

This is a view of Eight Mile, where I-275 crosses, looking west toward Haggerty.

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Summer widening planned for 8 Mile Road

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Motorists traveling congested, potholed Eight Mile will see some relief next summer with the planned widening of the thoroughfare from Halsted to I-275.

"There's a lot of development tak-

ing place on the Livonia side," said David Call, Farmington Hills assistant city manager. "What with existing traffic, there's a lot of congestion and safety problems."

The road will be widened from the existing two lanes to two lanes in each direction with a center lane for turns. The widening is part of a large-

er project extending 2½ miles from Halsted to Silver Springs Parkway in Northville. Total cost of the project, from Halsted into Northville, tops an estimated \$18 million. The section bordering Farmington Hills and Livonia will cost an estimated \$1.5 million.

A federal grant will help pay 75

percent of the widening costs, with Oakland and Wayne counties also contributing for improving the county road. Under state law, Farmington Hills and Livonia are obligated to pay equal shares for the improvements.

THE WIDENING will cost Farm-

ington Hills an estimated \$96,000, available in the city's projected 1990-91 road improvement budget, Call said.

The total project costs in the Novi stretch is an estimated \$18 million, with state Transportation Economic Development Funds paying 75 percent, \$2.2 million.

The widening from Halsted to I-275 will leave less than two miles, between Farmington and Halsted roads, that need widening. The segments are expected to be improved in the 1991 and 1992 construction seasons, should federal financing or state transportation development money become available, Call said.

12 Mile to be expanded with help of state grant

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Mary Bush knows there's going to be some suffering when construction begins next summer to widen heavily congested 12 Mile in Farmington Hills. But it's worth enduring for a multimillion-dollar, four-lane boulevard west through the office corridor.

"We're just thrilled. It's going to be wonderful. And it's certainly overdue," said Bush, executive assistant at Thompson-Brown Realtors, 32823 12 Mile.

Construction is expected to begin next summer on the first of three phases in the long-planned widening of 12 Mile, from Farmington Road to Haggerty. The first

phase, from Farmington Road to the Drake Road intersection, is expected to cost \$6.1 million.

City officials have planned for years to widen the office corridor, not only to relieve the congestion and increasing accident record, but to provide for economic development.

"It always backs up. Quite frankly, I plan my appointments around the peak traffic times. When I don't, I find I have to be patient and just wait to pull into traffic when I can," Bush said.

EARLIER THIS year, the city received a \$2.2 million matching grant from the Michigan Transportation Economic Development

for the first phase. City officials are now applying for the same type of grant for the second phase, from Halsted to Haggerty. Estimated cost of the second phase is in the \$6 million range, assistant city manager David Call said.

City officials applied for the grants under the state fund's economic growth category for areas experiencing growth along a major road that is incapable of handling the growth.

The congestion along 12 Mile has been "a negative condition" for both existing businesses and businesses that have considered locating along the office corridor, Bush said.

"I hear it almost on a regular basis."

The thoroughfare "is lagging" behind the

growth, Call said.

"I think this will improve the potential for it (business growth)."

Nissan Research and Development, for example, is building a 400,000-square-foot facility in the new Country Club Corporate Park on the southeast corner of 12 Mile and Haggerty.

"We need to improve the road for the congestion that's already there, plus new traffic," Call said.

If the grant application is approved, construction on the second phase is expected to begin the following year. The project's third phase would run from Drake to Halsted.

won't follow each continuous mile of the road, some traffic backup is expected. The Drake to Halsted mile is the last phase because there is no building in that area. That phase may fall under the transportation fund's congestion category for state financing, Call said.

With the matching grants, the city and Oakland County, which has jurisdiction over 12 Mile, are expected to pay equal local shares. Selling motor vehicles is a way of financing the local share, Call said.

"The county has not yet been able to commit what (money) is available," Call said. "If the county does not participate, we will somehow have to find a way to finance it."

BECAUSE CONSTRUCTION phases

Downtown Farmington readies for annual walk

Holiday spirit is snowballing in downtown Farmington as the area gets set for the fourth annual Christmas Walk and Open House Saturday, Dec. 2.

Featuring activities all day throughout the business district, the event's main attraction, a walk through the downtown's winter wonderland, will kick off at 4:30 p.m. from Farmington City Hall.

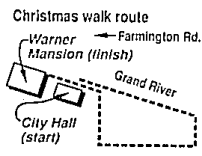
"It won't be long before spirited visitors will stroll through the festively decorated streets and shops of downtown Farmington," said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, Downtown Development Authority executive director (DDA).

The DDA is hosting the daylong event that involves 150 businesses in the downtown area and several community organizations.

"Thanks to the hard work of a number of business people, the downtown area looks great. Festive banners, wreathing and red bows line the city's streets and there are thousands of white lights in the trees. Many businesses are participating in some light-hearted competition as they decorate their storefronts for the contest sponsored by the DDA and the Farmington Observer," said Strip Sittsamer.

The annual contest, "Decorate Downtown for the Holidays," awards winners prizes of \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 free advertising space in the Observer. Winners will be announced at the Christmas Walk.

The fourth annual Christmas Walk and Open House is scheduled to finish at 6 p.m. Many businesses will extend their Saturday hours for post-event activities.



The Farmington High School band and choir will lead caroling as the walk proceeds through the downtown area. Along the walk's route, the Farmington Players will mingle with the crowd as they portray Dickens characters and other holiday favorites. Walk participants can stop into businesses to warm up, and many businesses will serve refreshments.

KICKED OFF by the newly elected mayor of Farmington, Shirley Richardson, the walk will boast the sights and sounds of the holiday season. About 350 Farmington area Girl Scouts are expected to help Richardson start the walk, following their annual decorating of the 40-foot blue spruce tree in front of City Hall.

At 5:15 p.m., the walk will conclude at the Warner Mansion Gazebo for the Farmington Area Jaycees annual holiday lighting. Here, there

will be more caroling, readings by the Farmington Players, and an announcement of the decorating contest winners. Radio station 104 WOMC air personality Don Phillips and station mascot WOM-CEE will lend some humor to the program.

Then, with a flip of the switch by Mayor Richardson and Farmington Hills Mayor Terry Sever, hundreds of lights will illuminate a Christmas tree. Adding to the excitement, Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive atop a fire truck to officially open the holiday season in downtown Farmington.

The fourth annual Christmas Walk and Open House is scheduled to finish at 6 p.m. Many businesses will extend their Saturday hours for post-event activities.

At the Village Mall, on the southeast corner of the intersection of Grand River and Farmington Road, a Scottish bagpiper will play Scottish and Irish Christmas songs from 6-8 p.m.

Farmington Hills police unit wins crime prevention award

The Farmington Hills Police Crime Prevention Section received the Crime Prevention Unit of the Year Award at the International Society for Crime Prevention Practitioners annual conference in Fort Worth, Tex., Nov. 18.

The Crime Prevention Section is responsible for planning, developing, introducing and maintaining programs designed to deter and prevent crime within the city. This is done through a combination of education, exposure and community involvement — through an active stance against crime.

In 1986, the section was recognized by the Crime Prevention Association of Michigan. Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said,

"The Crime Prevention Section's efforts are in keeping with the department's pro-active approach to reduce crime in Farmington Hills," Dwyer said.

IN 1988, the section developed and introduced programs that provide assistance to senior citizens.

The senior victim assistance program, for example, is an education program about prescribed medications and personal protection. In the senior volunteer program, seniors "provide the department with experience and knowledge, while helping in various clerical and analytical positions," Dwyer said.

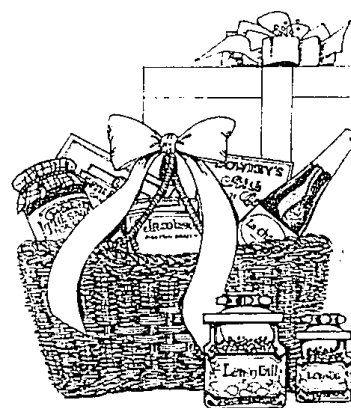
The Crime Prevention Section developed a substance abuse/education program, THINK (Teaching,

Helping, Involving, Noticing, Kids), for Farmington Public Schools.

"The program is designed to help educate youth about the dangers of drugs and how it affects them and their families," Dwyer said.

The Crime Prevention Section, begun in 1980, also hosts public relations-type presentations, an alarm permit and billing system, Neighborhood Watch, security surveys, Helping Hands, an annual open house, citizen crime prevention advisory committees, an anonymous drug analysis program, a drugs in the workplace program, "Say No To Drugs" week, Buzz the Buzz, a TV program for kids and others.

The Unit of the Year Award is a competitive award judged for program excellence.



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