

Communities to confer on mutual problems

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

The so-called "summit meeting" at which Oakland communities are to begin looking at mutual problems is scheduled for Feb. 21, although the person who proposed it in November may not be there.

More than 60 communities have been invited to the meeting at the Waterford Oaks Activities Center, 2800 Watkins Lake Road, from 8 a.m. until noon.

County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, the person who proposed the meeting in December, may not attend, however. Murphy is still recovering from an apparent stroke he

suffered Jan. 5. Murphy has left St. Joseph Mercy Hospital and is making "very good progress" at home, said Deputy County Executive Patrick M. Nowak. "I expect him (Murphy) to begin coming into the office any time now. But I don't know if he'll be ready for the meeting."

MURPHY PROPOSED the meeting at the Nov. 29 meeting of the Oakland Board of Commissioners, saying current trends like urban sprawl threaten the county's quality of life.

The program includes a presentation by futurist Edward Barlow Jr. and an update of the regional devel-

opment initiative being conducted by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

Local officials contacted Friday said they welcome the initiative and look forward to addressing mutual problems.

"It's a great idea," said William M. Costick, city manager of Farmington Hills. "We've got to take stock of the needs of the communities and the county. That's the only way we can begin to resolve them."

Not surprisingly, Costick said roads should be a priority concern. Rochester Hills Mayor Billie Ireland said she is looking forward to

the meeting. "I've got to believe there are a lot of problems we can work on together."

Ireland's priorities are traffic, growth and economic development.

FRANK GERSTENECKER, Troy city manager, said the meeting would be a good opportunity for individual communities — and Oakland as a whole — "to take a look at where we're going."

"We've got to take a look at what the future holds as we confront urban sprawl," he said.

High on Gerstenecker's concerns is the abandonment of older urban areas as residents move into rural areas, leaving behind empty buildings and an underused infrastructure.

There's a very high price for leaving cities behind," he said. "We've got to find ways of combating sprawl."

Fred Korzon, supervisor of Bloomfield Township, said there are

'We've got to take stock . . . to identify the needs of the communities and the county. That's the only way we can begin to resolve them (problems).'

— William M. Costick,
Farmington Hills city manager

"significant problems" that should be discussed collectively, like the Auburn Hills megamall that is expected to attract customers within a 50-mile radius.

That's going to affect all of us," he said about the megamall that is expected to attract customers within a 50-mile radius.

"BUT I PREFER to withhold my comments until I see what happens at that meeting," Korzon said.

Southfield City Administrator Robert R. Block agrees it's about time individual communities recognize they are not isolated and their problems need a cooperative solution.

We're chasing each other's tails, businesses and tax base. Block said, referring to the competition for economic development.

Asked about his priorities, Block said the meeting itself seems to make a priority of communities working together for mutual benefit.

Help from the Aussies

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Congested highways may be a major problem locally, but two international consultants say traffic in Oakland moves more rapidly and is more manageable than in other parts of the world.

Mobility here is "far greater" than in Hong Kong, Sydney, Dublin or other major metropolitan areas, according to two traffic engineers from Australia.

John E. Longfoot and Peter H. Lowrie, both engineers, spent three days last week evaluating congestion patterns in Troy and southeast Oakland County.

They have convinced the Road Commission for Oakland County to use SCATS (Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System) to better manage traffic using so-called smart highways, or Advanced Traffic Management Systems.

SCATS uses a high-tech system involving cameras and computers to

keep track of traffic congestion and manage it by coordinating street lights and other signals.

OAKLAND COUNTY has invested \$2 million in the project to be used as seed money to qualify the area for some \$70 million in federal funds.

As outlined by John L. Grubba, managing director of the road commission, 25 intersections in Troy would be computerized, beginning in April. If the system proves to be effective, other signals could be computerized throughout the county's southeast quadrant.

"Eventually every traffic signal in Oakland County would be part of the system," said Grubba.

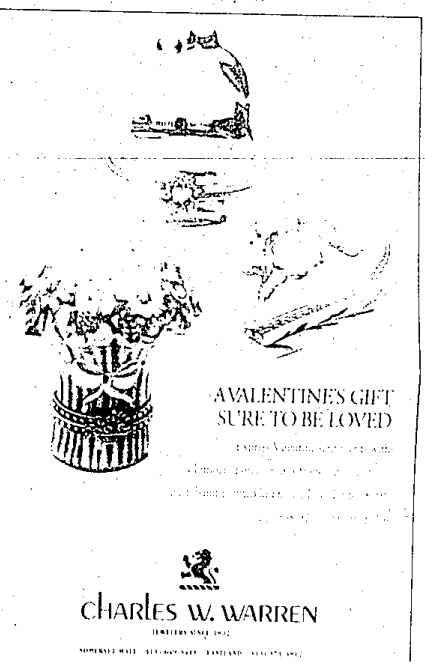
management systems offer an alternative to simply building more highways attempting to ease congestion. "Congestion is not the problem," Grubba asserted. "Providing mobility in congested areas is."

The two Australian engineers said cities like Hong Kong — that integrates bicycles, pushcarts, automobiles and pedestrians without benefit of freeways — have improved traffic flow with SCATS.

Among other things, SCATS detects blockages — like accidents or car breakdowns — and helps to reroute traffic by coordinating and adjusting nearby traffic signals.

Motorists will definitely notice a difference once SCATS is installed, they said.

HE SAID SCATS and other traffic



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Austin pushes bills against drunk driving

Secretary of State Richard H. Austin today said his top legislative priority this year is a comprehensive package of anti-drunk-driving bills.

"It should come as no surprise that we will strive for continued success in preventing the No. 1 killer and killer of Michigan's children, teenagers and adults — traffic crashes," Austin said.

THE PACKAGE includes provisions for:

- Swift and sure suspension of a drunk driver's license.
- 48 hours of consecutive jail time or 10 days of community service for a second-time offender.
- 30 days' minimum suspension for a drunk-driving conviction.

- Primary enforcement of Michigan's safety belt law. Presently, a person cannot be cited for failure to wear a safety belt unless stopped for another offense.

- Tougher drunk-driving standards for commercial drivers who operate large trucks, buses and school buses. Commercial drivers who are convicted of having a blood alcohol level of .04 percent or greater would have a one-year suspension of their commercial driver license and a lifetime suspension if convicted of a second violation. Currently, the blood alcohol limit is .10 percent.

- Mandatory safety helmet use by motor operators regardless of age. Currently, only motor operators up to age 19 are required to wear a safety helmet.

AUSTIN, SERVING his sixth term, also expressed a desire to work with other state officials in this post-election year to establish ethics legislation, "particularly regarding the issues of campaign finance and financial disclosure."

As Michigan's official historian, Austin expressed concern over lack of legislation governing the state's archaeology program, which is largely directed by federal law.

Austin called for approval of two other issues that have come before legislators in the past: limiting the sale of lists of names and addresses from voter registration; and reducing the potential for junk mail and authorization for the Department of State to accept credit card payment for all transactions, a practice now limited to mail transactions.

Lighthouse needs workers

The Pontiac Area Lighthouse, a non-profit human service agency, needs volunteers to help distribute food and clothing and to participate in fund-raising such as the Hunger Walk.

Those interested should write or visit Lighthouse at 109 Williams Street (at Orchard Lake Road), Pontiac, MI 48333. They can also call Jean Wagstaff at 335-2462.

Lighthouse, a member of the United Way of Oakland County, also welcomes donations.



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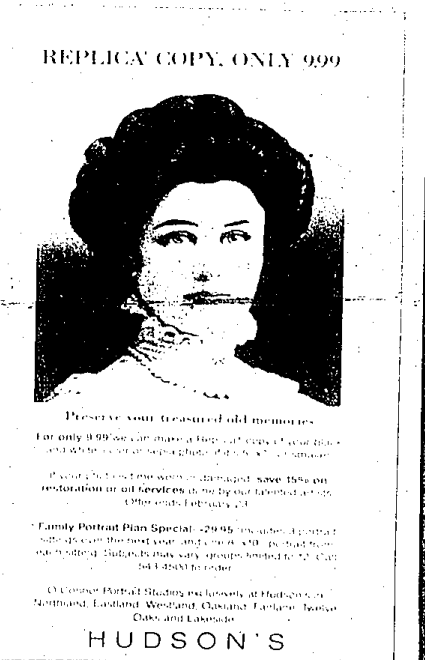
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- BIRMINGHAM 401 FOWLER RD. corner of Park Dr. 644-5850
- MT. CLEMENS 1216 S. GRATIOT 463-3620
- EAST DETROIT 1200 KELLY between 8 & 9 Mile Rd. 778-7020
- ANN ARBOR 336 WASH. between Washtenaw and S. 2nd 973-9340
- FLINT 4261 MILLER at S. 10th from Greenfield Valley Mall 313-732-5560
- FARMINGTON HILLS 2741 ORCHARD LAKE RD. at 2nd 553-8585
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