

Housing boom straining WL schools

By Carolyn DeMarco
staff writer

West Bloomfield Township's west end residential building boom will soon mean bulging seams for Walled Lake Consolidated Schools.

Walled Lake Consolidated already is one of the area's largest school districts with 8,630 students from West Bloomfield, Orchard Lake, Farmington Hills, Walled Lake, Wixom, White Lake Township, Commerce and Novi.

In the second attempt in two years to accommodate expected increases in population, board members agreed to redistrict the Maple Elementary School attendance area. The school is located on Maple at Haggerty in West Bloomfield.

Approximately 140 students living in Chateau Estates at 13 Mile and Rousseau in Novi will be transferred next year. Half will be bused to Decker, the other half to Walled Lake Elementary. The school serves kindergartners through sixth graders who live in West Bloomfield, Farmington Hills and Novi.

It is a feeder school for Walled Lake Junior High and Walled Lake Western High School.

"WE HAVE a serious space problem," Dr. Hugh Davies, director of elementary education, told the board. "We will be desperately crowded as projected."

Davies said he told the board when a similar transfer was effected last year that further transfers would not be necessary, but according to a recent study submitted by Vilcan-Leman, the increase in attendance will continue. "I can't promise anything the way things are going. The space just isn't there."

The Vilcan-Leman study shows a potential of 517 additional youngsters to the Maple school attendance area, most of them in the West Bloomfield portion between Haggerty and Halstead and 14 Mile to Maple. Farmington Hills construction south of 14 Mile is also contributing to the expected space crunch.

A dozen housing projects with more than 2,000 units are currently

in the construction stage in the Maple attendance area, said Dr. Leroy Bartman, superintendent of Walled Lake schools. Using accepted factors for apartments, condos, single family and cluster housing, more than 631 new students could be expected, he said.

"THEY SURROUND the building," Davies said. "It's important to

develop immediate relief."

The attendance area for Twin Beach Elementary School, on Oakley Park Road in West Bloomfield, will face similar problems next year, Bartman predicted. "We're looking for 147 new elementary kids by 1988-89, 36 for Smart Junior High and 117 for Walled Lake Central."

West Bloomfield construction will also affect Keith Elementary School

on Keith Road north of Commerce in the near future, both Davies and Bartman predicted. An estimated 137 elementary, 36 Smart Junior High students and 87 Central High School are expected in 1988-89.

The transfers are considered a short-term solution only, Bartman said. "The board has been given the report. Obviously we have a problem facing us."

Work-release opportunity OK'd

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Questions — without immediate answers — abound in an Oakland County Circuit Judge's recent decision to allow a jailed woman to complete her sentence in a work-release program.

On April 18, Circuit Judge Norman Lippitt signed an authorization for Connie Doa, 24 — convicted of manslaughter — to complete her six-month jail sentence in a work-release program at the Oakland County jail.

The program, which allows Doa to work during the day and spend the nights in jail, was recommended by a jail social worker. In a letter, the social worker said Doa was suffering from depression and was unable to cope with jail, according to a Detroit

Free Press report.

Lippitt authorized Doa's release to the program exactly two weeks after she began serving her sentence in the Oakland County jail. Lippitt's authorization was made without a court hearing.

"That's about all we know about it," said Brian Zubei, Oakland County assistant prosecutor. "As far as the mechanics of it, I don't know. I'm as much in the dark about it as you are."

ZUBEI SAID he was uncertain whether a court hearing would be required for a judge to change Doa's sentence. "We're looking into this," Zubei said.

Doa's attorney, Mitchell Ribitwer of Birmingham, was unavailable for comment. Lippitt's law clerk would not fully explain the reason for Doa's sentence change.

Doa was convicted of manslaughter in the death of Beverly Ann Lambert, 20, of West Bloomfield Township. Lambert was killed when the car she was driving was struck head-on by Doa's car in March 1985 on Mulwood Drive, near Conifer, at the Mulwood Apartments, Farmington Hills.

Doa's blood-alcohol level, taken after the collision was 13 percent — three-tenths higher than the .10 percent level at which people are considered legally drunk.

Lippitt affirmed Doa's sentence in late April after denying her request to serve her time at home, monitored by the Oakland County Probation Department through an electronic tether that would alert authorities if she tried to leave.

Beverly Ann's mother, Sharalyn Lambert of West Bloomfield, was surprised to hear of Doa's sentence

change. She learned of the change through the newspapers and through friends who called when they heard the news on the radio, Lambert said. "I was in a state of shock," she said.

LAMBERT SAID she is disappointed at Lippitt's decision, particularly after he said he would not be intimidated by anyone when it came to sentencing.

"Look at the way he comes across," Lambert said.

Speaking about Doa's apparent depression while in jail, Lambert said she felt that should not be a reason for allowing the woman to enter a work-release program.

"What that does say is if you are depressed, you don't have to go to jail," Lambert said.

Zubei said he was uncertain why Lippitt authorized Doa for the work-release program.

"Any reason I could offer would be speculation," Zubei said.

Hills to developers: Save 13 Mile trees

Protect the trees!

That's what Farmington Hills city officials did when they paved 13 Mile. They expect the same of developers along the corridor.

The site plan for a cluster development at the southwest corner of Drake and 13 Mile was extensively discussed by the city council May 18 before site plan approval was given.

The parcel to be developed by proponent David Gumenick was described as "heavily wooded" and "swampy."

Council members will require the

trees listed on the May 14 site plan be tagged so they cannot be destroyed unless approved by the city. They also required a corner retaining wall on the northwest portion of the project to save more trees.

A portion of the developer's escrow deposit will be held for one additional year, to be sure the existing trees survive in the finished development.

Another concern addressed by the council was a proposed exit onto 13 Mile, which was designated as an "emergency only" road by the council.

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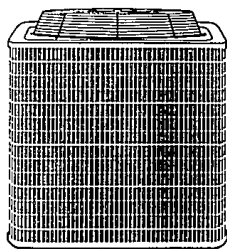
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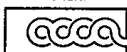


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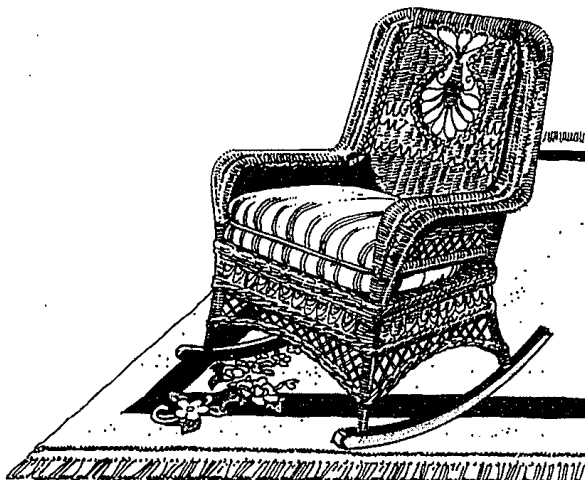
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