

Work starts, patience urged

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companied with heavy construction equipment, work crews and traffic slowdowns and tie-ups, motorists should be knowledgeable and fully prepared.

"For motorists, there will always be two lanes of traffic open in both

directions, but it will probably move slower," Maki said.

In April 1989, when stage 2 begins, all traffic will be switched to the westbound roadway. While the eastbound lanes are being removed to make way for four new lanes, all eastbound traffic will travel on two

new lanes of temporary pavement separated from westbound traffic by a concrete median barrier, Maki said.

THE FOUR new eastbound lanes should be completed by late summer 1989 when traffic will be shifted to

the new lanes in the third phase of work. The four new eastbound lanes will be separated — two lanes in each direction — by a concrete barrier while the former westbound lanes are removed and new lanes constructed. The work should be completed by fall 1989 when the eight new lanes should be open to traffic, Maki said.

Though the motorist information program is similar to last summer's Lodgability program, the I-696 widening in Farmington Hills and Southfield won't have a name of its own. But the project is considered a part of MDOT's "Mobility '88" construction programs. "Next year, it will be known as 'Mobility '89,'" said Jack Pyle, MDOT communications director.

Brochures detailing construction will be available later this month. Motorists can keep daily pace with construction tie-ups and other information by calling SEMCOG's hotline, 557-7696. Civic, community or homeowners groups interested in a public presentation of the construction project may call Bright Hassig at SEMCOG, 961-4266.

"If motorists are patient and know in advance, there should be minimal traffic disruption," said Kim Mitchell, SEMCOG communications specialist.

Above all, Mitchell said, motorists should remember that the speed limit throughout the construction zone is 45 mph.



LAURA CASTLE/staff photographer

This advisory sign is on the east side of Orchard Lake Road, just north of 11 Mile, less than a mile from I-696.

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Road projects plentiful

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills will be a hotbed of road construction this year.

While construction preparation begins on I-696 and the Orchard Lake Road interchange, local construction projects are apt to put an additional crimp in motorists' driving routes and habits.

The (Oakland County) road commission will work with us in a reactionary position," said Tom Blaisell, Farmington Hills public services director.

The need for signs and any other help, however, won't be known until traffic becomes affected by the I-696 construction, he added.

But motorists, especially Farmington Public Schools buses, may be further inconvenienced by the following local road projects:

- Widening and realigning of

Drake, between 11 and 12 Mile. Construction is expected to begin next week. The roadway will be closed through the end of October.

- Widening of 11 Mile and Middlebelt to five lanes in all directions. The Oakland County Road Commission is hoping to have construction completed by September to ease conflicts with the school district's buses, Blaisell said.

- Widening of eastbound and westbound Nine Mile, which is expected to begin within two weeks and be completed by the end of August.

- Resurfacing of 14 Mile, between Farmington and Orchard Lake roads. Work is expected to begin in August or September and be completed by October.

Other projects this year include the widening of the 12 Mile-Halsted intersection; and the rebuilding and repaving of Farmington Road, from Eight Mile to Nine Mile.

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