

Ground broken for new westside school

School will 'set the pace' for the future

By Casey Hans
Staff writer

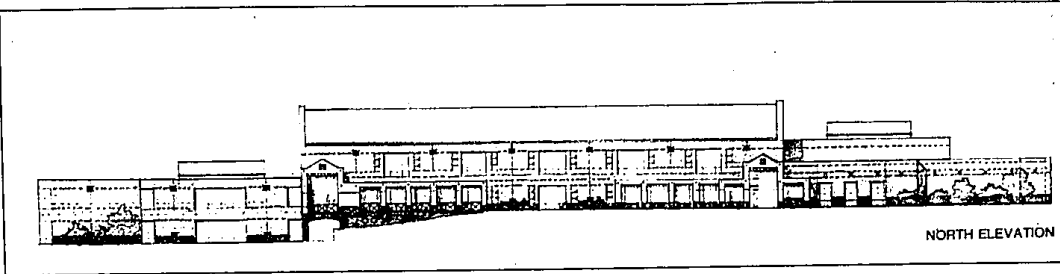
A new westside elementary in Farmington Hills "will really set the tone" for Farmington Public Schools, according to the superintendent.

Ground was broken June 6 for the \$7.3 million facility, slated to open in fall 1990. Superintendent Graham Lewis dedicated the new school "to the students who are keepers of the realm in the year 2,000 and beyond."

Board president Jack Cotton called the groundbreaking "a symbolic day."

"Farmington is returning to a

Trustees and administrators broke ground June 6 for the new west-side elementary. Shown are: assistant superintendent Lynn Nutter (left), trustees Jack Inch and Janice Rolnick, board president Jack Cotton, superintendent Graham Lewis (wielding the shovel), trustees Helen Dilzhazy and Helen Prutow, deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan, and trustees Susan Rennels and James Abernethy.



NORTH ELEVATION

This artist's rendering shows the new elementary school as it will appear from 11 Mile. The school will

be built on the south side of 11 Mile, a half mile east of Halsted, in Farmington Hills. A name for the

school is expected to be decided at the June 20 school board meeting.

growth district and that is good news," he said.

Some 650 students from kindergarten through fifth grade will attend the school to be located on 11 Mile, east of Halsted. According to final design information from architects Greiner, Inc., the school will encompass 77,000 square feet.

The district is forming a committee to look at how attendance boundaries for the new school will be determined. The school board is expected to decide on a name for the new school June 20, after receiving suggestions from the community.

THE IDEA of building a new

school was first raised by now-retired assistant superintendent Lawrence Freedman during a neighborhood elementary boundary meeting with parents in February 1986.

The administration officially recommended the new school option in March 1987 and the school board began to plan for such a move. The

idea escalated quickly after a proposal for massive redistricting of elementary students turned sour in early 1988.

After a bond defeat last fall, money for the new school was finally approved by voters in January.

Once built, deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan has estimated the operation cost of running the school would be more than \$500,000 per year, not including the costs for classroom teaching staff.

A "planning team" of 16 Farmington schools employees has been studying the future operations of the school since February, according to information provided by the district. Included are the district's three assistant superintendents, several department coordinators and principals, one department head and two teachers from Highmeadow Common Campus.

TRUSTEES HAVE said they want to include Farmington-area parents in studying boundary changes that will impact the district because of the new school.

The school will be nestled into a wooded, 11-acre parcel on the south side of 11 Mile. The approved \$7.3 million in bonds will generate \$7.7 million for the school; money will be used to build the school, develop and

improve the site and equip the school's playground.

About \$5 million is for building costs. The remainder of the money will cover administrative, site and utility costs, equipment and furnishings, insurance, attorney fees, contingency projections for inflation

'Farmington is returning to a growth district and that is good news.'

— Jack Cotton,
school board president

and other necessary items.

THE INTERIOR will likely be zoned into three areas: early elementary learning and play areas to the east; academic classrooms areas, including the media center in the center; and a grouping of cafeteria, gymnasium and school playground to the west.

Plans call for a berm to separate the school property from neighboring houses in the Hunt Club subdivision to the west, where several neighbors have voiced concerns about noise from the school.



RANDY BOSTI/Staff photographer

News that's closer to home News that's close

No endorsement offered on Haggerty alternatives

By Phil Gionetti
Staff writer

The Novi City Council passed a resolution June 5 supporting none of the current Haggerty Road connector alternatives — breaking from its history of support for alternative 4A.

Both the Farmington Hills City Council and the West Bloomfield Township Board of Trustees support alternative 4A. The new \$72 million road, a half-mile west of Haggerty from I-98 to Pontiac Trail, would curve easterly to bypass the peak bog south of 14 Mile. It would displace 28 residences and four businesses.

Novi council members voted 5-2 to not endorse any of the remaining alternatives and instead to encourage the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to explore other ways of relieving north-south congestion in the area.

The move drew a stern warning from Novi City Manager Edward Kriewall, who rarely speaks to such issues at the council table.

"I believe sufficient work has been done to address all of the alternatives," Kriewall said. "If we're going to throw it up in the air and knock this project off the drawing board, then we're doing a disservice to all of the City of Novi."

IT IS clear what the change in policy will mean for the Haggerty Road connector project. The Novi City Council favored alternative 4A in a January 1988 vote. Alternative 4A would cut a new alignment for the roadway about a half-mile west of Haggerty Road, between Twelve Mile and Pontiac Trail.

It is the option that is clearly the most environmentally damaging, but would cost less and also necessitate the removal of fewer homes and businesses.

Novi council members said they would likely wait for the outcome of the MDOT public hearing June 7 before taking further action, possibly opposing one of the routes.

The council's 5-2 vote followed a series of impassioned pleas by residents of the Summit Hills subdivision (near 12 Mile and Meadowbrook), which would be substantially altered should the roadway go through. An interchange planned for 12 Mile would require the removal of several homes and the taking of some vacant lots in that rural subdivision.

"You should take a long hard look," said Summit Drive resident Arthur Valenti. "Examine your conscience."

DURING HIS presentation, Valenti gave Novi city clerk Geraldine Slipp a check for \$1,000 to be used to form a committee to study purchasing land north of 12 Mile and convert it to a natural parkland.

Novi councilman Joseph Toth, a persistent critic of both of the off-Haggerty routes, again questioned alternative four's impact on the area north of 12 Mile.

"I don't see why we should put anything in there," Toth said. "I'm going to be a little selfish and think first of Novi. As far as I'm concerned, I really don't give a damn about the people up by M-59. Let them worry about how to get there."

Novi councilwoman Martha Hoyer disagreed. "The people at the southeast corner of the community are crying for relief," she said. "We're talking about 10,000 homes," she said. "I would not be in favor of changing any opinion on anything until all the facts are on the table."

TRAFFIC CONSULTANT Roll Hall pointed out that 70-75 percent of the traffic entering the city from the north has a destination of an in-

terstate roadway, like I-275 at Eight Mile.

"What's the best way to take care of it?" he asked. "Get rid of it. Get it on the freeway."

Kilian called an option offered by Novi councilman Edward Leininger "unrealistic."

Leininger had called for the cloverleaf interchange to be constructed "as close to Haggerty Road as possible," in a brief visual display to the council.

Novi council members voted 5-2 to not endorse any of the remaining alternatives and instead to encourage the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to explore other ways of relieving north-south congestion in the area.

"It would be a mistake. It would be a detriment," Kilian said. "It would be likely to cause more problems."

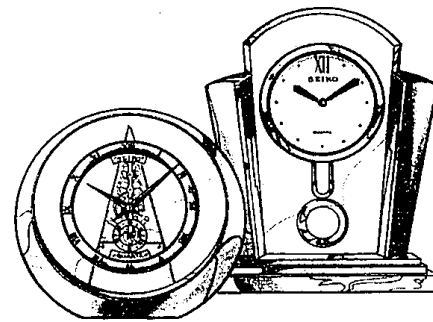
Hoyer has been the city's representative on a Haggerty Road connector policy committee, made up of various elected officials from the affected communities. Kilian has served on a similar technical committee, which includes traffic experts from the communities.

CURRENTLY, ONLY two real options remain under consideration for the Haggerty Road connector, which could be called M-9 when or if it is connected with M-59 in the future. Both plans involve the cloverleaf at 12 Mile and Summit.

Novi Mayor Matthew Quinn said the residents were faced with presenting a viable alternative to MDOT officials during the June 7 public hearing.

"That's what the Summit people have to do," Quinn said. "It's got to be shown that it can be safe for the traffic if it is put elsewhere."

Leininger, Toth and Novi council members Hugh Crawford, Nancy Covert and Ronald Watson voted in favor of the new resolution. Quinn and Hoyer were opposed.



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