

Local legislators push for subway alternative

By JACKIE KLEIN

Public transportation in Oakland County could be another hot potato in the same bubbling political pot as the

long-awaited I-696 east-west expressway. Neither is getting off dead center. That's the opinion of Oakland County Commissioner Alexander Perinoff, D-Southfield, who was among speakers on

the mass transit controversy during a Monday legislative breakfast in Southfield.

At issue is a legislative resolution, approved by the State Senate two weeks ago. If approved, the transportation plan under consideration by the State House would release \$990,000 in state funds for a preliminary engineering study for a light rail subway from downtown Detroit to Six Mile, then surfacing along the Woodward corridor to 10 Mile.

The plan, opposed by many Oakland County and local officials, provides about six miles of expensive subway in Detroit. It represents a hard fought and shaky compromise reached by Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) members in December.

Subway opponents claim the proposal fails to meet the needs of the entire county. Capital costs for the underground portion of light rail in Detroit reduce available funds to extend the system in Oakland County, according to those opponents.

Legislative approval is required before SEMTA can conduct the engineering studies which will permit it to apply for a \$900 million matching grant informally pledged by the federal government for the transportation system.

"THIS IS a pragmatic problem," Perinoff said. "I agree the plan for six miles of subway is a travesty because it will do nothing for Southfield or other Oakland County communities. But we might have to swallow the subway proposal to get what we want."

"The county has three delegates on the SEMTA board and some commissioners are hot to withdraw from SEMTA. But where would we get the money on our own to get off first base? If we keep arguing this could turn out to be another I-696. We can't wait 20 years to get public transit off the ground. You've got to start with one leg to get to the next."

Original SEMTA plans called for a shorter subway system estimated to cost \$1.2 billion. This proposal was scrapped by the SEMTA board. The new proposal would cost about \$1.6 billion to implement.

Many counties in the region object to adding to the system just for the satisfaction of balancing out federal dollar allocations with funding committed to Detroit, according to Oakland County Executive Daniel Murphy who spoke at Monday's meeting in Southfield.

"Adding more rail to insure our share of funding isn't answering the problem with the proposed transportation plan," Murphy said. "But there's a

lot of horse trading going on in the legislature. Members are swapping work-er's compensation votes for transit votes."

"NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT, secretary of transportation, thinks we in Oakland County are bad guys because we want to move people where people want to go. We better get our act together so we won't lose all the federal money."

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners in January passed a resolution supporting a public transportation system which includes the following:

- Light rail service from Detroit to Pontiac.
- A spur to the Silverdome.
- A feasibility study for extending light rail to Orion and Oxford townships.
- A route preference over the Woodward corridor — light rail from downtown Detroit up Woodward through Ferndale and Pleasant Ridge, over the Grand Trunk right-of-way through Royal Oak and north to Pontiac.
- Provision of 47 small buses in the county by July.
- Expansion of Oakland County Advanced Reservation Transit (OCART)

to 85 by 1982 and to 140 by 1990.

• A bus system including park and ride facilities, shelters and maintenance.

IF THE SEMTA plan passes in the State House, Murphy said, the public should have the right to vote on it. Under the Headline amendment, he said, government units can't earmark taxes for programs without the vote of the people.

"There'll be a hue and cry from the Oakland County Board of Commissioners if this proposal doesn't appear on the ballot," Murphy said. "If we have to, we'll start an initiative petition to get it on the ballot. Some legislators are afraid to put the proposal to a vote because they don't think people will pass it."

Phase II of the SEMTA plan calls for surface light rail from 10 Mile to Big Beaver and light rail on the Gratiot corridor from Woodward to Maple.

Oakland County Commissioner Lawrence Perinoff, D-Southfield, favors regional government and transportation systems. He maintains the county should work with SEMTA.

(Continued on page 8A)

obituaries

ANNE A. CHRISTMAN

Anne Christman, 69, of Farmington died March 4 in Mesa Lutheran Hospital, Arizona.

She was born Nov. 11, 1910 in Michigan. Mrs. Christman was a housewife and a member of Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, Farmington.

Survivors include: husband, Harold G.; son, Donald H. of LaPlata, Md.; Sharon A. Stuart of Salt Lake City, Utah; three sisters, three brothers and four grandchildren.

Services were March 3 in Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, Farmington and Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington. Burial was in Calumet Cemetery, Hancock, Mich.

ELEANOR D. BOYLE

Eleanor Boyle, 82, of Farmington Hills died March 5 in Lourdes Nursing Home.

She was born Jan. 18, 1898 in Michigan. Miss Boyle was a teacher for the Detroit Public Schools. She was a member of St. Fabian's Roman Catholic Church in Farmington Hills.

Survivors include: brother, Edward

Edwin Boyle and several cousins.

Services were March 8 at Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington and St. Fabian's Roman Catholic Church, Farmington Hills. The Rev. Seamus Ryan officiated. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

ROBERT FREDERICK DONOVAN

Robert Donovan, 62, of Spring Lake, Mich., died March 10 at home.

He was born June 10, 1917, in Marshall, Minn. A former Farmington resident, he was a plant manager for Reynolds Metal in Grand Rapids. He was a member of P.B.O.E. Lodge 1986 and the Detroit Power Squad.

Survivors include: wife, Nellie; children, Mary Lee Jesup of Chicago and Patricia Donovan of Colorado; Michael of Oklahoma, Robert Jr. of Grand Rapids, George and Alvan Oldfield of Milford, and James Oldfield of Plymouth; brothers, Howard of Chicago and William of Lake Orion; 12 grandchildren.

Services will be March 14 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington. Burial will be in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

Robert Siegel, A.S.I.D.

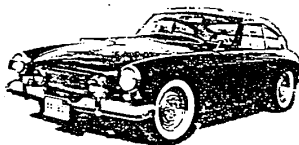


Bob Siegel is Gorman's head designer, not only designing interiors himself, but helping advise and counsel his expert staff. A member of Tau Sigma Delta, an honorary design fraternity, Bob graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Design degree and he's been designing beautiful interiors ever since. In fact, during his 30 years in the profession, Bob designed the interiors of both the original Raleigh House and the Congregation Shoreay Zedek. Bob's services are available to you, free of charge, at Gorman's.

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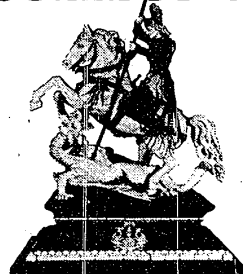
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