

We Still Have Time To Stop It

The Crossgates Mall proposal is almost three years old.

The Pyramid Company of Syracuse first brought the Crossgates proposal to the Town of Guilderland in the spring of 1978. Just last month, Pyramid submitted another thick volume of data to try to convince the State Department of Environmental Conservation to grant permits Pyramid needs to build its huge shopping center in Westmere.

This newsletter is an update on what the Pyramid Crossgates proposal is, where it stands, how it would affect you.

The outcome of the Crossgates Mall proposal will affect our town and our region profoundly for many years to come.

No matter where you live, you probably chose your home and its location with great care. You made your choice based on your family's desire for a safe, convenient and pleasant neighborhood. If you own your home, a great deal of your resources are invested in your home.

Now your town, your neighborhood, your investment, are threatened by the actions of an outside developer who will not live in or care about your community as you do.

If you care about Guilderland and the Capital District, if you care about the character of your community, you should get involved in the Crossgates question. The Pyramid Company encourages and thrives on public ignorance and public apathy.

To insure that your neighborhood remains a desirable place to live, you must participate in this important decision which affects your community.

There is still time.

No final decisions have been made on any of the permits, either state or local, needed by Crossgates.

Western Avenue: Just how bad will the traffic be? **See page 3.**

Crossgates Update

MARCH 1981

*Crossgate Mall opponent
an talks before hear*
St. Crossgates Roadway Plan Adds Western Ave. Bridge

**Crossgates remains silent on mall anchor +
over Pine Bush mall**

Officials oppose widening road in Guilderland
150 hear board's position on \$85M mall in Pine Bush as Crossgates testimony continues

Crossgates call delayed by 8 months
aner: Delay Mall, d Inner City Revival

Biology Is Next C
Alb... ator Launches R... ack on Crossgates

Cornell biologist calls Crossgates site crucial 'treasure'
Guilderland may oppose Crossgates road change

Assemblyman says most don't want mall

St... outline Set for Hearing On Crossgates Project
Crossgates Market Study Bad

Mall

EnCon: No Decision Yet

After a 14-month hearing process the State Department of Environmental Conservation (EnCon) came to **no decision** on whether or not to grant State permits needed by the Pyramid Crossgates Company. The permits needed include a freshwater wetland permit, air quality permits, several stream impoundment and stream diversion permits, and a stream pollution permit.

The November 1980 hearing report by Administrative Law Judge William J. Dickerson recommended that several of the permits be denied. However, despite 81 days of hearings, 333 exhibits and 17,000 pages of testimony, Com-

missioner Flacke of EnCon decided to give Pyramid another chance. He withheld all permits and gave Pyramid time to submit additional information on traffic, air quality and storm water management.

On February 9, 1981, Pyramid submitted a response to Flacke. The response contained essentially no changes from the proposal presented at the hearings last year. In particular, the highway plan is unchanged. Western Avenue is still planned to be the major access route to Crossgates.

We may anticipate a decision from Commissioner Flacke in late spring.

What Came Out at the State Hearings

Economics

"In addition to competitive displacement, the Crossgates Mall may bring \$94.7 million of new shoppers' goods sales — and an indeterminate amount of 'other retail sales' dollars — into the Capital District. This will occur most immediately through a closing of the sales gap which divides local store sales volume, from local residents' shopping purchases outside the region." — from the Crossgates Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Appendix I, page V-1.

Pyramid's economic argument was destroyed at the Hearings. Judge Dickerson found their argument "basically a chain of unsubstantiated assumptions". He concluded:

"The applicant has not established a need for the mall based on its gap analysis but has only provided a basis for its business judgment to proceed with its proposal. . . . The economic benefits from the project, as now proposed, cannot be established, based on the record, in order to balance these benefits against the significant adverse environmental impacts of the project."

Contrary to Pyramid's claims, the Crossgates Mall would obtain almost all of its business by taking it away from other shopping centers and retailers in the Capital District, such as Stuyvesant Plaza and 20 Mall.

How many half-empty Northway Malls do we need in the Capital District? In Guilderland?

Environment

Judge Dickerson found that the proposed Crossgates shopping center would not have a substantial effect on the Pine Bush, or the Karner Blue Butterfly, and that although the shopping center

would destroy a State-protected freshwater wetland, that wetland provided minimal benefits according to the criteria cited in the law. In reaching these conclusions, Judge Dickerson seems to have ignored testimony from world-famous scientists brought to the hearings by citizens groups as well as witnesses from his own department. Commissioner Flacke upheld Judge Dickerson's findings on these issues.

However, Judge Dickerson recommended that the air quality permits be denied. He found that Pyramid could not meet Federal and State air quality standards. Commissioner Flacke required Pyramid to submit additional data on carbon monoxide emissions of its traffic. At this writing, EnCon is currently evaluating the new data.

Community

Pyramid's big selling point for its shopping center has been the

supposed tax revenue. Adding the mall would be like adding 700 new homes to the tax base. But. . .

What will the mall do to our community? Will the tax revenue be worth the high cost in the quality of our Town?

What will the mall do to other property values in the Town?

Will the supposed tax benefits be lasting benefits?

Shopping centers have an average life of under 30 years, according to EnCon's economic witness. They wear out, and customers turn away from them to newer facilities. Look at Westgate, 25 years old. Or Northway Mall, under 15 years old.

The long run financial stability of the Town depends on what the Mall will do to other property values. Guilderland is primarily a residential community. Will the Mall make Guilderland a more attractive place to live? Will it enhance residential property value, or hurt it? We think the answer is clear. [See box below]

A Resident's View of Colonie Center

There have been some beneficial social effects [of Colonie Center]. For instance, it has served as a community center for young adults. It does provide family recreation, as in the case of a petting zoo and for senior citizens particularly, it has been a means of social contact. . . .

Under the harmful effects socially, we have seen a tremendous increase in crime, particularly the crime of shoplifting. . . and purse snatching. . . and theft of cars. . . and much more serious is the crime of rape in the parking lot. . .

We have found our cost for services for water, sewer, and police have increased tremendously. . . . We had to add another judge. . .

In the 10 years since we've had Colonie Center our town population has increased roughly 15 percent. We've gone from 60,000 up to 70,000, but we are now serving between 210,000 and 220,000 people who come into the town. So we are actually having to provide services, as you know any city does, for the people that are actually there during the day, and this is why our costs have risen so tremendously.


This balances out, you see, the increased income we have received. We've had to provide all these extra services, so it's not a plus for us economically. . .

We have lost a lot of our small businesses. . .

The Mall is a breeder. It has bred not only other shopping centers, but we've had fast food places, office buildings, discount stores, all, it has drawn all these things to our community and it has totally changed the character of it. . .

The people who get the jobs at the Mall don't have to live in

continued on page 4

	CONCERNED CITIZENS AGAINST CROSSGATES P.O. Box 5393, Albany, New York 12205		
	BOARD OF DIRECTORS	Gregory R. Bell	CONSULTANTS
	Rhonda Childs President	Margaret McKinley Donald J. Reeb	Lindsay N. Childs John Shea, Esq.
	Mary C. Phillips Secretary-Treasurer		

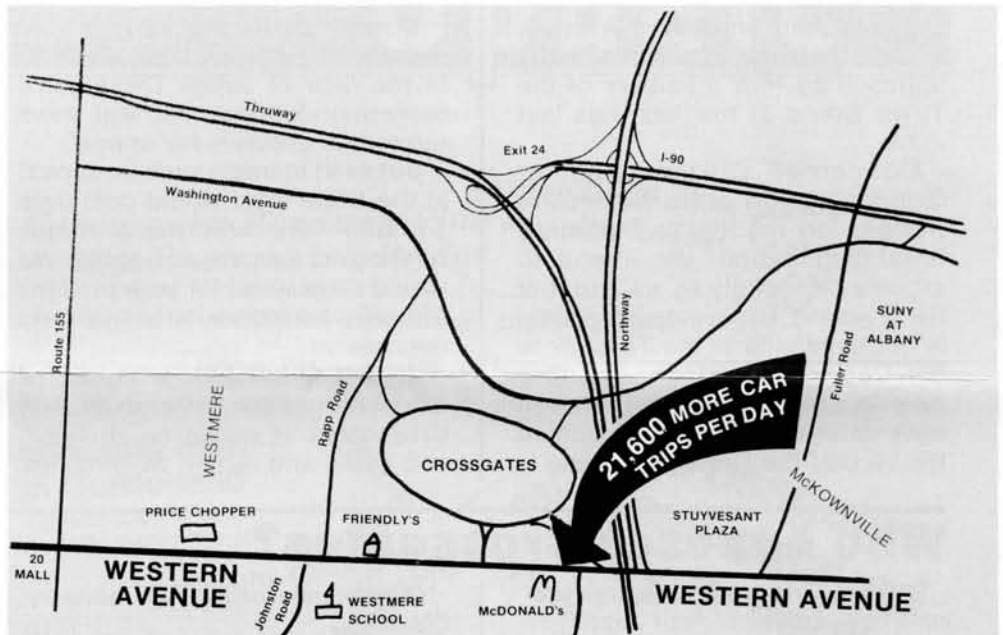
Traffic: Just how bad? will it be ?

"We are unalterably opposed to the further widening of Route 20." — statement of Supervisor Carl Walters, Town Board meeting, September 11, 1979.

Pyramid's traffic plan would put all traffic between the Northway and the shopping center onto Western Avenue. Pyramid plans to spend \$6.5 million to widen Western Avenue (Route 20) between Schoolhouse Road and Friendly's to as many as eight lanes. Pyramid's traffic plan would add some 21,600 car trips per day to Western Avenue after the shopping center is built, a 75 percent increase.

Of the five highway plans offered by Pyramid since 1978, the Western Avenue plan is the only plan still considered feasible by the State Department of Transportation.

The State hearings found that traffic conditions on Western Avenue, and on Washington Avenue and Fuller Road in 1985 will be unacceptably bad, even without Crossgates. With Crossgates, conditions would be worse.



The traffic conditions described on Western Avenue with Crossgates would be permanent conditions. Judge Dickerson found that "the proposal for the widening of Western Avenue is the maximum widening physically possible. It is

doubtful that the Department of Transportation would ever widen Western Avenue beyond that proposed by the Applicant."

Pyramid offers us permanently unacceptable traffic conditions on Western Avenue.

Friday, September, 1985...

Here are State Department of Transportation estimates of traffic conditions in 1985 on a typical Friday in September, both with and without Crossgates Mall.

Intersection	Hour	Levels of Service		Green to Cycle ratio	
		Without Crossgates	With Crossgates	Without Crossgates	With Crossgates
Western Avenue - end of Northway	7:30-8:30 am	F	F	1.35	1.35
	4:30-5:30 pm	F	F	1.29	1.36
	6:30-7:30 pm	B	F	0.92	1.25
Western Avenue - Johnston Rd.	7:30-8:30 am	D	D	1.06	1.06
	4:30-5:30 pm	F	F	1.23	1.27
	6:30-7:30 pm	A	C	0.87	0.94
Washington Avenue Extension - Fuller Road	7:30-8:30 am	F	D	1.24	1.13
	4:30-5:30 pm	E	F	1.22	1.23
	6:30-7:30 pm	A	B	0.64	0.92
Washington Avenue Extension - I-90 Eastbound Ramp	7:30-8:30 am	E	E	1.20	1.19
	4:30-5:30 pm	F	F	1.28	1.46
	6:30-7:30 pm	A	C	0.66	0.97

Levels of service are graded from A to F. Level C is satisfactory, and D is heavy but tolerable. Level E represents capacity. At level E, cars trying to pass through the intersection may be delayed by several minutes. Level F is jammed conditions.

The green to cycle ratio represents the amount of time in a traffic signal cycle needed to let all cars through the intersection. If the G/C ratio is bigger than 1.00, traffic starts to back up. The larger the G/C ratio, the worse traffic conditions will be.

'Another Wolf Road'

"Traffic congestion on Western Avenue if the \$85 million Crossgates Mall is built will mirror that on Colonie's Wolf Road," says the area's top transportation official... Charles Carlson, regional director for the state Department of Transportation. Carlson, who said last week that Wolf Road has a "D" rating and is "fast approaching E", said Western Avenue conditions would be similar to those on Wolf Road and Central Avenue. ... "Level E starts to become unacceptable. People are irritated by level of service 'E' ", he said." — Knickerbocker News, Sept. 20, 1980.

THE FUTURE: What you can do

Where does the Pyramid Crossgates proposal stand?

First of all, **Crossgates has not been approved**, either at the State level or at the Town level.

Pyramid appears committed to a highway plan which has the worst possible effect on Western Avenue, a plan which was specifically opposed by four members of the Town Board at the hearings last June.

Concerned Citizens Against Crossgates and other parties are working on rebuttal to Pyramid's latest submission. We intend to argue as forcefully as we can that the Pyramid Crossgates proposal is not beneficial to the Town or to the Capital District, and that the permits should be denied. We will have attorneys keeping watch to insure that the Crossgates case is

judged on facts, not on unwarranted claims and unsubstantiated assumptions.

Of course, professional legal help costs money. We need help in paying for legal assistance. We need **your** help.

Commissioner Flacke may rule in favor of Pyramid. If so, it will be in the face of Judge Dickerson's recommendations. We will have numerous grounds for appeal.

But even to begin such an appeal at the State level would cost over \$10,000. We will need major funding to sustain an appeal. We would be grateful for your pledges of support in case such an appeal is necessary.

It is fully within the power of Guilderland Town officials to stop Crossgates. It would be cheaper, and safer, and easier, to convince

Town officials that the Crossgates Mall is not good for our Town, and that they should translate their statements of opposition into **action** against this unwanted proposal.

You must help us in that task. In 1978, and again in 1979, before the State hearings brought out the real impact of the shopping center, Town officials didn't pay attention to over 3000 people who signed petitions opposing the Crossgates proposal. But now the facts are all out. We know, and you know, what kind of impact this project would have on our Town. They know, too. They followed the hearings. They have read the hearing report.

It's time to encourage them to action. Write letters. Call them. Get your friends and neighbors to do the same.

LET'S STOP CROSSGATES IN 1981.

Who opposes Crossgates?

The following groups and organizations have expressed their opposition to the Crossgates Mall proposal in its present form:

- Concerned Citizens Against Crossgates
- McKownville Improvement Assoc.
- Guilderland Democratic Party
- Guilderland Republican Party
- McKownville Fire Department
- Central Avenue Civic and Merchants Association
- Save the Pine Bush, Inc.
- Pine Bush Historic Preservation Project, Inc.
- Sierra Club
- Fund for Animals

Guilderland Conservation Advisory Council

83% of those polled by former County Legislator Donald Munn, July, 1979

Over 75% of those expressing an opinion in a scientific survey of Guilderland voters in November, 1979

80% of those responding to Assemblyman Mike Hoblock's survey in the winter of 1980

2578 signers of petitions in August of 1978 submitted to the Guilderland Town Board

3200 signers of petitions in the summer and fall of 1979, submitted to the Guilderland Town Board.

YOUR OPINION IS IMPORTANT

Commissioner Robert F. Flacke

Dept. of Environmental Conservation
50 Wolf Road
Albany, N.Y. 12233

Commissioner William C. Hennessy

Department of Transportation
State Campus
Albany, N.Y. 12226

Supervisor Carl J. Walters

Town Hall
Guilderland, N.Y. 12084

Mr. Richard Murray, Chairman

Zoning Board of Appeals
Town Hall
Guilderland, N.Y. 12084

A Resident's View *continued from page 2*

Colonie. We found that locally we get the smaller jobs. . . . Most of the big jobs were by experts brought in from outside, and it has been a tremendous boon to Saratoga County. . . . Everybody moved out and went to Saratoga because their

taxes are lower. Our taxes went up...

This has been our experience in Colonie. The Northway Mall and the Mohawk Mall, they're in our South Colonie School District, so we're concerned about the assessment. Both went to court

and got court reductions because their income had fallen, and therefore we had to reduce their assessment.

Now the Colonie Mall is very successful, but they went to court and got a reduction because they were being assessed at more than the other malls. . . .

So socially, though there are benefits you will have as we have, you change a town into a city. In summary, that is what happens when you have commercial development. The town becomes a city. It's up to you to decide whether you'd like it.

—from the statement of Rita Weiss, Crossgates Hearing Record, pp. 166-179.

Help Stop Crossgates NOW!

Please send your donations to:

CONCERNED CITIZENS AGAINST CROSSGATES
P.O. BOX 5393
ALBANY, N.Y. 12205

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Donation \$ _____

