

Air pollution unlikely, mall consultants say

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*Times
Union
4/26/81*

It is "extremely rare" that proposed traffic patterns for the planned \$85 million Crossgates Mall in Guilderland will violate state air quality rules at Western Avenue and Schoolhouse Road, consultants for the mall developer say.

In a letter to state Environmental Conservation Department Commissioner Robert F. Flacke, the consultants said that an air quality violation might occur "once in every 10 years" at the intersection if all the worse elements of air quality case studies were combined.

The letter from Finley, Kumble,

Wagner, Heine, Underberg and Casey of New York was sent Friday, the deadline for submission of additional air quality data.

The consultants to the Pyramid Crossgates Co., the company firm that wants to build the mall, urged Flacke to end public hearings on the proposed 169-acre regional shopping center and issue the necessary 11 state permits so construction can begin.

The mall developers propose to build the mall off Western Avenue and west of the Northway. They also plan to spend about \$6.5 million to widen Western Avenue between Schoolhouse Road and Rapp Road from five to eight lanes, widen the Western Avenue



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bridge over the Thruway, and use the major artery to funnel cars to the mall.

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Air quality safe with new mall, consultants say

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EnCon officials are concerned about the carbon monoxide levels generated by cars at the mall's parking lots and those traveling to the center.

Area environmental and citizen groups have opposed the proposed mall, claiming the new complex isn't needed and that it will create more traffic problems and adversely affect the environment.

The Schoolhouse Road-Western Avenue intersection has been labeled "the most critical" for air quality and traffic flow standards, EnCon officials said.

In their most recent response, the consultants claim potential air quality problems at the Schoolhouse Road corner near the mall can be solved by "minor" road improvements or by changing the traffic signals there.

EnCon officials have said the developer could not meet the state's air quality requirements through 1985, department spokesman John Moore said Saturday.

Flacke has until Tuesday to decide the next step. He can reconvene public hearings on the mall's permit applications, deny the developer the necessary permits, or ask for still more information from the developer and concerned parties, Moore added.

In the past, Flacke has refused comment on information submitted by the developers to the department because of his "quasijudicial" role in the hearings.

Flacke decided Nov. 28, 1980, to withhold permits for the planned center, and gave Crossgates six more months to file data. He said the developer had not submitted adequate information on air quality, water runoff and traffic flow.

The developer must first obtain from the state four air quality permits, five storm water drainage permits, a permit to allow the use of the McKownville Reservoir as a storm water receptacle, and a permit to build on a freshwater wetland.

Crossgates also must receive zoning approval from the Town of Guilderland.

The State Department of Transportation, acting as a consultant to EnCon, approved the developer's plan to widen Western Avenue and the Thruway bridge.

The Guilderland Town Board, however, and Supervisor Carl Walters have opposed the street widening plan, saying it will produce more traffic jams on the already-congested highway.