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Finally! 10 Mile intersection gets county nod

After five years of debate, planning and standing in line for federal funds, the 10 Mile-Grand River intersection will be revamped within a year.

Ninety percent of the project's \$625,000 price tag will be financed by federal funds with Oakland County and Farmington Hills kicking in the rest, Dennis Pajot, Oakland County Road Commission spokesman, said.

Mayor Joann Soronen said, "There's no question it's a problem," she said of the intersection.

Bidding for the construction contract should be opened in early 1981, Pajot said.

Actual construction should begin in the spring and be completed within the year, he said.

"The design is based on one of three

proposals presented nearly three years ago by the state and county highway authorities.

Under the new design, the emphasis of the intersection will be placed on 10 Mile, which flows east and west. The current design places emphasis on Grand River.

The design keeps most of the present road structure in the intersection but turns Grand River toward 10 Mile at a right angle.

THIS CONFIGURATION would better mark 10 Mile and make allowances for a turn-around area in a traffic island. The island would be placed at the present intersection of the two roads.

Westbound 10 Mile would be free flowing without any stop lights, Pajot said. Ten Mile, which carries more traffic, would go straight through to Grand River. A traffic signal would be placed at eastbound Grand River.

When it is completed, the intersection will take on the opposite of its present appearance, Pajot said.

The heavily trafficked area is the site of a Holiday Inn and the Red Roof Inn as well as several restaurants, including Mountain Jacks and a Denny's, which is currently under construction.

Several small shopping plazas and a car dealership have been added to the area since the intersection was con-

structed in the '50s.

Shortly after the intersection was completed, M-102 was built in the area, Pajot said. Ten years ago, I-275 was added as well.

While the intersection's design handled traffic well originally, it has failed to accommodate traffic efficiently within the last five years.

"The land use changes have been fantastic in that area in the last 10 years," Pajot said.

Decision looming on I-696

By CRAIG PIECHURA

Aides to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Neil Goldschmidt say he's likely to make a decision to approve or reject plans for construction of the proposed I-696 expressway before leaving his appointed post Jan. 28.

"I can't say for sure," said a member of the office of environment and safety in Washington, D.C. "I'm not one of the political appointees. But I can say we have had indications from them that they wish to make a decision on a number of major (highway) projects rather than passing the buck to the new administration."

David Merchant, division administrator for the Federal Highway Administration in Lansing, concurs. He said he is "hoping" for a decision before the Ronald Reagan administration moves in but admits he probably won't learn of the secretary's decision until the public does.

"They (department of transportation officials) have been out talking to people, getting additional information, so we're hopeful for a decision soon but I really can't say it will be forthcoming," Merchant said.

One of the topics of discussion in these visits has been a proposal developed by the Michigan Department of Transportation in attempts to resolve concerns that the freeway would interrupt Orthodox Jewish communities. Critics have said the freeway would make it almost impossible for Orthodox Jews in Oak Park to walk to services, as prescribed by religious law.

PLANS CALL for at least three pedestrian walkways to be built along the proposed freeway route. Under the state highway proposal, the freeway is approved, a deck would be built at Church, another would be located between Church and Greenfield and a third would be built at Fairfax in Southfield.

There is also talk about building a deck over the freeway near the Detroit Zoo to make it easier for persons in Pleasant Ridge to walk to the zoo. The plans also state that such a deck would replace park land lost by Pleasant Ridge through freeway construction.

Merchant said it is just speculation, but a reasonable one, to assume that since such options are being explored, the freeway will be approved.

Lately, only Pleasant Ridge and Lathrup Village governments have been vocal in opposition to plans for construction of I-696. Pete Swallow of Lathrup Village, president of Community Organizations United to Save Our Neighborhoods (COUPON), said even if Goldschmidt approves the highway project the Governor still has the option of applying for Withdrawal and Substitution funds, where federal funds pay for 85 percent of surface road improvements as substitution for a federal highway.

Swallow met with Michigan Department of Transportation commissioners yesterday afternoon to discuss the concept of Withdrawal and Substitution. He's already discussed the idea with SEMCOG officials.

Swallow says the idea of building ramps over the freeway will just make the freeway cost more than the last estimate of \$600 million, \$6 million of which would have to be paid by state, county and local government.

Using Withdrawal and Substitution funds, Swallow says cities will get 85 percent federal funding and allow them to widen roads and fix intersections that already need repair but are being ignored because of the state's poor economy.



Skating Santa

The Jolly ol' gent came to town a little early this year to don a pair of roller skates and do a little discoing with the local children. To see what happened, turn to Page 3A. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Elderly benefit

Tax relief to increase

Michigan homeowners and renters received state property tax relief credits and refunds totaling \$395 million in 1980 and tax relief in 1981 is expected to exceed \$500 million.

The average rebate was nearly \$300 and is expected to jump to \$378 in 1981.

"These payments reaffirm Michigan's position as the state with the largest property tax relief program in the nation," said state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington.

"They were made under our program, often referred to as the 'circuit breaker,' which provides property tax relief through the state income tax based on the relationship of property

taxes to the income of the taxpayer.

"The fact that this relief is provided through the state income tax often has resulted in misunderstanding concerning the amount of property tax relief being given and which taxpayers are eligible to receive it.

"Governor Milliken recognizes that escalating property taxes are causing a substantial burden to taxpayers. As a result, he will be proposing steps to provide further property tax relief in his State of the State message."

MORE THAN ONE MILLION households received credits during 1980.

Major relief went to an estimated

389,000 senior citizen households in payments averaging \$414. Senior citizen payments are expected to rise to \$476 for 1980 property taxes.

About 925,000 other households received average payments of about \$240. Their tax relief checks are expected to jump to an average of \$320 based on 1980 property tax bills.

The economic slump caused by the national recession helped trigger the increased payments.

"The slowdown in income growth has meant greater relief, especially in combination with the growth of proper-

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Battle begins for approval of 'paper' bill

By MARY GNIEWEK

The fate of a bill that would curb excessive paperwork at all levels of state government is now in the hands of Governor Milliken.

Senate Bill 786, sponsored by Southfield Democrat Doug Ross, was approved almost unanimously by both houses of the state Legislature before adjournment last Wednesday.

The lone dissenter was Rep. Frank Wierzbicki, D-Detroit.

A Ross aide said that Milliken very likely will approve the bill.

"I think there's a real good chance," the aide, Bob O'Leary, said.

"The state chamber of commerce, various small businesses and other groups will be contacting the governor to encourage him to support it."

Milliken is expected to receive the bill later this week. He then will have 14 days to sign or veto it.

Ross introduced the bill late last year to combat Michigan's estimated \$1 billion cost for processing of government paperwork.

"THE STATE HAS some 20,000 different forms," Ross said. "For every dollar spent for printing, \$30 is spent for processing and storage."

Senate Majority Leader William Faust, D-Westland, and Senate Minority Leader Robert VanderLaan, R-Grand Rapids, co-sponsored the legislation.

In the House, Rep. Richard Young, D-Dearborn Heights, rallied the measure through.

If Milliken signs the bill into law, an extensive review of public forms would begin in December 1981 and would conclude by the end of 1984.

A joint administrative rules commit-

tee would judge the validity of each form.

"For the first time, we'll review every form the public is asked to fill out," Ross said.

"If the form is unneeded, excessively costly, ineffective, or duplicative, we can eliminate it."

Government paperwork and forms in the 19 departments have been uncoordinated and unreviewed.

Gerald Miller, director of the state department of Management and Budget, has been a vocal opponent of the Ross bill.

Although some departments have applied modern form design, most departments have no program to review their forms, eliminate unnecessary government or coordinate information gathering with other agencies.

THE ROSS BILL is based on tested legislation in Kentucky and Indiana. In Indiana, the effort to reduce paperwork resulted in a 30-percent cut. Kentucky had a 25-percent reduction.

"He took the best aspects of those states and drafted his own version," O'Leary said.

Ross said he sponsored the bill because of its premise that government is disappearing in its own paperwork.

"And it's taking many of us down with it," he said.

The cost is shared at clerical levels — secretarial and different processing, mailing, analysis, data processing, filing and storage of forms.

"The Legislature is finally going to take responsibility for trimming government paperwork without new expenditures or added bureaucracy," Ross said.

"The governor has had great interest in forms management and paperwork reduction."

AFSCME workers ratify pact

Some 230 maintenance operations and food service workers, members of AFSCME Local 1456, ratified a new three-year work agreement with the Farmington Public Schools last week.

The agreement extends the present contract, which was due to expire July 1, 1981, to July 1983.

The new wage agreement calls for a 12 cent an hour raise this year, a 75 cent an hour raise in 1981-82, and a 71 cent an hour hike in 1982-83.

In the last year of the contract, there is a reopener clause for compensation and fringe benefits.

Other minor changes in contract language were made, according to Robert Coleman, personnel director for the Farmington School District.

Union President Gary Kurzynski and union representative Helen Lema were present Tuesday when the Farmington Board of Education unanimously approved the new agreement.

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