

Chances of extending highway appear slim

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where it is going to go." Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said following the meeting. "But we still have to look at it. We still have to look at all issues before we say one is dead."

In a letter to Farmington Hills, Commerce Township officials said they supported the highway's proposed extension, particularly in light of "unprecedented development." Improvements made in the Northwestern Highway-Maple area, officials wrote.

City and township officials acknowledged growing traffic congestion on both 14 Mile, Orchard Lake and Haggerty roads. Congestion on these roads, officials agreed, is due in large part to traffic coming off Northwestern and I-96 (at the 12 Mile interchange) with much of it traveling west to Commerce, White Lake and Milford townships, for example.

Yet solutions — agreeable to both communities — have yet to be found to relieve congestion along roadways whose traffic volume has matched economic growth in the last couple of years. Costick and West Bloomfield Township Supervisor John Doherty agreed that an intergovernmental coalition could actively pursue solutions to problems.

Farmington Hills officials have sought to revive extension plans to help stem the use of the city-owned 14 Mile as a major east-west artery and divert traffic onto Maple, an Oakland County road.

UNTIL SEVERAL years ago, West Bloomfield's master zoning plan called for Northwestern's extension. Officials finally changed the master plan when they felt the extension would never come about.

In addition to West Bloomfield's extension, West Bloomfield plans attention to the north-south Haggerty thoroughfare is suggested in the 10-year plan. Widening of I-696 with two lanes in each direction by 1990 is planned, with additional interchanges near Inkster Road in Southfield, as well as near Haggerty and Drake roads, Lambert said.

IN OPPOSING Northwestern's extension, West Bloomfield officials — maintaining the extension would divert traffic to residential areas on Maple — suggested widening 14 Mile, perhaps into a boulevard, to accommodate increased traffic.

While Northwestern's proposed extension is not in MDT's plans, attention to the north-south Haggerty thoroughfare is suggested in the 10-year plan. Widening of I-696 with two lanes in each direction by 1990 is planned, with additional interchanges near Inkster Road in Southfield, as well as near Haggerty and Drake roads, Lambert said.

"Fourteen Mile was never intended as a major east-west boulevard. It was," Farmington Hills Mayor Joe Alkateh said, referring to residential areas along 14 Mile.

Farmington Hills Councilwoman Jody Soronen and Mayor Pro Tem Ben Marks also commented. "Completing the paving of both Drake and Farmington roads was also suggested."

"To help relieve traffic congestion on Northwestern, MDT is spending \$400,000 this year constructing cross-overs or traffic loops along the trunkline, Lambert said.

Despite MDT's list of plans for Northwestern's extension, state highway officials — following a successful suit filed by Oakland County — were ordered to abide by a construction contract between the county and state for the proposed project, said John Grubba, Oakland County

Road Commission managing director.

As far as the county road commission's position on the proposed extension, Grubba said: "Our board is reviewing their position now. The last position was in favor of the extension. That may not be the position tomorrow."

BUT GRUBBA said the road commission is interested in the township and city's position on the proposed project because it will have an impact on dealing with MDT and the longstanding Northwestern construction contract.

County road commissioners, however, are conferring with legal counsel on how to enforce the construction contract with the state. "We are certain some legal action will be taken to force the issue," Grubba said.

In 1967, MDT agreed with Oakland County to make Northwestern a limited access freeway, extending to Pontiac in Genoa Township, Lambert said. By the 1970s, MDT's proposed extension on the backburner. Environmentalists strongly opposed the highway's extension.

As a result of the construction contract, Oakland County sold bonds for the proposed extension, Grubba said. Yet, after all this time, MDT still has no plans to begin construction, he added.

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"This could do much to minimize bottlenecks on Northwestern at Middlebelt, 14 Mile, 13 Mile and 12 Mile roads," said Poye, president of the West Bloomfield Township-based Gateway "Plus" homeowners organization.

Poye presented the organization's attitudes toward growing office and commercial development as well as accompanying traffic problems during an intergovernmental meeting on traffic problems in the West Bloomfield-Farmington Hills area Wednesday.

West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills officials as well as representatives of the Michigan Department of Transportation and Oakland County Road Commission attended the intergovernmental meeting in Farmington Hills City Hall.

"To us, extending Northwestern to Maple Road will accomplish, little more than moving the choke point one mile further up the road; it will not appreciably reduce congestion. In fact, it may create more prob-

lems that it solves," Poye said.

POYE PRESENTED officials with a list of recommendations, some of which, he said, can be accomplished this summer to reduce traffic congestion.

"We believe working together, we can come up with reasonable solutions for our mutual problems. We feel some immediate, yet rather simple low-cost changes can be accomplished that will reduce congestion 5-10 percent and help make current conditions more bearable until more extensive cures can be agreed upon by all concerned," Poye said.

Of initial importance is the need for 24-hour, seven-day traffic counts on all major roads in the area. "Let's find out what we are talking about. Nobody knows," Poye said. The only available traffic counts for area roads were completed in the fall of 1981.

Poye suggested plotting current traffic patterns. "With fresh data, we can all come to more meaningful decisions on what our true problems really are concerned with as far as congestion," he said.

"A 12-mile extension of Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick told Poye patterns along 14 Mile would be studied this spring.

ADDING SIGNS to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion was also suggested. Signs could be added marking both exit lanes on the I-696 ramp at allow left turns only for northbound traffic. Other signs could be installed to lengthen left-turn signal timing at intersections to allow more cars to move and reduce backups on Orchard Lake, Poye said.

Poye's other recommendations include:

- Expanding and repaving 14 Mile. Members of Poye's organization believe 14 Mile should be four lanes, not three or five because 80 percent of the residential traffic is turning right.
- Paving Drake and Halsted to 12 Mile. "Assuming Farmington Road is paved from Maple to 14 Mile, and 14 Mile is expanded and paved to Farmington Road and, beyond, residents would have several alternate choices to reach I-696 and Northwestern Highway," Poye said.
- Expanding Haggerty to five lanes.
- Widening Northwestern with an additional lane in each direction. "We believe widening Northwestern from Orchard Lake to the Lodge Freeway below 12 Mile Road will allow cars to use the highway as a stacking area rather than the connecting roads," Poye said. "This could do much to minimize bottlenecks on Northwestern at Middlebelt, 14 Mile, 13 Mile and 12 Mile roads."

• Adding an interchange off I-696 between Orchard Lake and Novi roads.

BESIDES OFFERING possible solutions to reduce congestion, Poye criticized some governmental units for causing some of the traffic problems.

"In our opinion, all area communities as well as various government bodies have, in one manner or another, helped to create many of our problems," Poye said.

Calling Farmington Hills "probably the worst offender," Poye said the many curb cuts on Orchard Lake Road between 12 and 14 Mile roads cause confusion and traffic bottlenecks.

"With all the new building being done today, the problems can only get worse, not better. The concentrated office developments on 12 Mile Road, with Novi and Orchard Lake roads as the only I-696 access points, can only make the Orchard Lake roads a bigger nightmare."

The Oakland County Road Commission also received its share of criticism.

"Road and intersection improvements are delayed reported due to a lack of money. In our opinion, it's more a matter of priorities as to where available funds are spent," Poye said.

Bloomfield officials that while widening 14 Mile might seem a reasonable alternative, gaining rights-of-way will be difficult, if not costly considering the proximity of the residential areas to the road.

MARKS, ON the other hand, asked West Bloomfield to provide Farmington Hills with a show of support for helping the city pay for the widening of 14 Mile.

"I know it (14 Mile) is ours, but we have a problem there are both affected by severely," Marks said.

In response, township supervisor Doherty said he would develop a recommendation for possibly sharing a portion of financing for the township board's recommendation.

"There's quite a bit of difference in the way we exist when it comes to roads," Doherty said.

Townships do not receive Public Act 51 gas and weight revenue from the state for roads like cities such as Farmington Hills.

"We are not averse to taking our share as we see our share," Doherty said.

Group opposing road's extension

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

As far as Kenneth Poye is concerned, widening Northwestern Highway to relieve some of the traffic congestion along the state trunkline is not the alternative to extending the highway westward.

"This could do much to minimize bottlenecks on Northwestern at Middlebelt, 14 Mile, 13 Mile and 12 Mile roads," said Poye, president of the West Bloomfield Township-based Gateway "Plus" homeowners organization.

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West Bloomfield Supervisor John Doherty (left), Farmington Hills Mayor Joe Alkateh, and Farmington Hills City Clerk JoAnn Reynolds watch the proceedings Wednesday. Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick is not shown.

BOB SKLAR/staff photographer

short takes

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to: Short takes, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

NEW PRESIDENT
River Place Financial Corp., a limited purpose state chartered bank owned by River Place Holdings, Inc. has appointed James Wibby to president, chief operating officer and director.

The Farmington resident joined River Place Financial Corp. as vice president and cashier in January 1985.

He was formerly employed with Manufacturers National Bank of Detroit, serving 21 years as vice president-administration. His other banking experience was gained through 14 years as president of Metropolitan National Bank of Farmington.

In addition to holding numerous positions on local, state and national banking committees, Wibby acted as president of the Michigan Association of Community Bankers in 1978. He is a past president of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce and the Farmington Exchange Club. He is a trustee and treasurer of the Farmington Community Library.

SHE'S PROMOTED
Yvette Menard was promoted to broadcast coordinator/junior producer at Yaffe & Co., Southfield.

The Farmington Hills resident moves up from creative department secretary. She is responsible for booking talent and studio time, meeting production deadlines, and broadcast production duties.

Before joining Yaffe & Co. last year, Menard was a teacher of television production at Redford Union Schools. She free-lanced as a writer/producer, and production technician.

MERRY MAIDS
Holly Kelly owns and operates the new Merry Maids Professional

House Cleaning Service in Farmington Hills.

At 24780 Hathaway, it is one of 300 independently owned Merry Maids franchise operations now serving homes in 40 states and Australia. The company, started five years ago, has grown from a single office in Omaha, Neb.

Merry Maids specializes in custom cleaning private homes, condominiums and apartments on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis. It also will tackle special jobs, such as seasonal cleanings or sprucing up a home before a big occasion.

Holly and her husband, Tim, recently attended a week long training session at Merry Maids' company headquarters in Omaha.

They learned about advances in customized home cleaning and discovered the cleaning properties of the biodegradable, non-abrasive cleaning products manufactured and used by the company.

In order to graduate, the Kellys visited and cleaned several homes according to the Merry Maids methods.

Merry Maids furnishes all cleaning products and cleaning equipment. The maids wear smocks and name tags, and are fully bonded and insured. They never eat, smoke or drink in a customer's home and are instructed not to answer the phone or door if the homeowner is away.

A free home visit and clearing cost quotation, provided before any cleaning is done, is part of the Merry Maids service.

For more information about Merry Maids' professional home cleaning services, call Holly Kelly at 471-0930.

NEW IN TOWN
Susan Hajjar of Farmington Hills has opened Errands Unlimited, an errand running service.

Errands Unlimited is called upon to do personal shopping, provide courier service, mail packages, even get shoes repaired or take clothes to the laundromat.

It also will provide house-sitting while you are on vacation. Call 478-4120.

COMING ABOARD
Two Farmington Hills residents have joined the staff of Young & Rubicam, Detroit.

Bruce Oldroyd is a new account executive for product information.

Sara Sevec is new in the traffic department.

HE'S HONORED
Fred Samra, a State Farm Insurance Companies agent in the Farmington area, has been named Bronze Tablet Member, one of the firm's most prestigious distinctions.

Only about 6 percent of State Farm's agents qualify for the Bronze Tablet, which requires five consecutive years of very high standards in all aspects of the insurance business, especially regarding the quality of the business.

Samra has been a State Farm agent since 1953.

CAR PRODUCTION
European cars enthusiasts, take heart.

Outsourcing complete vehicle engineering design and development programs is becoming the wisest technological option for future automobile production in the American industry as well as overseas.

The SDRC Automotive Business Group in Farmington Hills has assembled engineers and program managers to provide turn-key services to major automotive manufacturers and their suppliers.

State-of-the-art advances enabled SDRC to devise TEAM 2000, which works with the client as an extended arm, leading services within individual budget and time constraints.

Services of this kind have recently been utilized by the three major automobile companies in the United States, but TEAM 2000 will branch out to the Japanese and European makers as well.

SDRC is involved in automotive design, development and validation, using computer-aided engineering technologies. Automotive Headquarters are at 31400 Northwestern.

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CANTON 1100 E. Grand Ave. Phone 383-8000	LANSING 1100 E. Grand Ave. Phone 383-8000	LIVONIA 2820 W. Evelyn Ave. Rd. Phone 462-8000	MONTICELLO 1100 E. Grand Ave. Phone 383-8000	PONTIAC 4314 Tappan St. Phone 463-8000	TROY 300 W. 14 Mile Rd. Phone 271-2000

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