



Should Western Avenue be widened?

Area residents speak ...

Kathy LeRoux, McKownville—"I don't see the necessity for the proposal. I feel that they could make some improvements, such as a turn lane at Fuller and Western and traffic lights at high-traffic areas, without making a fifth lane."

Opal Johnson,—McKownville—"I'm concerned about the drainage problem. Widening the road, they would have to slope the road quite a ways." She is concerned that this "will affect flooding of side streets on the northern side."

Jim Dermody, McKownville—"I'm in favor of it. I don't think it'll make a difference as far as commercialization is concerned and I think it will reduce the number of accidents."

Anonymous, McKownville—"I feel that the widening of Western Ave. in McKownville may bring about commercialization of the north side of the roadway. I'm against anything which would cause this possibility."

Ted LaMountain, Westmere—"I think it's a good idea for the traffic flow, since we are a growing community." His wife, Carol, agreed, but noted that Gipp Road, is presently used by car drivers and trucks as a shortcut from Western Ave. to Washington Ave. Ext. She doesn't like this practice and "hopes that the widening of Western Ave. doesn't increase this usage."

Pat Lanpbear, Westmere—"I would be against it because I hate to see Western Ave. become another Central Ave. I would like to

keep Guilderland more 'townish' rather than its becoming a commercial thoroughfare."

Betty Klindowrth, Westmere—"I don't feel the widening is necessary and am not in favor of it. It will be cutting our front yard by about one-third."

Lorraine Benson,—Westmere—"Western Ave. shouldn't be widened throughout the residential sections. A major traffic problem is cars and trucks parking on the street (Western Ave.) If that, along with the synchronization of the lights, were changed, some of the stress in the area would be alleviated."

BUSINESS PEOPLE'S OPINIONS

Michael Hannan, Hannan's Pharmacy, "I'm in favor of it."

Jack Sprague, owner operator of McDonald's Restaurant—"I'm in favor of everything because the proposals will have a beneficial effect on McDonald's customers. In general, I'm in favor of it because it's a very heavily traveled road. Having a left turn lane would make it a lot easier for people to enter the restaurant. Also, by eliminating the shoulder strip and making the road five lanes, it will stop trucks from parking in 'no parking' lanes in front of the restaurant, which blocks the view of customers trying to exit."

Curtis King, King's Shell Gas Station—"I would prefer it didn't get wider. It will make the road very close to my business."

The officials speak ...

Donald Geoffroy, regional director, Region One, Department of Transportation: "This is a very minimal improvement, providing basically a center median which will make a significant improvement in reducing accidents. It will have a minimal impact on adjacent properties and businesses."

"We recognize that a minimal impact on area residents and businesses is an inconvenience at best. We realize they're apprehensive about the improvement. The department's designers and real estate agents will be contacting them to discuss the details about which they are specifically affected."

Ray Gardeski, regional design engineer, Region One of the department: "We've analyzed all accident statistics and have made many studies from a safety point of view. We are presenting recommendations that will preserve and rehabilitate the existing roadway and will provide needed safety and service improvements, with the minimum adverse impact on adjacent property."

According to Gardeski, the purpose of the median lanes is to reduce the number of left turn and rear end accidents that now occur on Western Avenue.

Carl Walters, town supervisor of Guilderland: "We have been working with DOT all along and have asked them to include bike paths in their plans. We are happy they have agreed to include these in their construction, as it's going to save taxpayers money."

Matt Delaney, Guilderland town planner and moderator at the recent transportation meetings in McKownville and Westmere:

"These meetings are an immense improvement over the way DOT used to operate in the past. Now they come to the town officials and local residents during the formative stage of the project." This provides "direct local impact," Delaney continued.

MCKOWNVILLE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Jack Esler, chairperson, transportation committee: "The planned construction does not meet the needs of McKownville residents. Our families need a safe place to walk and wait for buses, as well as a way to bicycle to friends and to the stores. They need to be able to cross the streets safely and to be able to turn onto and off of Western Avenue with safety. The DOT proposal with its fifth lane decreases the safety of persons walking by, reducing the buffer zone between the cars and the sidewalks. The narrowed shoulders on Western Avenue, the cars and trucks will have no place to stop and load and unload and the snowplows will be pushing the snow onto the sidewalks, making them impassable for the winter."

Esler continued, "Regardless of how many lanes they add, we're still going to have the bottleneck on Western Avenue and Fuller Road at 5 p.m. once the office building at 1450 Western Ave. is occupied again."

"We know that DOT is acting in good faith. They think they're doing what is good for us. But we know what's good for us and we feel their proposal is going to kill McKownville as a residential community. I'll call it loving us to death."