

County survey spotlights road congestion

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throughfare provides any insight, Call said.

Though he believes some of the counts might be higher than the OCRS survey shows, Call said the results confirm what city officials have been telling county and state officials for a long time.

"THEY (SURVEY results) help us in applying for funding, using this as a basis," Call said.

But he echoed what OCRS officials have also been saying for quite some time: There isn't enough money to fix all of the road problems that need immediate attention.

"The sad thing is that there is little we can do to solve the problem," OCRS Managing Director John Grubba said. "In fact, traffic congestion is definitely going to get worse before it gets better. New development in Oakland County is pouring more vehicles onto the roads, but not the money to catch up — let alone keep up — with the road improvements necessary."

At current funding levels, the OCRS will "be lucky" to provide enough money to widen eight miles of roads in the next three years.

"We've identified possible funding for that much through 1989, but even that is dependent on actions yet to be taken by others, such as Congress, the state Legislature and local units of government," Grubba said.

The outlook for road improvement funding is disappointing to local officials. "That doesn't even take a little corner of the iceberg," Call said.

BOTH COUNTY and local officials must look to Congress and the state Legislature for changes in how road improvements are financed. "Local municipalities can't generate enough funds on their own or the county government without the feds help," Call said.

Many county and city officials are hoping for changes in the way gas and weight taxes are distributed to counties. Gas and weight taxes are

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— John Grubba
managing director
road commission

distributed to counties based on the miles of roads within a county rather than the amount of traffic using the roads. Consequently, some of the less congested northern counties are receiving more money to fix roads than Wayne and Oakland counties.

Meanwhile, there is a chance that some of the Farmington Hills roads listed on the OCRS survey could be improved with financing through the county's popular tri-party road improvement program, Call said.

The tri-party program involves dividing road improvement costs between the county Board of Commissioners, the road commission and local governmental units. Farmington Hills has been involved in the program for years.

WIDENING OF Orchard Lake Road, from the Oakland Community College entrance, south of I-586 to 11 Mile, was the latest use of the tri-party program. Because of the expense, however, the city combined two years' worth of financing under the program to complete the project.

Now, Farmington Hills officials are talking with Novi officials about combining each city's share of tri-party money to improve the Haggerty and Nine Mile intersection, Call

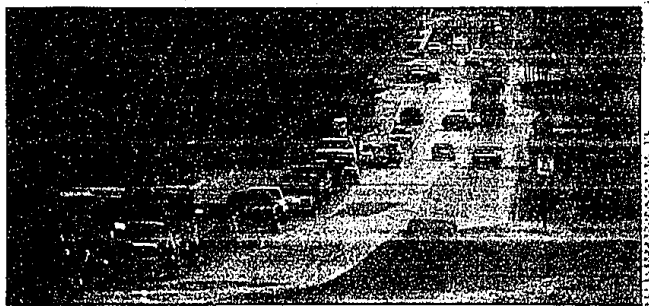
said.

And yet another county program is now available and that Farmington Hills jumped at to be first in line for financing. The road commission has received approval to sell \$4 million worth of bonds to complete overlays, widening and shoulder repairs on county roads.

"We wrote a letter indicating our interest. We got everything we asked for except for maybe a quarter of a mile (of improvements)," Call said.

Under the program, the road commission would pay two-thirds of the cost of improvements while Farmington Hills picks up the remaining one-third or about \$366,000. Targeted for overlays and other safety improvements are sections of 10 Mile, Middlebelt and 12 Mile, Call said.

Of the county's \$4 million available in the program, about \$1 million is coming to Farmington Hills. "We will meet with the road commission to come up with a (construction) schedule," said Call, adding improvements are slated for 1987.



Assistant City Manager David Call considers roads, among Farmington Hills' more congested road segments.

Backups expected to continue

If you have ever gazed the sky looking for a helicopter to pluck you out of bumper-to-bumper rush hour traffic, take heart. Traffic congestion is expected to get worse, before getting better.

That's the latest message from Oakland County Road Commission (OCRCS) managing director John Grubba.

"We project that very soon there will be three cars on the roads for every two cars currently there," said Grubba in a report detailing the results of the latest OCRS survey showing the most congested roads.

The survey shows that almost half of the county-owned, two-lane paved roads are congested to the point that improvements are needed now. It is this congestion that awakens the familiar groan of motorists traveling

in Oakland County.

Most motorists are confronted daily with waiting in line for two or more cycles of a traffic light before it's their turn to cut across an intersection. The congestion also shows itself with long waits for left turns, which leave a long stream of cars backed up.

WHILE MOTORISTS know the frustration the congestion brings, traffic engineers hold it down to statistics. Consider that poor driving conditions become commonplace during rush hours when 10,000 vehicles a day, at 20,000 vehicles a day, poor driving conditions grow even worse, existing throughout the

day except for late evenings and early mornings.

The OCRS survey shows that of the two-lane roads, 267 miles are now at the 10,000 vehicle limit; 139 miles of roads are at the 15,000 limit; and 45 miles have reached the 20,000 or more vehicle limit. Eight miles of two-lane roads carry more than 25,000 vehicles a day, according to the survey.

But the survey also shows that 11 segments of county-owned roads are among the top 52 congested roads in the county.

THE TOP 11 segments carrying more than 20,000 vehicles a day, traffic count, segment length and ranking follows:

• Haggerty Road, 13 to 14 Mile, 27,973, 1 mile, 2nd place.

• Haggerty, 12 to 13 Mile, 26,975, 1 mile, 4th place.

• Haggerty, Nine to 10 Mile, 26,985, 1 mile, 5th place.

• Orchard Lake Road, Eight Mile to M-102, 23,837, 15th place.

• Haggerty, Grand River to Howard, 21,984, 1.25 mile, 28th place.

• 12 Mile Road, Halsted to Drake, 21,743, 1 mile, 31st place.

• Middlebelt Road, Nine to 10 Mile, 20,645, 1 mile, 39th place.

• Orchard Lake, M-102, north of Grand River, 32-mile, 41st place.

• Middlebelt, 11 to 12 Mile, 20,567, 1 mile, 43rd place.

• Haggerty, Eight to Nine Mile, 20,271, 1 mile, 47th place.

• Haggerty, 10 Mile to Grand River, 20,137, .28-mile, 50th place.

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