested burying utility lines during the construction, but a Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. spokesman said the cost would be five to 10 times greater than leaving the lines on the surface and property owners would have to pay for their connections to the lines.