

SEMOG calls for new I-696 interchange

By Teri Benas
staff writer

A state transportation study has recommended adding a new I-696 exit-entrance interchange at Inkster Road.

SEMOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) representatives last week approved a resolution calling for the interchange as recommended by the study, initiated by SEMCOG and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

A new interchange will serve to re-

lieve traffic congestion along the eight-mile stretch of I-696 between I-275 and Telegraph Road, officials said.

The only entrance-exit interchange serving that stretch now is at Orchard Lake Road.

THE STUDY also recommended another new I-696 interchange somewhere between Orchard Lake Road in

Farmington Hills and Beck Road in Novi.

"Local communities felt there has not been adequate access along that stretch of I-696," said Robert Adams, MDOT planning deputy.

"Originally, that highway was designed as a rural highway. The planners hadn't presumed that there would be the urban development that there is

along I-696 and 12 Mile Road and the spacing of the interchanges reflected that."

Adams estimated it could take two to five years before construction is begun on the Inkster Road interchange. They engineers must first draft specific design plans and get those approved by the federal government. MDOT must

also make an environmental impact study, he said.

THE I-696 study also recommended these improvements:

- Widening of I-696 from four to six lanes in each direction.
- Widening of parallel and intersecting roads, including 12 Mile Road in the area of Farmington Hills, Inkster Road from 10 Mile Road to 12 Mile Road, and 11 Mile Road from Franklin Road to Inkster Road.

The cost of the highway program will be funded 80 percent by the federal government and 10 percent by state sources.

SEMOG members took action on the measure by adopting an amendment to their Year 2005 Regional Transportation Plan.

In the report, planners noted I-696 between Telegraph and Lahser currently provides "inadequate" access to Southfield and Farmington Hills.

IT CITED traffic counts which indicated that without any improvements to the four-lane freeway, 1982 daily traffic volumes of 60,000-70,000 vehicles per day are projected to increase

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to more than 95,000 vehicles per day by 2005.

The report stated that that stretch could become a severe "bottleneck" unless the four-lane freeway is widened by 1990 because that section is slated to connect to two six-lane planned freeways: I-96 to the west and the new I-696 central section on the east.

SEMOG studies indicate that problems can only become worse by 2005 if nothing is done. According to projections, there will be a 41 percent increase in area population, a 64 percent increase in the number of households and a 69 percent increase in area employment.

1-minute manager classes set

Oakland University's Cotnam Center will present a "Ken Blanchard, One Minute Manager" seminar on supervision and management development in two evening sessions, July 23 and 30.

The sessions will be held 7-10 p.m. at the Holiday Inn of Southfield. Fees are \$45 for two sessions, \$25 for one. For information call 970-3033.

Regional problems go beyond 3-county area — departing chief

By Teri Benas
staff writer

The outgoing chairman of the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMOG) cautioned against approaching regional problems on only a tri-county basis — Wayne, Macomb and Oakland.

"By law and in fact, we're a seven-county region and need to plan as a seven-county region," said Donald E. Shelton, SEMCOG's chairman for the past two years.

Shelton spoke to the general assembly at its annual meeting last week in Botsford in Farmington Hills. His comments touched on cooperation among governmental units in the areas of economic development and public transportation.

THE TRANSPORTATION issue in recent months has brought together the so-called "Big 4," made up of Detroit Mayor Coleman Young and the chief officeholders in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

Shelton "applauded" the Big 4's efforts at "regional planning." Yet he warned that any success they may achieve should not limit regional planning to just Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

Shelton pledged the SEMCOG's support by providing a transit needs study that is planned to highlight the needs of commuters as well as the low income, elderly and handicapped.

"This will be valuable regardless of what plan takes over," he said, in refer-

ence to legislation considered to reorganize the structure of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA).

Bills to convert the seven-county SEMTA into a tri-county Regional Transit Commission (RTC) have been approved by the state Senate.

In addition to a transit needs study, Shelton announced the SEMCOG staff will explore the impact of the transit board reorganization on the four outlying counties of Livingston, Monroe, St. Clair and Washtenaw.

He also offered secretarial and planning services to whatever structure emerges as the regional transportation authority.

AFTER THE meeting, Shelton said of a three-county versus seven-county approach to regionalism:

"It doesn't make any more planning sense to draw an imaginary line at Interstate-275 than it did at Eight Mile. Over the next 20 years, the problems won't be just three-county size. A lot of growth will take place in those four other counties."

Agreeing, Max Graybiel, a St. Clair County delegate, responded to Shelton's remark that "cooperation is a two-way street."

Chairperson of the St. Clair County board, Graybiel said he was weary of being asked to help solve the problems associated with the "Silverdome in Pontiac and now a liquor tax to support Cobo Hall" without being included in broader regional consideration.

SHELTON, MAYOR of Saline in

Washtenaw County, was replaced last week as SEMCOG chairman by Robert E. Smith, president of the Livingston Intermediate School Board. There were no challengers for the position.

Smith is the first member of SEMCOG's school block to assume the chief spot. He has worked as a lobbyist for the Michigan Farm Bureau for 25 years.

Smith also offered SEMCOG's services for starting up a new transportation authority. "We are a true regional aid for transit and our members," he told the gathering.

He urged local governments to continue working jointly in solving problems and sharing resources. He said the recent recession taught local governments the importance of this.

AS FOR the Big 4, Smith said "It's important they get together," though he also stressed transportation is a seven-county issue. He said he was confident that Oakland County Executive Dan Murphy, an active SEMCOG supporter, would keep an eye on the welfare of the entire region.

"My opinion is that nothing is so complex that reasonable people can't come up with a solution," Smith said.

Those elected to the five vice-chairmanships of SEMCOG last week were

Detroit Councilman Clyde Cleveland, Ann Arbor Township Supervisor Nancy Davis, Oakland County Commissioner Marilyn Gooling of Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township Supervisor Fred Koron and Washtenaw County Commissioner Mary Egnor.

Re-elected to the two SEMCOG seats on the SEMTA board were Farmington Hills Councilperson JoAnn (Jody) Seronen and Thomas Pegan, director of the Washtenaw County Metropolitan Planning Commission.

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Casuals—were to \$37.50. **\$19 - \$24**

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