

Industrial space demand is linked to road network

By MIKE MATUSZEWSKI

Mile after mile of open highway. Ton upon ton of concrete. What does it all mean?

Residential sprawl and industrial development.

A burgeoning expressway network—1-275, I-96, I-94, M-14, M-39 and a long-awaited I-696 extension—feed the insatiable desire to move beyond densely-populated, fully-developed urban areas.

"I've got this large map on my wall," said Jack Steiner of the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, "and I can't figure out what comes first the chicken (the expressway) or the egg (development)."

"When a freeway comes through, the first thing you pick up is commercial and industrial development," he said.

LAST YEAR with the opening of the Jeffries Expressway (I-96), Livonia officials were flooded with demands for thousands of square feet of industrial and office space.

This year, Plymouth Township officials are hoping to reap the benefits of I-275 and the long-delayed opening of M-14, a link between northwestern Wayne County and Ann Arbor.

Even though I-275 does not have the advantages of a large service road to facilitate freeway access, township officials say they have been getting large numbers of inquiries concerning property near expressway intersections.

They say they have received many inquiries concerning the Sheldon Road Five Mile Road intersection, which appears to be targeted for an industrial boom.

"As a commercial-industrial area, it's going to blossom out quite rapidly," said Plymouth Township planner James Anulewicz.

"People who were first allured by the access availability are now taking a closer look at the specifics," Anulewicz said. "It's evident that Canton Township, Plymouth Township, Van Buren Township and Northville Township are going to be impacted by the freeways," he said.

NOT EVERYONE agrees just how those communities will be affected, though.

There will be the industrial parks that pop up along the freeway corridor, officials say, and there will be the subdivisions housing some of the work force.

But there may also be a service-industry boom.

"There's lots of vacant ground around here," said Harvey Ziel, treasurer of the Plymouth Economic Development

Corporation. "And there's going to be a lot of rezoning."

"Sooner or later you're going to see some highways going up and the service people will move in much like they did in Southfield when the expressway made it easy to get to and from downtown," he said.

MUCH OF THE speculation hinges on the completion of M-14.

The State Department of Transportation has again pushed back the project's completion date. It was supposed to open last fall.

Highway officials are hesitant to even try to be specific about a new opening day. They say only it will be open this year.

At fault for the latest delay, according to district highway engineer Warren Cox, were construction problems and a nation-wide cement shortage.

"There just wasn't any chance of completing it last year," Cox said.

The cement shortage, which Cox blamed on plant breakdowns, a strike at a large manufacturer, Dundee, and a tremendous increase in demand for bulk cement, "affected every construction project we had last year," he said.

BUT M-14 is not the only much-maligned expressway in metropolitan Detroit.

I-696, which has been on the drawing board for more than 20 years, is nowhere near completion. An important stretch between Macomb County and western Oakland County is not even close to the construction stage.

Cox estimated that the entire length of I-696, from I-94 in eastern Macomb County to I-96 in western Oakland County might be completed in 1986—at the earliest.

A major hang-up has been the Detroit Zoo, which will border the expressway in southeastern Oakland County. Cox said the state department of transportation last month presented to the federal government a new environmental impact statement. State officials are now waiting for the federal government's reply.

That impact statement dealt specifically with the possible effects of a major highway on the animals in the 50-year-old zoo.

"Nobody can ascertain," Cox said, "that there's any effect on the animals. Being in a zoo, they're not in their normal environment, so it's hard to say how the freeway will affect them."

Following federal approval of I-696 plans and the revised environmental impact statement, Cox said, the highway department could begin to acquire the necessary property along the proposed expressway route. That, he said, could take three years.

Banking goes electronic

Michigan's first electronic banking terminals to be shared by various types of financial institutions have been put into use in two downtown Detroit office buildings.

Called "Metromoney", the automatic tellers are in the Michigan Bell Company headquarters on Michigan Avenue and in the Ford Motor Company tower in the Renaissance Center.

The terminals — two at each location — are shared by four banks, two credit unions and a savings and loan association.

The program marks the first attempt at such a large-scale cooperative

arrangement in the state.

The terminals can perform a full range of deposit, withdrawal, transfer and bill payment functions and are activated by plastic cards offered by participating institutions.

Involved institutions are Bank of the Commonwealth, City National Bank of Detroit, Dearborn Federal Credit Union, First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Detroit, Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit, National Bank of Detroit and the Telephone Employees Credit Union of Detroit.

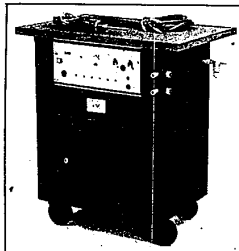
Additional terminals are planned for other area locations.



For several months, drivers on I-275 and I-96 have seen a veiled indication that the connecting link with the new M-14 freeway to Ann Arbor is no pipedream. However, the completion date has been pushed

back again. When that date does arrive later this year, the drape will be jerked off such signs as this and the new route west will be a reality. (Staff photo)

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