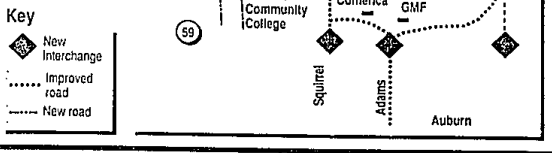


# Road work

Road construction and improvement precipitated by the development of the Oak-Tech Park and especially by the Chrysler Tech Center.



# Road construction plays catch-up to development

By Gerald Frawley staff writer

"Roads? Where we're going we don't need roads." — Dr. Emmett Brown in "Back to the Future." A lack of roads in and around the Oakland Technology Park has been the greatest obstacle to Chrysler's plans to build its \$1 billion Chrysler Technology park.

In 1989, shortly after Chrysler officials announced intentions to build the tech center, they said they would not build extensive road improvements were made. What roads and who should pay for the improvements was the center of much debate between Chrysler, state, county and local officials.

Access to freeways was a key issue with Chrysler and state officials. Interstate 75 was woefully inadequate to meet the demands of upward of 20,000 to 40,000 new jobs that would be generated by the technology center and its adjacent automotive supplier park, according to Bill Lantz of the Michigan Department of Commerce economic development division.

"WHEN WE STARTED the project with Chrysler back in 1985, the first thing we did was an environmental impact study and from that came the question of roads."

I-75 was already scheduled to receive \$44 million in road improvements, Lantz said, but building the additional interchanges needed for access to the freeways was to take years, Department of Transportation planning division director Lou Lambert said.

Chrysler and state officials agreed the freeways would need to be widened to accommodate the additional traffic. Nearly four years later, I-75 has been widened from four to eight lanes from Square Lake Road to M-24, and from four to six lanes from M-24 to Clarkston.

THERE IS still extensive work to be done before the road systems will be ready to serve the technology center and the remainder of the park, said MDOT project engineer Gerald Martin.

"We've got I-75 done now," Martin said, "but we still have a ways to go on the interchanges that will serve the area." Three new interchanges — I-75 between University and Featherstone roads, M-59 at Squirrel Road, and M-59 at Adams Road — and the accompanying ramps, bridges and collector roads must be built.

"The total cost — and this is a real preliminary estimate, we have to hedge a bit — is \$94 million," Martin said.

THE FIRST RAMP to the new interchange on I-75 is already under construction and should be completed this spring, Martin said. MDOT will also let bids this spring for construction of a new bridge at Featherstone Road to handle the increased traffic.

MDOT is also working on acquiring the necessary land to build the exit ramp from the new I-75 interchange to southbound I-75.

"If we get that done, we should have that ramp done early in 1991."

"The further we move into the future, the less hard these (completion) dates get," Martin said.

A NEW bridge to accommodate University Drive, and two remaining ramps for the new I-75 interchange — as well as collectors and distributors between the interchange and University Drive — are scheduled for 1992, he said.

Building two M-59 interchanges, one at Squirrel Road and a second at an extended Adams Road east of the current Adams Road bridge, is scheduled for 1994 construction, he said.

"The last thing we're going to do for that would be a reconstruction of the I-75, M-59 interchange," Martin said, "but we're looking at 1995 or after for that."

EXTENSIVE WIDENING of local and county roads was also needed, according to Oakland County Road commission spokesman John Joy.

Although Oakland County itself was not responsible for any road improvements, the road commission did act as the civil engineer for the local road projects.

The road commission will act as leader for two other projects needed to serve the technology center and the tech park.

Walton Boulevard will be widened to a five-lane boulevard between Squirrel and Opdyke roads and will include a second bridge over I-75, Joy said.

"We'll start with right-of-way acquisition and engineering and design in 1992 and construction will be in 1993."

The project is expected to cost \$5.5 million and will be paid for through federal financing.

An extension of Adams Road south of Hamlin Road will be done in conjunction with MDOT and will include a new interchange at M-59 and Adams Road.

"Even with a fast track, we're 'guesstimating' a 1994 starting date," Joy said.

PHASE ONE of the local road improvement projects is virtually complete, said Mary Ann Miller, economic development coordinator for Auburn Hills.

Auburn Hills paid for its share of road improvements through \$40 million in local development financing authority bonds guaranteed by Chrysler.

Other money was raised by a tax increment financing district on the Oakland Technology Park, Miller said, but they were not road improvements made solely for the Chrysler project.

Phase one includes realigning and widening Squirrel Road from Featherstone to M-59, at a cost of roughly \$2 million; realigning and widening Featherstone from Squirrel to I-75 at a cost of \$5 million; and realigning and widening Hamlin Road from Squirrel to Adams, Miller said.

Hamlin Road, for which cost estimates are still unavailable, is still under construction after bad weather prevented the roads completion last year, Miller said.

"We hope to have it done after the building season begins."

PHASE TWO — which should be completed in 1990 — will include realigning and widening Featherstone from Opdyke to I-75 at a cost of roughly \$2 million; realigning and widening Squirrel from Featherstone to University at a cost of roughly \$7 million.

Phase three, scheduled for completion in 1991 and 1992, will include widening and realigning Squirrel Road from University to Walton at a cost of \$6 million, and widening University from East Pontiac to Squirrel at a cost of roughly \$1 million, Miller said.

Planning road improvements takes a great deal of time, and although it may seem like the process has bogged down, everything is right on schedule, Joy said.

"When you're talking about a road that is going to last 40 to 50 years, five years is really not much time to wait," Joy said.

"It usually takes five years from 'I want to do that' to 'Here comes the concrete.'"

"That may seem abnormal to the driver, but that's quite normal to the road commission," Joy said.

# 5 promoted at Grubb & Ellis

Five Grubb & Ellis employees have been named senior marketing consultants. They are:

John Catalano, vice president; Bill Pankhurst, vice president; Clarence Gleason, Jim McClowry and Bob Badgero.

Based in Southeast, Grubb & Ellis is a commercial real estate company.

Contract Interiors will provide design and furniture services for the following new projects in Michigan: Johnson Controls in Plymouth; TRW in Washington; West Bloomfield Township Hall and police station; and Kireo Realty and Development, Bloomfield Hills.

Garrity & Associates, a newly formed property management company has located in Livonia at 9200 Middlebelt.

Luckenbach/Ziegelman and Partners, Birmingham, has added Daniel Van Fleten and Karen Swanson to its architectural staff.

# Southfield hosts home show

Exhibitors at the second Oakland County Home Show this weekend will serve up plenty of food for thought for those buying a new house or remodeling the old homestead.

The show at the Southfield Civic Center, Evergreen and 10 1/4 Mile roads, will run 6-9 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$4. There is no charge for children under 12 and adults 62 and over.

Some 145 exhibitors are expected to showcase a

wide range of building products and services. Prospective and current homeowners will be tempted with displays about room additions, hot tubs and spas and the latest styles in decorating.

Companies specializing in home security systems, windows and doors, cabinets, fencing and furniture also are expected to display.

English Gardens Center will feature seminars on such topics as caring for your lawn and do-it-yourself landscaping.

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