

## Rapp Rd proposal

1 message

**Bette Shields** <bette311@gmail.com>  
To: kovalchikk@togny.org

Tue, Apr 28, 2020 at 8:07 AM

Dear Mr. Kovalchik and members of the Planning Board,

A lot has happened in the past few weeks, so I write again to voice my objection to the approval of a Costco to be built by the Pyramid Corporation at the Crossgates Mall.

There are many reasons for the Planning board to disapprove this project including environmental issues, disruption to the surrounding neighborhood, increases in traffic, not only on Western Avenue but also in the nearby neighborhood.

In an article written by Stephen Congel, the CEO of Pyramid, for Forbes Magazine, he touts the importance of mixed use in malls and that his model is how you deal with 'Retail Apocalypse'.

As Mr. Congel states here <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesrealestatecouncil/2018/06/26/there-is-a-right-way-to-develop-mixed-use-centers/#1c051ea821f2>

large 'box' stores should be placed INSIDE the mall rather than nearby a mall complex.

He also states "Many of today's failed malls made the mistake of allowing stores to develop around them on outparcel pads versus incorporating them into the shopping center" and

"Placing these retailers and new uses on outparcels will suck the life out of the property, split your visitors up, weaken your foot traffic and negatively impact the overall health and vibrancy of the property." and

"Whether **big box**, entertainment or restaurants not tied into the mall, there is no shortage of tenants we have worked with to help find **tremendous success by operating directly inside** of our shopping centers. "

His article touting this 'business' model is the exact opposite of what is proposed for Crossgates. There are vacancies within the mall structure, now and into the future, that can be repurposed for this project.

Due to the pandemic, the vacancies are sure to increase and the viability of the mall itself must be questioned.

In addition, the horrific clearing of the trees, where Pyramid cut down acres of woodlands that could have provided habitat in the coming months for endangered and threatened species, is appalling.

The clear cutting violated significant provisions of federal and state law, including the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and especially, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

Clearly this shows that Pyramid cares only about profit and not about our town or its citizens.

One more note, there are currently 7 functioning, small business/franchised owned gas stations from Carman Road to Church Rd. This is a distance of approximately 5 miles.

By allowing a huge fueling station of approximately 18 gas pumps, you are encouraging big business rather than smaller, local, existing businesses.

As stated by town officials at many meetings, Guilderland "supports" small business. Here's your chance to put the support into practice.

I urge you to deny this project as it is proposed.

Sincerely,  
Bette Shields



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## Public Comment: Rapp Road Residential/Western Avenue Mixed Use Redevelopment Project

1 message

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**Shields** <bette311@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 9, 2020 at 11:24 PM

To: "kovalchikk@togny.org" <kovalchikk@togny.org>

Dear Mr. Kovalchik,

As a homeowner and taxpayer for over 40 years in Guilderland, I care deeply and have a large personal stake in what happens in my town. This proposal is too expansive and the impact on traffic now and into the future will be very detrimental.

I believe there are already large areas in the Crossgates perimeter parking lots that could be used for Costco. This could happen without destroying more undeveloped areas and disturbing long existing neighborhoods like Westmere Terrace.

I stand opposed to this project.

Westmere NY

B. Shields



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## Comment regarding Lead Agency for DEIS Rapp Road Residential/Western Avenue Mixed Use Redevelopment Projects

1 message

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**Bette Shields** <bette311@gmail.com>

Mon, May 11, 2020 at 11:27 AM

To: Kenneth Kovalchik <kovalchikk@togny.org>

Attention: Kenneth Kovalchik, Town Planner, [Kovalchikk@togny.org](mailto:Kovalchikk@togny.org)

The Town of Guilderland Planning Board should remove itself as Lead Agency for evaluating the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed development by The Pyramid Companies (Crossgates) on Rapp Road, the Mall Road and Western Avenue to build up to 360 Apartments with up to 3 five-story apartment buildings, up to 50,000 sq ft of office space and up to 278,900 sq ft of commercial expansive retail including a Costco with a 700 car parking lot and a 16 pump gas station because:

1. The Town allowed illegal alteration during the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process when The Pyramid Companies clear-cut a large wooded portion of the site of the proposed Costco on March 26, 2020 even though Pyramid provided advance notice of the clear cutting to the Town.
2. The Guilderland Planning Board deemed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) "complete" when it was missing wetland reports. As of May 10, 2020, these reports still have not been provided to the public if they have indeed even been provided to the Town by Pyramid.
3. The Guilderland Planning Board claimed Lead Agency before the full scope of the project was revealed.

At the very least, the Town of Guilderland Planning Board should postpone making any decisions regarding the DEIS until all pending lawsuits against the Town of Guilderland and The Pyramid Companies regarding the status of the Planning Board remaining Lead Agency are resolved.

Thank You,  
Elizabeth Shields  
Westmere, NY

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**Impact on Guilderland Comment regarding DEIS Rapp Road Residential/Western Avenue Mixed Use Redevelopment Projects**

1 message

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**Bette Shields** <bette311@gmail.com>  
To: Kenneth Kovalchik <kovalchikk@togny.org>

Mon, May 11, 2020 at 11:20 AM

Attention: Kenneth Kovalchik, Town Planner, [Kovalchikk@togny.org](mailto:kovalchikk@togny.org)

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed development by Pyramid (Crossgates) on Rapp Road, the Mall Road and Western Avenue to build up to 360 Apartments with up to 3 five-story apartment buildings, up to 50,000 sq ft of office space and up to 278,900 sq ft commercial expansive retail including including a Costco with a 700 car parking lot and a 16 pump gas station should be rejected because the following are not adequately addressed:

1. The quality of life in Guilderland is changing drastically with the explosion of growth that is occurring. The previous building of the hotel and now this expansion of Crossgates Mall on over 46 additional acres with multiple high-rise apartment buildings, office buildings and a proposed big-box retail Costco is creating a very dense city/urban area that will directly impact neighborhoods that should remain suburban. The Transit Oriented District is supposed to “incentivize development that adequately protects nearby residential neighborhoods” according to the stated purpose in section § 280-18.19(a) of the Town Zoning Code. This development does not meet that standard.
2. Crime is already a problem at Crossgates Mall and Pyramid has reneged on their promise to pay for additional police officers. We do not need to encourage more potential issues in this area with high-density housing and commercial retail. There are several small residential neighborhoods that will be directly affected and overwhelmed by this surge in density. Traffic and home values being the most obvious impacts that will be detrimental to the homeowners and other residents in this area. We need to preserve and protect the way of life that this suburban area has offered to the current residents of this town and which attracts others to move here.
3. The proposed expansion by Pyramid to build a huge Costco big-box store with 18 gas pumps also does not fit the stated purpose of the Transit Oriented District and gas stations should never be built over known aquifers and environmentally sensitive areas.
4. This intense development will not help the traffic in this part of Guilderland. To increase the development on these roads and expect traffic to go down, especially on Western Avenue, is magical thinking.

From just 2 of the 3 sites, the DEIS traffic study predicts 364 new trips during the weekday AM peak, 662 new trips during the weekday PM peak and 911 new trips during that Saturday peak.

The traffic congestion on Western Avenue is already horrible and dangerous. More traffic will only make it more difficult to patronize local businesses. It is almost impossible to make left hand turns from either direction in a safe manner. With the addition of a regional attraction like Costco, the amount of non-local traffic will sky rocket leading to an increased probability of more accidents that will further stress Guilderland's first responders. This will only get worse around the holidays in the winter.

5. The town's infrastructure has not had any major updates in quite some time. By allowing the projects that Pyramid wants will further stress the water, sewer and road infrastructures. This town cannot continue to allow this unfettered growth without major concerns for the infrastructure of the entire town. Again, Pyramid has already reneged on its promise to pay for police officers.
6. The DEIS does not adequately consider other options, particularly the option to not build these developments at all or to build them inside the Mall Ring Road to make better use of Crossgates Mall and existing under utilized parking lots.
7. The core vision for the Town of Guilderland includes a balance of business and residential components that are conducive to the suburban/rural way of life in this town. The growth that is occurring, specifically that of the type that the Pyramid Corporations want to build, does not belong in Guilderland. Huge Malls and big box stores are better situated in areas zoned Industrial or more densely populated areas that are for businesses. Over the past 20 years, we have watched urban and multi-dwelling apartments projects continue westward into Guilderland. This has increased traffic, noise and dirt for anyone who lives a block or two from Western Ave. Let's protect what we have and say no to any future corporate expansion in town.
8. The town must consider the financial status of the applicant. News reports indicate that the Pyramid Group is considering filing bankruptcy. The Town of Guilderland should not allow projects to begin that have a high likelihood of not being completed.

Thank you,  
Elizabeth Shields