

The McKownville Improvement Association

McKOWNVILLE
ALBANY NEW YORK

January 6, 1984

Mr. Thomas Cairns
646 New Loudon Road
Latham, New York 12110

Dear Mr. Cairns,

The McKownville Improvement Association wishes to express its concern about locating a proposed Albany County civic center on the SUNY land at the southwest corner of the Fuller Road/Washington Avenue Extension intersection.

Our concern is that the site is too small and too poorly situated with respect to the highway system to be suitable for a civic center seating 12,000 to 15,000 people, and the consequences will be detrimental both to the convenience of patrons and the ultimate success of the facility, and to the quality of life in McKownville.

The SUNY land contains a total of 70 acres, of which the building itself and surrounding walkways would take up, according to press reports, about 25 acres. That leaves 45 acres for roadways and parking, room for perhaps a 3300 car parking lot and associated access roads. For popular events, that size lot would not be adequate.

If parking onsite is not adequate, patrons will end up parking on all of the adjacent residential streets.

While at first glance, the site appears attractive because of the nearby interstate highways, in fact, as the Pyramid Crossgates Company found out, that area is heavily congested and too close to the Northway/I-90 interchange to permit good highway access. Access between the interstate highway network and Washington Avenue Extension is poor. In fact, locating a civic center on the SUNY land would prevent construction of a loop to carry traffic from the eastbound Washington Avenue Extension to the northbound Northway. Such a loop is desired by the Town of Guilderland to help divert through traffic away from Western Avenue in Westmere, and would also help relieve congestion at the Ruller Road/Washington Avenue intersection.

If the civic center were built on the SUNY parcel, perhaps three-fourths of the civic center traffic would pass through the highly congested Fuller Road/Washington Avenue intersection.

The main hour for entering the civic center for evening events will coincide with the peak exiting hour for the Crossgates Mall. The combination of the two events will push the Fuller Road/Washington Avenue intersection far behind capacity, causing major traffic jams.

As a consequence, civic center traffic will spill over onto Western Avenue and the Fuller Road/Western Avenue intersection, an intersection which will also be beyond capacity at peak hours when the Crossgates Mall is in full swing.

The resulting congestion will be detrimental to the safety and convenience of the residents of McKownville, and will also be detrimental to the success of the civic center.

As we have read, civic centers generally lose money. Convenience of parking and access from and to the interstate highway system are of essential importance for the success of a civic center. When viewed from that perspective, the SUNY site is inadequate. Other sites proposed, including the Latham, North Albany and Exit 23 sites, may not share the liabilities of the SUNY site, nor would a location on the State Office Campus near Washington Avenue.

We hope your committee will examine these considerations very carefully before saddling the taxpayers of the County, and the hamlet of McKownville, with a site which is too small and congested to be successful.

Respectfully yours,



Dorothy Ellinwood, Secretary
McKownville Improvement
Association

cc: Albany County Legislators
James Coyne, County Supervisor
Thomas Whalen, Mayor
Kevin Moss, Guilderland Town Supervisor