State looks for remedies for local congested roads

BY BILL COUTANT

Farmington Hills city officials are calling the state's progress on road improvements for 14 Mile, 15 Mile, Orchard Lake and Northwestern Highway a good be-

climing. The Michigan Department of Transportation concluded three fall meetings with a meeting Nov. 29 to take suggestions for the public and from Hills and West Bloomfield officials concerning plans for the roads. The state has said that if enough public interest is shown, it could spend up to \$20 million to improve roads in the area.

area.
"I think the state will come to the two councils sometime in Jan-uary," said Hills Assistant City

Manager Dave Call. "They'll take up those issues (from the three meetings and other studies) with the councils."

ne councils.
Although the Haggerty Connec aunough the Haggerty Connec-tory project, which now connects M-5 with 12 Mile has alleviated a lot of traffic, the Orchard Lake, 14 Mile and Northwestern area has been a traffic tangle for area resi-dents.

Northwestern Highway had been planned as a connector with US-23 in Fenton but fell by the wayside as the interstates and other roads took priority, said MDOT administrator Bill Hartwie

Hartwig.
In the meantime, growth in Farmington Hills, West Bloom-field and points west and north

have outpaced improvements to those roads.

The state has already proposed several elternatives including widening the intersections of Northwestern, 14 Mile, Orchard Lake and Maple (15 Mile) to relieve conçestion, adding left turn lance and passing lance along 14 Mile, widening 14 Mile to a six-lane boulevard and making Maple of four-lane boulevard from Orchard Lake to Haggerty, Call said.

The support for the changes has been there, Call said. The state will now prioritize the needs for turn lanes, traffic signals and congestion relief and present those findings to the city and township before any decisions are enaded.

Residency

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to be able to call people from home, Goes said.

Farmington Hills Fire Department has a paid-on-call volunteer system. Volunteer fire departments are exempt from the bill.

Hills full-time fire personnel, though, are required to live within a 12-mile radius of the city limits. Hills police officers are required to live within a 25-mile radius of police beadquarters. Command officers — licutenants and sergeants — have to live within 12 miles.

Farmington Hills research. Farmington Hills prefers a ra-

Farmington Hills prefers a ra-dius requirement opposed to a re-sidency requirement, which is "outmoded," asid assistant city manager Steve Brock.
"You look at a couple who are working in both communities, and if you have residency require-ments in both, it becomes imprac-tical," Brock said. "We think that doesn't work."

Farmington officials view their firefighting situation as similar to that in the Hills. Though em-ployed full time, public safety of-ficers are often called from home

Last year, Gosa said Farming-ton had 42 call-back fires where an average nine full-time officers and five reserve officers came in

Honigman appears willing to

Cities like Detroit and Flint impose such requirements to prevent middle class flight and a loss of tax base. Honigman said. If it's for safety sake, the senanto said that's another matter. "If it's rational and makes sense, that's fine," Honigman said.

City officials contend the bills infringe on home rule and run

against Public Act 312, which allows cities and unions to collectively bargain on residency issues. The U.S. Justice Department and local courts have upheld that, officials add.

Unions have been behind such legislation in the past, Farming-ton City Manager Frank Lauhoff said.

"Normally, they have been con-cerned about gaining something from legislation they couldn't gain through collective bargain-ing," Lauhoff said.

Honigman said there's a more fundamental issue involved: Gev-ernments shouldn't be able to tell

people where to live.

"The Berlin Wall has come down, but we still have laws like this in Michigan cities," Honig-man said.







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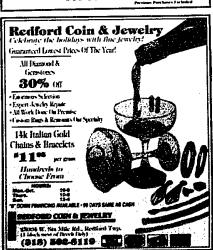
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