

Cities squabble over land swap

By MARY CONNELLY-SZCZESNY
Whether 123 acres of Troy land should be transferred to Birmingham has divided Birmingham into two camps.
All seven members of the Birmingham City Commission are opposed to the transfer, charging it is a financial windfall.
Birmingham city administrators and Troy City Council members, however, support the land transfer, claiming it will bring better city services to the property.
Troy and Birmingham voters will decide the issue during the Nov. 7 election.
The 123 acres proposed for transfer

is Troy land cut off from that city by the Grand Trunk railroad tracks. It includes a triangle of land north of Birmingham between Adams and the railroad tracks, which contains an apartment complex and Derby School, part of the Birmingham School District.
The Saeed Clover Hill Park cemetery and a strip of property along the tracks north of Fourteen would also be transferred.
FOR BIRMINGHAM commissioners, the thorn in the transfer is the Derby Road bridge, included in the annexation package.
As part of the transfer agreement, Birmingham would have to split with

Troy the cost of repairing the Derby bridge if the price exceeded \$140,000.
"It's like writing a blank check," claimed Birmingham Mayor Pro Tem Bert Jackson. "We're talking about annexing a small piece of land that's not going to generate much revenue compared to the liability of that bridge."
"I'm not looking for us to make money, but I'm opposed to Birmingham taking on more liabilities and burdens."
"It's a loser," agreed Commissioner Jack Sights. "I'm not against annexation. I'm against spending taxes that no one has budgeted for. We sure don't have \$400,000 to spend on the Derby bridge."
"It's simple arithmetic at this point," Sights added. "I don't want to incur a debt we can't afford."

BIRMINGHAM COMMISSIONERS claim the Derby bridge repairs could amount to one million dollars, citing the \$1.6 million it is now expected to cost to rebuild the bridge on Adams Road.
"These bridges were built at the same time," Jackson said of the late 1920 structures.
Troy City Council members however dispute Birmingham's claims maintaining that the Derby bridge can be renovated within the \$140,000 ceiling in the transfer agreement.
"I don't know how they can be aware of the facts and vote against it. It's incomprehensible," said Troy council member Jeanne Stine.

BIRMINGHAM MAYOR Robert Kelly criticized Birmingham's administrators for not being able to compute the cost of the Derby bridge repair.
"I support the concept of annexation but I will vote against it until I know what the total cost of repairing Troy's bridge is," Kelly said. "Our administration is recommending something they cannot give us a dollar figure on. It's a financial fiasco. We just don't have all the facts."
Birmingham Commissioner William York added that Birmingham should not incur a debt before knowing the results of the tax limiting and tax cutting proposals on the Nov. 7 ballot.
"The main concern is the unknown of the Tisch-Headlee effect we may be faced with," York said, referring to the Tisch and Headlee tax proposals on the ballot. He maintained that if tax

revenues to the city are cut, Birmingham will not have money to repair or maintain the Derby bridge.
BIRMINGHAM'S CITY manager Robert Kenning, who has sought the land transfer for more than 20 years, pleaded this week with commissioners to support the annexation.
Kenning has been on sick leave but sent a letter to commissioners urging support for the transfer.
One of the chief reasons for the transfer is to better supply city services, such as police and fire protection, to the property, according to backers.
Troy has had trouble servicing the area because it is cut off from that city by the railroad tracks.
"The delivery of governmental services should not be complicated by historical and sometimes arbitrary boundary lines which have created political enclaves," Kenning wrote. "The proposed annexation would place these enclaves within the city that surrounds them."
Kenning also maintained that if the annexation passes, Birmingham will gain control of Derby Road, "a critical connection between the Pembroke area and the rest of Birmingham."
"Other than Maple Road, it serves as the only route between Fourteen Mile and Sixteen Mile road for emergency vehicles or for the residents to cross the Grand Trunk railroad tracks," he said.

KENNING ALSO argued that if the land is transferred, Birmingham will gain control over the mixing of a disputed piece of property east of Adams, north of Birmingham. The property developer has filed a lawsuit seeking to change the zoning from a single family residential classification to a zoning that would allow a high rise apartment building.
In the lawsuit, the claim is made that a dense apartment development is needed to offset the cost of bringing government services to the area, Kenning said. The claim would be weakened, he said, if the land is transferred and Birmingham provides sewer and water lines.

THE LAND transfer would also allow Birmingham to improve fire protection in the city's industrial area adjacent to Eton Road, the manager claimed.

Tips are given new car buyers

With the 1979 autos making their debut, consumers are confronted with a multitude of choices and options. To help those in the market shop for a new model, the Michigan Consumers Council (MCC) offers these tips.
"Don't let sales pressure make the decision for you," said MCC executive director Linda Joy. "Rather, do some homework and decide on the car and options you want before you get to the dealership. After all, an automobile is one of the biggest purchases you'll ever make."
Consumers may be able to save money by selling their old cars themselves, rather than trading them in, Ms. Joy advised.
"Don't rush to tell the dealer you want to trade in your old car. This will allow you to first get the price on the new car without a trade-in. Then, get the price that includes a trade-in for your old car. If you feel it's too low, consider selling it on your own."
Ms. Joy also urged consumers to price options as well as the car itself.
"Some manufacturers put together packages of options at a special price," she said. "But if you compare the price of the options you want to the package deal, it may be cheaper simply to order your choice of options and to forget the special package."

Consumers should shop for credit as carefully as they shop for the car.
"While most dealers can arrange financing, it pays to shop around at banks or credit unions. And no matter what a lender says, credit life or credit disability insurance isn't required by law. This insurance will pay off the loan if a consumer is disabled or dies but it's not always worth the cost," Ms. Joy added.
If a lender says credit insurance is required, Ms. Joy urged consumers to contact the state attorney general's Consumer Protection Division, 525 W. Ottawa, Lansing 48913 or call 373-1140.
Ms. Joy urged consumers to be vigilant when their new car arrives. She advised looking it over carefully for flaws, inside and out, before accepting the car.
"If anything is wrong, notify the dealer immediately and don't accept the car until the flaws are corrected. If problems arise later, don't put off letting the dealer know and get itemized receipts to document everything, even repairs covered under the warranty," Ms. Joy added.
MCC has a free fact sheet for consumers who want to know more about new car shopping. For a copy write MCC, 414 Hollister Building, 106 W. Allegan, Lansing 48933.



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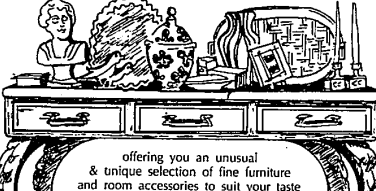


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