



RANDY BOORST/staff photographer

Nosing in

Third-year acting students from Farmington Hills Mercy High entertained area elementary schools with their rendition of the play, "Pinocchio." Above, Mercy senior and Farmington Hills resident Shannon Wisne plays the role of "Isabella" during a May 8 performance at St. Fabian Catholic School in Farmington Hills. There are 17 girls in the acting class.

Subdivision fights freeway plans

By Phil Ginotti
Staff writer

Arthur Valenti is sick of the on-again, off-again saga of I-275, M-9 or whatever else state bureaucrats have decided to call it over the years.

His position is quite clear. He wants it off again — forever. Valenti and approximately 80 other members of the Summit Hills subdivision signed petitions this past weekend calling for an end to M-9 plans that involve cutting a swath through their subdivision. Most of the residents want M-9 to follow the existing route along Haggerty Road.

They collected all but two signatures from the subdivision — and both of those homeowners were out of town.

"We watched (Gov. James) Blanchard get up in the helicopter and tell us that the congestion was on Haggerty Road," Valenti said. "Then they ought to keep it on Haggerty Road. Widen Haggerty, don't send it right through here."

THE ROUTE should actually be called the Haggerty Road connector instead of M-9 until it hooks up to M-59.

M-9 would be a six- or eight-lane divided highway, designed to relieve congestion caused by the lack of a north-south passage through western Oakland County.

Two of the official four options currently on the table involve placing a major interchange approximately a half-mile west of Haggerty Road on 12 Mile. That would necessitate the taking of several lots in the

area and wiping out the current entrance to Summit Drive off 12 Mile.

Valenti's home and two lots — approximately 11 acres total — would be bought for the road right of way. Several other homes in the subdivision also would have to be leveled to make room for the interchange serving M-9.

Other residents are simply concerned about the predictable noise from the six- to eight-lane roadway.

WORD OF THE "takeover" of Haggerty Road — possibly clearing the way for M-9 — again shook the usually calm neighborhood. The subdivision features winding dirt roads, quiet, lots of trees and an occasional rabbit or two — even deer.

"They feed them out in the woods," said Valenti, a 27-year resident.

"There isn't one neighbor you couldn't count on out here," Joanne Trachtman said. "It's something

very special and I don't want to lose it."

"We found a paradise," she said. "We lived in Redford for over 20 years and that's why we moved here — to get a break from the noise

the traffic," Peggy Wilson said. Currently, plans involve extending M-9 north from I-96, either along the course of existing Haggerty Road, or at the point approximately a half-mile west of Haggerty.

IF M-9 follows the off-Haggerty road, the road would either extend entirely through the northeastern portion of the city, or work east and link up with Haggerty Road, near 13 Mile. The "ultimate destination, for now, would be Pontiac Trail."

A decision on the actual route of the roadway could be made later this year after an environmental impact public hearing later this summer or fall. A long-awaited environmental impact statement (EIS) was due out this week, according to

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) official Michael Fajole.

Residents said they feel the city is making too many sacrifices by consenting to M-9 through their subdivision and the virgin turf of northeastern Novi.

"This is the most beautiful area of Novi," Valenti said. "They're asking us to give up everything. The other communities, Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield, aren't giving up anything at all."

"It's a glorified driveway from West Bloomfield to the mall," said Virginia Valenti, Arthur's wife.

THE West Bloomfield Township board has already passed a resolution of support for options that would keep the roadway from being built on Haggerty, out of the township.

Arthur Valenti said the issue has reminded old feelings about "taking on city hall." Valenti was one of the residents who pitched in money to fight plans for a landfill at 12 Mile and Novi Road in the mid-1960s. The case went all the way to the state Supreme Court, where residents prevailed.

"We've recaptured that spirit," Valenti said. "We're going to fight this thing all the way, even if it goes to the highest tribunal in the nation."

"If they want my home, my property, I'll tie 'em up in court for the next 10 years and it'll never go through," he said.

Residents plan to be out in force for the environmental impact hearing, which is scheduled to be held in early June.

chamber perspectives

This column is prepared by the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, 33201 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

Corvette drawing winner, Jeff Brownico of Howell was delighted with his first prize. This young man had purchased tickets for the raffle over years. Ticket sales enabled the chamber to pay for all the prizes and begin supporting Founder's Festival activities.

Founder's Festival dates are July 8-16. The festival includes the successful arts and crafts sales, food

booths, entertainment, children's rides, a parade, a jazz concert and sidewalk sales. New activities this year include a Civil War encampment with participants from around the state setting up their camp at Heritage Park on Saturday and Sunday, July 8-9.

The festival bed race, for the benefit of the Muscular Dystrophy Association, will be run prior to the parade on Saturday, July 15.

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