

Mr. Kenneth Kovalchik, AICP  
Town Planner  
Town of Guilderland Planning Department  
5209 Western Turnpike  
Guilderland, NY 12084

May 25, 2020

**RE:** Environmental Impact Statement  
Rapp Road Residential/Western Avenue Mixed Use  
Redevelopment Projects

Dear Mr. Kovalchik and Members of the Town Planning Board:

The McKownville Improvement Association is sending this letter to be entered into your record of public comments regarding the proposed Rapp Road and Western Avenue redevelopment projects. Please let the record show that we are opposed to these proposed developments, and are concerned about the impacts that they would have on the Town of Guilderland, including the Pine Bush ecosystem, and our neighbors in Westmere and here in McKownville.

Several issues have not been sufficiently addressed:

***Environment:***

The Pine Bush is a sensitive ecosystem that will suffer if the proposed development goes forward. In particular, the protected Karner Blue habitat on the hill next to the corner of the mall will be further isolated from the larger Pine Bush ecosystem, especially by the apartments planned; this degradation should not be permitted. Why destroy this unique and beautiful natural environment for the sake of still more cookie cutter development, especially at a time of so much economic uncertainty?

***Rapp Road:***

The Rapp Road Community Historic District is an asset that should be appreciated and preserved as the unique treasure that it is. Quality of life for residents of the Rapp Road community and the Gipp Road corridor has already been decreased by the effects of increased traffic in those neighborhoods, and further degradation is certain to result if these new projects are approved. To protect the Gipp Road and Rapp Road neighborhoods a new traffic pattern between Western and Washington Avenues must be required by the Town.

***Traffic:***

Traffic flow into the Crossgates Mall area, especially across the Northway ramp and along Western Avenue, is highly congested. This long-standing problem poses a significant toll in the resulting traffic accidents, use of fire and emergency resources and personnel, and traffic backup

into other areas, including McKownville. The ramp from the Northway to Crossgates is inadequate for the demands of shoppers and will only grow worse if the Crossgates expansion goes forward. That should not be permitted - people are being injured and killed at the Northway ramp.

Along with many of our neighbors in the Town of Guilderland, we question the need for constant growth. We support healthy and thoughtful development that safeguards our environment. The clear-cutting of trees along Western Avenue while the project is still under SEQR review is not a good indicator of Pyramid's intentions to act as a good neighbor within our community. Actions DO speak louder than words. In this case, unfortunately, a real eyesore has been created.

We strongly, and with true concern, question the viability of these projects as now proposed. We are concerned for our community and for our unique Pine Bush ecosystem. We live here. We want to continue to recognize and enjoy the area that we call home.

Respectfully,

The McKownville Improvement Association Board

Ellen Manning, President, Doug Smith, Vice President  
Laura Barry, Secretary, Martha Haraus, Treasurer

Leslie John Craigie  
Richard Goldstein  
William Kidd  
Angie Parsons  
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Debra Trees  
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