

I-696 corridor 'dynamic' market—consultant

A national real estate consulting firm is optimistic about major real estate markets in Oakland County and the I-696 Corridor.

Oakland County hired the firm, Lavenhol and Horwath, to evaluate real estate opportunities and trends in the 144-square-mile area along the I-696 freeway in Royal Oak, Southfield, Farmington Hills and Novi.

The Lavenhol and Horwath study team, based in Southfield, was headed by Charles Eckenstahler.

"The strongest market segments in the next 12 months will be for upscale condominiums, high-tech industrial space, and retail space, particularly in neighborhood and strip centers," said Eckenstahler. He described the Oakland County and I-696 market areas as "dynamic."

The report projected some softening in apartment and hotel construction.

'There are good opportunities for infill development in Royal Oak, Ferndale, Oak Park, Berkley, Madison Heights and Hazel Park.'

— Jack Driker
county study coordinator

I-696 will stretch east-west across the suburbs north of Detroit. The "missing link," through the Royal Oak-Southfield area, is due to be completed this fall after delays totalling 25 years.

JACK DRIKER, the county's coordinator of the study, said growth management in outlying communities and investors to take a more careful look at central and mature areas.

There are good opportunities for infill development in Royal Oak, Ferndale, Oak Park, Berkley, Madison Heights and Hazel Park," said Driker.

"As pressures mount against urban sprawl, developers will rediscover opportunities that were skipped over."

The study team also includes Villan-Leman Associates, a prominent community planning firm. Its assignment is to prepare conceptual

plans for development opportunities at several representative locations in the I-696 corridor.

SEVEN "FOCUS areas" were selected by the I-696 Committee from a candidate list of 19 areas. They are:

- I-696/Wixom Road Interchange area in Wixom,
- Huntington Woods and Lathrup Village, policies for residential conservation and addressing freeway impact.
- Cluster in vicinity of 10 Mile-Greenfield.
- Cluster in vicinity of 10 Mile-Woodward.
- Eight Mile-Woodward area in Ferndale and Detroit.
- Army, drive-in area in Oak Park and Detroit frontage.
- Greenfield/10 Mile Road area in Southfield, Oak Park and Detroit.

THE REPORT emphasized that

these areas were selected as prototypes of other situations and opportunities in the corridor area.

The consultant team has been meeting with local officials in these areas.

According to Joseph D. Joachim, director of Oakland County Department of Community and Economic Development, three of the seven focus areas involve Detroit.

"We feel it's essential to have Detroit actively involved in planning for betterment of areas along Eight Mile Road," Joachim said.

The study, which is being financed by Oakland County, is expected to be completed this spring.

ROBERT BLOCK, city manager of Southfield and chair of the I-696 Committee, said, "The completed I-696 freeway will give people more choices of where to live, shop, work and play. As traffic barriers are lowered, real estate competition will increase."

Driker added, "The completion of I-696 will have a greater impact on the region's geography than any infrastructure project since construction of the Lodge Freeway."

"The I-696 project will form a regional circumferential beltway made up of I-275, I-94, and I-696—the first freeway beltway in Greater Detroit."

Grubba: Don't rush ban on road salt

State lawmakers seem in too big a hurry to implement a bill prohibiting use of salt on icy roads, says an Oakland County official.

"We decline to support its effective date of Aug. 1, 1991" unless the need can be proven, said John L. Grubba, managing director of the Road Commission.

But he said the OCRRC supports the bill in general terms. House Bill 4013 prohibits use of salt, requiring studies of salt's environmental impact and a replacement called CMA (calcium magnesium acetate).

Grubba raised these objections:

- In other states, CMA appears to be 20 minutes slower to react than

salt—a safety hazard.

- CMA requires twice the number of loadings to equal the performance of salt, placing the public at double the risk for a longer period. "It is not yet a proven deicer," he said.

- CMA costs 40 to 45 times as much per ton as salt.

The bill is sponsored by Rep. William Van Regenmortel, R-Jenison, and co-sponsored by Reps. Matt Dunaskiss, R-Lake Orion, David Hoenigman, R-West Bloomfield, and James Kosteva, D-Canton, among others.

It is in the House Transportation Committee.

Diabetes, parenting classes are free

Classes for diabetics, expectant parents and persons with high blood pressure will be offered in the coming month by the Oakland County Health Division.

All classes will be in the Southfield office at 277252 Greenfield Road unless otherwise noted. Although classes are free, you should pre-register by calling the health office at 424-7012.

SIX DIABETES classes will be held 7-9 p.m. on Thursdays beginning tonight.

They are for adult diabetics and their family members. They are taught by a public health nurse and a

registered dietitian. Topics will include the nature of the disease, dietary management, medications and suggestions for coping with everyday problems.

SIX EXPECTANT Parent Classes will run 7-9 p.m. beginning Wednesday, March 1.

Classes will be taught by public health nurses.

Topics will include maternal physical changes, good nutrition, growth and development of the fetus and the baby, labor and delivery, infant care and parenting. The Health Division advises that you enroll as early in your pregnancy as possible.

SIX DIABETES classes will be held on Thursdays 7-9 p.m., beginning March 2.

These classes are for adult diabetics and their family members. They are taught by a public health nurse and a registered dietitian. Topics include the nature of the disease, dietary management, medications and suggestions for coping with everyday problems.

SIX BLOOD pressure control classes will be held 7-9 p.m. Tuesdays in the Waterford Community Center, 1415 Crescent Lake Road, Pontiac. Classes are on March 7, 14, 21, 28, and April 4 and 11.

Topics include: an overview of high blood pressure and its control; medications; meal planning and food choices; and cholesterol.

Classes will be taught by Oakland County Health Division public health nurses and nutritionists. Activities and information shared will help class participants better understand high blood pressure and self-care skills. Spouses or other family members are encouraged to attend.

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