

# How 3 Local Planners See TALUS' 1990 Ideas

Rapid transit impresses a Livonia planner, but some Farmington officials are less impressed by the 1990 plan proposed recently for southeastern Michigan.

The land use and transportation plans were unveiled by Irving J. Rubin, director of TALUS, a project of the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments.

The chief elements of the TALUS plan for the next 20 years are to try to bring a halt to suburban "sprawl," to add cross-radial expressways to connect the routes that fan out of Detroit, and to build a rapid transit system.

FEW SUBURBAN planning departments and commissions have seen the three-volume TALUS report, although its highlights have been reported extensively in The Observer Newspapers.

The TALUS plan has received preliminary approval from that project's executive committee. After public hearings and possible modifications, the 1990 plan is to be adopted by SEMCOG.

The actual implementation, however, is up to the six counties and the hundreds of cities, villages and townships. Local opinion is important -- and that's why Observer Newspapers reporters have begun to interview hometown officials.

Here is what three had to say:

JAMES PIATT, member of the City of Farmington Planning Commission, has been impressed over a period of time with Rubin's effectiveness in acquiring public support for the regional planning concept.

PIATT has been one of the most active City of Farmington participants in regional planning conferences in recent years.

PIATT said Rubin wants to increase population densities in certain areas and to implement a mass transit system. This rubs against the

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should be located. One so-called "new town" is projected for the Novi area, just west of the Farmington community.

The new towns are to be complete communities of 50,000 to 100,000 population, with a broad range of housing types and prices and job opportunities -- they're not just old-style bedroom suburbs.

"IT WILL BE very hard to accomplish implementation of the plan by suburban governments," Piatt predicted.

The effect on Farmington is "a poorer tax base and will be met with opposition from other, similar communities." Piatt credited Rubin with an excellent job in gathering information which will be very useful to regional planners but useful in only a minimal way for local communities.

A case in point, he explained, is the Farmington area where TALUS jumped township and city statistics together.

IN PIATT'S OPINION, SEMCOG has been dominated by central Detroit political people, and the result is a plan which may be more efficient for Detroit than for the suburbs.

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"In Farmington and Southfield, the die is already cast -- one for low and one for high density," he said. "Novi is still virgin but will likely have high density."

Lorton said the township commission was critical of some TALUS conclusions but admitted it needed more time to completely evaluate the survey.

COMMENTS ON the TALUS plan were for the most part favorable by John Nagy, assistant city planner for Livonia.

He said the planner's office always had felt it "advisable" to have a rapid transit system.

"Our position is that Livonia should be related to a rapid transit system which will bring it closer to the airport and downtown Detroit," Nagy said.

He described the Jeffries Freeway as a "convenience," but said he doubted if a rapid transit system would increase population of Livonia to any appreciable extent.

NAGY SAID benefits of such a transportation plan would be realized primarily by business and commercial interests.

"A rapid transit system would help increase the economic development of Livonia and promote convention center and hotel and motel expansion surgently needed now in the city," he declared.

He said the suggested corridor, the mile between Schoolcraft and Plymouth roads, "made sense."

However, he commented, "I cannot get too enthusiastic at this time over the TALUS maps. They're much too general."

Nagy agreed that the proposed 1990 completion date was realistic for "major segments" of the plan, but said he did not feel it would apply to the overall program.

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