

# County roads said to need bucks, cooperation

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

It's going to take \$1 billion to meet Oakland County's road needs as the area continues its rapid growth, according to the director of the road

commission.

But a legislator with his finger on the pulse says it will take something else as well — cooperation.

These assessments were made at the kickoff of a strategic planning

process for the Road Commission of Oakland County Monday at the Novi Biltmore. About 150 people, mostly representatives of the county's 61 communities, attended.

There were no surprises from road commission director John L. Grubba, who said the existing road system is in jeopardy — mainly because of the area's continued growth and prosperity.

Unless the state Legislature and Oakland County come up with more money to help fund required improvements, said Grubba, "We are at risk of choking on our own successes."

Grubba said \$1 billion will be needed to meet the county's road and highway needs. An important first step would be a 15 percent increase in revenue.

"THE OAKLAND COUNTY road system cannot handle the traffic ex-

plusion," Grubba said. "The road system is at great risk of breaking down."

"There is no way a \$64 million annual budget can fix a \$1 billion-plus problem."

U.S. Rep. Bob Carr, whose 6th District stretches from Pontiac to East Lansing, agreed that building and maintaining roads will be expensive. But it's also going to take coordination and cooperation if the area hopes to get federal funding.

"Rather than local officials approaching me piecemeal about their individual needs, we should work together to identify those (mutual) corridors of opportunity," said Carr, a Democrat.

We must achieve the highest "efficiency of traffic flow, with the greatest potential for economic development," he continued, "with the least adverse effect on the surrounding communities and environment."

As an example of the kinds of projects that will likely get federal assistance in the future, Carr pointed to the expansion of M-59 from about I-75 westward. That's a project that can benefit two counties (Oakland and Livingston) and numerous individual communities.

As another example of the kind of project likely to get federal assistance, Carr pointed to the effort to computerize 28 traffic signals along Rochester and Big Beaver roads in Troy.

THAT COMPUTERIZATION — to begin later this month — is for the so-called smart highway system designed to speed the flow of traffic

with advanced planning and management.

Carr is vice chairman of the house transportation appropriations subcommittee that has earmarked \$10 million for a pilot project in Troy. If that project is successful, officials plan to expand it throughout Oakland County, at an anticipated cost of about \$70 million.

Carr's comments were significant, according to Lawrence E. Littman, a Troy resident who is chairman of the road commission.

"He's given us the formula for getting federal dollars," said Littman. "He's saying to put aside parochial interests, put aside petty politics and work together. That's significant."

## Health care hearing on tap Friday in Troy

Troy will be the Detroit-area location for a hearing on the cost and availability of health care at 1 p.m. Friday at the Civic Center, 520 W. Big Beaver Road.

This is a change in schedule from the previous Oct. 11 date.

The Legislature is considering four bills pertaining to the cost and availability of health care. The subcommittee is scheduled to refer its findings to the Senate Judiciary

committee for consideration by the Legislature later this fall.

Anyone wanting to testify at the hearing is asked to notify Molly Huil, committee clerk, by calling (517) 373-0920. Speakers are limited to three minutes.

Residents can also submit written testimony at the hearing or by mailing it to the office of Sen. William Van Regenmorter, the State Capitol, Lansing, Mich., 48913.

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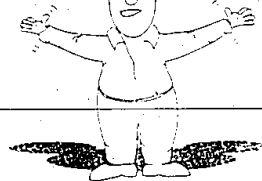
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