

State to be asked to assist Western Avenue walkers

GUILDERLAND — The Town Board is asking the state Transportation Department to help pedestrians cross Western Avenue near the Northway entrance.

At its agenda meeting Tuesday, the board agreed to send a letter to Donald Geoffroy, regional department director, requesting push-button pedestrian lights at Schoolhouse Road and Western Avenue and at Church Road and Western Avenue.

The board also agreed to request sidewalks in the area and widening of the underpass at the end of the Northway.

The recommendations were made after Evelyn Gerstman of Woodlake Apartments said the newly constructed loop leading to the Northway, built to accommodate Crossgate's Shopping Mall, had created hazardous walking conditions.

The mall is scheduled to open in March.

Since the loop — designed to eliminate left-hand turns onto the Northway and provide for smoother traffic flow — was constructed, it has become very dangerous for pedestrians to cross Western Avenue to get to Stuyvesant Plaza, Mrs. Gerstman told the board.

"Our purpose is to make a safe crossing for those who walk," Mrs. Gerstman said.

Supervisor Kevin Moss told of similar concerns about pedestrian safety and traffic flow in a letter he wrote to Geoffroy immediately after the loop was opened to traffic in mid-December. Moss said he had received about a dozen complaints from motorists about the new traffic pattern.

Geoffroy responded to Moss' letter by saying he was not surprised by the

complaints and had received many himself.

"Admittedly there are problems with the new traffic pattern. Some are caused by the newness of the situation, some are caused by the seasonality of the opening and some will be with us for a few years, until a new wider bridge over the Thruway is built," Geoffroy wrote.

A seven-lane bridge to replace the present five-lane bridge is projected to be constructed in early 1987, Geoffroy said.

He agreed unsafe pedestrian and bicycling conditions had been created by the traffic pattern. "Unfortunately," he wrote, "there is no reasonable way to eliminate this conflict and still allow the loop to function."

Moss said he would send another letter to Geoffroy with the new requests for pedestrian lights, sidewalks and road widening.

The loop was constructed by the developers of the Crossgates Mall, Pyramid Crossgates Co., with the Transportation Department acting as consultants.

THE TOWN BOARD also:

- Agreed to conduct a public hearing at 7:45 p.m. Tuesday on proposed rezoning to permit developer Armand Quadrini to extend Carpenter Village to Route 20.

- Planned a public hearing at 8:15 p.m. Tuesday on a request by Neil Hellman to rezone the Turnpike Theater property on Route 20 to build town houses. Hellman wants to tear down the drive-in, which has come drawn criticism from area residents for the type of movies shown.