

# Moderate housing growth is SEMCOG's goal

by TIM RICHARD  
Pretend the housing growth policy of southeast Michigan is like a superhighway.

The inside lane is for a freeze on growth. The outside lane is for unrestricted gobbling up of vacant land.

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments is planning to travel the second lane. That assessment comes from James McCartney, a Wayne County Community College trustee, former county commissioner and a resident of still-developing Westland.

In SEMCOG circles, McCartney is chairman of the Council on Regional Development (CORD). For several months, he has been chairing hot meetings as local officials debate which lane to travel to the year 2000.

LAST WEEK, SEMCOG's General Assembly picked a lane called "Local Plans, Modified by Adopted SEMCOG policies."

"We're in the middle, leaning toward preservation and conservation," said McCartney after the vote.

The modifications in favor of preservation on existing facilities and conservation of vacant land were necessary, he said in an interview, because "local plans look only at the community with no concern for the outside."

SEMCOG, a six-county regional planning agency, is in the process of making what it calls "small area forecasts." These are attempts to figure out how many people, households and jobs areas in the region will have in the future. SEMCOG's forecasts will influence the flow of federal aid for

such facilities as sewers, water, transportation networks and parks.

THE DECISION to travel the "Local Plans, Modified" lane came on a vote with about a 3-1 margin in the general assembly.

Oakland County Commissioner Robert Page (R-Birmingham) noted that Troy, which is part of his district, objected to the plan because it assigned a capacity of eight dwelling units to an acre of vacant sewer land. Troy figures two units per acre, Page said.

But SEMCOG staffer William Duddleson, who handles data and analytical methods, replied that a "conservation" land policy should provide for eight units per acre.

Issues I like that occupied CORD in its 30 or more meetings this year, McCartney said. "No one is ever completely satisfied. We could probably work on this policy forever," he said.

The final policy won't be adopted until mid-1980. What SEMCOG's action last week does is to select one lane for SEMCOG to travel in making small area forecasts.



JAMES MCCARTNEY  
Right of center

WHAT DOES the "Local Plans, Modified" lane mean to the growth of the region? Here is SEMCOG's own summary:

• Land use—"SEMCOG encourages

• Redevelopment—"SEMCOG encourages local governments to implement their current plans for redevelopment." • Sewer service—"SEMCOG supports the provision of sewer service to areas designated to be served on the 1990 Sewer Service Area Plan Map adopted by the council, and the likely Water Quality Problems local governments to implement their current land use plans and policies within the proposed sewer service area adopted by the Council (SEMCOG). The Council discourages all major commercial, institutional and industrial development on unserved areas within the region, and discourages development on agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands that will remain unserved through the year 2000."

Map, whether or not this service conforms to local plans." The significance is that local plans often show more areas receiving sewers than SEMCOG shows.

• Protection of fragile land resources—"SEMCOG supports the prohibition of development on all flood plains and wetlands."

The Council also supports the prohibition of as much unserved agricultural and environmentally sensitive land as possible."

• Transportation—"The assumed highway improvements in the I-696, M-33 and M-24 corridors as well as transit improvements in the Gratiot, Woodward and Michigan corridors and expanded background service would be considered in Transportation Plan updates."

## Don't dump snow on road

Dumping snow from driveways into or across roads creates one of the most dangerous situations motorists face in winter.

John L. Grubka, managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission, said, "Some plow operators and even shovelers don't seem to realize the danger they are creating. A small mound of snow changes the surface condition and is slick, which can cause drivers to lose control."

"For unlucky motorists, who will undoubtedly be confronted with such obstacles often this winter, the best advice I know is to be wary, avoid jamming on the brakes or making quick turning movements. Release the accelerator and steer straight through or into the snow."

"As always on snow or ice, repeated gentle pumping of the brakes—if necessary—will be less likely to cause loss of control than jamming on the brakes. Straight wheels are less likely to cause a severe swerve."

"Snow removal contractors and residents can avoid creating hazards by piling snow on the same side of the street as the driveway and as far off the roadway as possible. The motorist will be saved from difficulty just might be a relative or friend coming to visit you," said Grubka.

He also reminded that if snow must be piled on the shoulder it should be to the right of your driveway as you face the street. "This will reduce the amount of snow rolled into the driveway by passing road snowplows," he said.

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