

Freeway neighbors wary of increased noise

By Noreen Fleck
staff writer

Cindi Steff, who lives in Camelot Court subdivision, north of 11 Mile and west of Inkster, said she can't invite friends over for summer barbecues because of the noise and dirt from the I-696 freeway.

"Our windows are rarely open because of the dirt and noise," she said. "I think the road is higher, too," Steff said. "I'm sure the cars are more visible now than before. I'm not even sure if berms would be able to be erected that high in order to cover the noise."

Of the 150 homes in Camelot Court, 75 abut eastbound I-696. "We aren't the only sub affected by this," Steff said. "I've talked to people in Kimberley and Farm Meadows who are tired of the noise, too."

Camelot Court residents say the widening of I-696 through Farmington Hills will not only increase traffic, but will increase noise as well.

NEIL SWIACKI, Camelot Court

Homeowners Association president, asked the Farmington Hills City Council Sept. 25 for support in demanding that noise barriers be built sooner than 1991, the target date in the Michigan Department of Transportation's plans.

"They (MDOT) agreed to construct the berms as part of the environmental approval of the project," said Skip Ottwell, city engineer. "We're concerned with the time schedule and we want to see if the state can accelerate the construction."

In an Aug. 4 letter, MDOT officials said noise barriers are planned at westbound I-696, west Orchard Lake Road; eastbound I-696, east of Halsted; and eastbound I-696, west of Inkster.

The cost of the barriers will exceed \$1 million, with money coming from the state's vehicle weight and fuel taxes.

The cost only includes basic noise barriers. Additional treatments, such as a higher berm or a different brick, must be funded by the city, said G. Robert Adams, MDOT deputy director.

CONSTRUCTION of the berm along eastbound I-696, west of Inkster, is estimated at \$600,000. MDOT plans an earth berm that will rise 12 feet above the residential backyard ground. The berm will run 2,500 feet along the area abutting the freeway. The project will require removal of most of the I-696 landscaping and some residential landscaping.

At westbound I-696, west of Orchard Lake Road, the planned noise wall is estimated at \$420,000. It will consist of a 2,100-foot cement wall standing up to 12 feet high.

At eastbound I-696, near Halsted, the cost of the proposed 300-foot-long, 12-foot-high earth berm is estimated at \$45,000.

"The intent is still to construct the needed noise barrier walls under separate contracts after completion of the I-696 widening," read the MDOT letter signed by Alfonso Williams, MDOT district engineer.

"Although not assigned for project development and design, the projects are tentatively scheduled for letting to contract, probably in fiscal year 1991."

Improved I-696 to open early

Continued from Page 1

when you consider 80,000 vehicles travel the road each day," Garceau said.

The bonus, \$15,000 a day for each day ahead of schedule, up to \$1 million, was added to the contract to assure the 8.8-mile stretch through Farmington Hills opened when the 7.9-mile stretch from Lakser Road to I-75 through eastern Oakland County does in mid-

December.

Construction bonuses are paid only when there's a major safety issue, huge volumes of traffic are affected or the last link to a much-needed improvement is pending.

"The benefits must outweigh the cost of the incentive," Garceau said.

Workers will share in the \$1 million bonus, since many worked overtime, he said.

I-696 WILL be eight lanes, four in each direction, from I-275 to I-75, except for three miles from Telegraph Road to Southfield Road in Southfield, where it will narrow to six lanes, three in each direction. When fully opened, I-696 will span 27 miles. It will link I-275 in Farmington Hills to I-94 in St. Clair Shores. The \$657.5-million project, paid for by both federal and state money, has been brewing for 30 years.

Swiacki called the MDOT letter unacceptable as a response to the problem.

ON AUG. 16, Swiacki wrote MDOT to seek immediate erection of the noise barrier. He requested a copy of the plans and the time schedule, asking for a response by Sept. 8.

"Because we did not get our response, I turned to the city council and they committed to arranging a

meeting with me to discuss the problem and take further steps," Swiacki said.

A MDOT response on Sept. 30 acknowledged receipt of the association's letter. But it said that planning for construction of the berms may not begin for some time.

Two eastbound lanes and two westbound lanes were added toward the median of the eight-lane freeway, meaning that noise will not

be brought closer to the subdivisions, Ottwell said.

BUT THE widening will increase traffic volume, as will the growth of Farmington Hills, causing noise to rise, Ottwell added.

MDOT also is tentatively planning to add a noise barrier along westbound I-696, near Tyler in Southfield, in the mid-1990s in conjunction with a new interchange there.

Left-wing group to counter Nazi demonstration

Continued from Page 1

They see Nazis as the vanguard of the bourgeoisie. They feel that it's important to confront Nazis. They feel the Nazis are part of the forces of capitalism."

THE NEO-NAZIS will assemble in a field location along the route of the Love Force United Progressive

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March of 1989. The march is set to begin at 3:07 p.m. on the north side of Grand River, from Mooney to Liberty.

Led by Derwin Success, a black Farmington resident in a biracial family victimized by racial slurs for the past two years, the march will end at the steps of city hall where a rally will be held until 6:07 p.m.

Success, 32, a lay staff member at Berea-St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Highland Park, said he's praying for no violence but added that he's "not opposed to any group - the Nazis or INCAR."

"My main focus is to gain racial harmony and to express love to get

people unified for one cause," he said. "I believe we're on the cutting edge of things to come. It'll be painful. But victory is there."

He said nothing will stop the march. "God has called it into being and nothing can interfere."

He said Farmington "is a model city. What happens here will have an impact on the rest of the state and the nation."

A SPOKESMAN for INCAR refused to identify himself or be interviewed. "We're going to stop the Nazis," he said. "We're not going to allow them to march."

Farmington police have adopted a zero tolerance approach. "Don't call

this a peace march," Lauffhoff said. "This is no peace march. We're going to be arresting anyone who creates a disturbance."

About 80 to 100 officers from Farmington, Farmington Hills, the Oakland County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police will assist.

In mid-September, the Farmington Department of Public Safety designated the assigned location for the SS Action Group's counterdemonstration.

LAUHOFF IDENTIFIED John Reich, the group's spokesman, as the same man who protested with 11 other members at a rally near Farmington City Hall in December 1984 in support of capital punishment.

Reich, 35, of Detroit, has admitted he is using an alias. He said his real name is John Moriarty. He has a U.S. Post Office box at the Plymouth

Road location in Redford Township. A clerk confirmed the box number is listed under Moriarty's name.

"I'm coming out of retirement for this (the march)," he said.

Lauffhoff set the boundary parameters for the SS Action Group's proposed peaceful counterdemonstration on the south side of Grand River, east of Power. The group will assemble on city right-of-way but not be allowed on private property, Lauffhoff said.

Police officers will be positioned along that cordoned area.

They (the neo-Nazis) have that area on Grand River to demonstrate in," Lauffhoff said. "I explained the safety aspect. If they attempt to incite or walk on the street, they will be arrested. They want to demonstrate and leave. Once the march has passed, they will leave."

THE SS Action Group, part of the American Nazi Party, is an American political group dedicated "to

preserving the white race and the U.S. Constitution." According to Lauffhoff, Reich said the National Socialist group wanted to cooperate with police.

Lauffhoff said the SS Action Group "is fairly careful. They are provocative but do not initiate. The group has as much history of not showing up as showing up."

Steve Nofke, Communist Party of Michigan executive secretary, said INCAR/PLP had no connection with his group. "I know they exist," he said. "I don't know anything about them."

Nofke said he told some friends from civil rights groups about the peace march. "I have not been in touch with Derwin Success," Nofke said. "It's important that the peace march not become a Communists versus Nazis kind of thing. The real issue gets clouded, and it will keep people from coming out."

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