

Road plans discussed

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The plan also calls for the widening of I-696 and addition of interchanges near Haggerty and Drake, as confirmed by the MDOT's recommendations.

The estimated price tag for 12 Mile improvements totals \$18.5 million, including construction, storm drainage and right-of-way costs. But the city's share would total an estimated \$9.7 providing state and federal grants can be used to pay for approximately \$8.7 million of the total.

To pay the Farmington Hills share, city officials propose using TIFA financing to pay for the four-lane boulevard — \$9.2 million. The remaining \$220,000 for the other 12 Mile widening project would be paid for with the city's share of state gas and weight taxes.

City officials also proposed to use approximately \$294,000 in TIFA revenue (and \$49,500 in gas and weight taxes) to help pay the estimated \$343,000 share of I-696 improvements. Although city officials only have estimated costs for these improvements, they expect the price tag on I-696 improvements to total \$27.5 million.

THE FOUR-LANE boulevard would be constructed in three phases — one mile in each phase. The construction segments would be Farmington to Drake, Drake to Halsted, and Halsted to Haggerty. City officials expect each phase to be completed in a year.

The precise starting point of construction, whether we begin at Haggerty and move eastward or start at Farmington Road and work westward, will depend on the location and construction timing schedule for the Michigan Department of Transportation for the additional freeway access points. The city will plan the first phase of the boulevard to the into the new freeway exit. It is anticipated that construction will begin in 1987, according to the city's plan.

The expense associated with the construction and maintenance of a boulevard is considered a disadvantage. But city officials prefer a boulevard as opposed to conventional widening.

A boulevard will enable more vehicles to travel in an uninterrupted traffic stream. Traffic lights could be installed at the major commercial drive-ways without disrupting traffic flow. A boulevard would also allow indirect left turns at intersecting streets, according to the plan.

BUT CITY officials also maintain that a boulevard would improve road and pedestrian safety, and serve as a separation between residential areas north of 12 Mile and the commercial and office stretch on the thoroughfare's south side.

Under the city's plans, a right-of-way of 180 feet

is proposed along the 12 Mile boulevard of 180 feet to provide adequate room for a turn traffic.

While city officials consider a boulevard the best route to take in improving 12 Mile, owners of at least one business along the corridor disagree.

Speaking at last week's special meeting on the 12 Mile study, Jervis H. Webb, vice president of the Jervis B. Webb Co. — one of the first businesses along the corridor — said he is opposed to the boulevard because of the amount of right-of-way required.

Although Webb supports widening 12 Mile, he suggests it can be done in the conventional manner — similar to the current widening project on 12 Mile, between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads.

"THE BOULEVARD might look cute, but is not economically justified," Webb maintained in a list of reasons for his opposition that was presented to other business and city officials Thursday.

"It would require 120 extra lined feet totaling 180 feet of precious valuable land from the residential and business sectors. It would devalue and have an environmental impact to the front of the Jervis B. Webb Company property facing 12 Mile Road."

The boulevard would also increase the speed of traffic, "causing more accidents because the drivers of the automobiles would feel a sensation of an expressway effect," Webb maintained.

Also listed as reasons for opposition is the cost associated with the purchase of right-of-way, and maintenance of the median with tree pruning, sodding and lawn cutting.

The cost for the boulevard would include two extra curbs for three miles, extra drainage, construction removal and expensive right-of-way purchasing of valuable property to the sum of \$7 million to be paid by the taxpayer (\$4 million for right-of-way, \$3 million for extra construction costs).

"THE JERVIS B. Webb Co. feels that the \$7 million plus, and the hardship that the boulevard creates, is not in the best interest of the Farmington community and is not in the best interest of all concerned."

The only people that would benefit from this project are the people selling undeveloped land at a ridiculous price to the city, the construction company and architectural advisors doing the project," Webb concluded.

In response, Costick said he believes a boulevard will solve some of the problems discussed by Webb. But Costick also said city officials still have a long way to go before design plans are prepared for the improvements.

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