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Listen up: State Rep. Andrew Raczkowski offers one of the many books of records from residents to MDOT as proof that their problems are longstanding.

No noise abatement program has been considered because it's a reconstruction project, not an expansion or new road, MDOT officials said.

There is not an 11th-hour plea either, residents said.

Subdivision residents wrote letters to MDOT before the freeway was built in the mid-1970s. More than 70 percent of homes were built before I-275 went in.

Four maroon binders sat on a table next to the podium, which homeowners chronicled ongoing correspondence between themselves and state officials and other information.

"I can verify those are real," said Tom Biasell, Hills Public Services director.

The city hired California-based acoustical firm Parson's Brinkerhoff Quade & Douglas to look at

whether surface grading can be modified within the existing contract.

At Monday's meeting, Farmington Hills City Council members unanimously passed a resolution in support of I-275 reconstruction and noise reduction. Council members suggested that MDOT use part of \$31 million saved from the \$49 million bid project to reduce noise.

Federal law requires tining — or raking — to provide traction. The whine from tires rubbing across grooves doesn't register on sound meters, but white noise definitely penetrates ear drums, Biasell said.

"What it does is bother you," he said.

Sharpe asked MDOT to look at random tining, which alters road groove patterns and reduces noise. MDOT's Chief Operations Officer Tom Maki said he'll look into it.

A reduction of three decibels can make a difference, one resident said. Robert Townsley, who wears two hearing aids, noted that a 10-decibel increase means 20 times the noise.

Townsley didn't want to stifle his presentation with decibel readings and scientific findings, though.

"This is not about decibel readings ... It's about people, family and quality of life," Townsley said.

Commission member Betty Jean Awrey tried to relate. She lived in Meadowbrook Forest for 10 years until 1992. Her family resides in Plymouth Township.

"There's noise there, too (because of M-14)," Awrey said. "I don't think you can ever get away from it."

Awrey said about living near I-275, "I remember hearing the noise, but it just wasn't that offensive."

**No easy solutions**

Sound walls or a surface change might not be an answer, another commission said.

Studies have found walls mute noise, but freeway sound still filters 300 feet beyond.

Asphalt would need more maintenance than concrete. MDOT officials said reconstruction with concrete should last 35 years.

"There might not be a perfect solution to your road noise problem," Commissioner Lowell Jackson said.

Residents didn't leave happy.



Formerly: Commission member Betty Jean Awrey formerly lived in Meadowbrook, Sub and tells the residents that she hears traffic from M-14 in her current home.

**'He did not offer one bit of MDOT provisions to help us. We're looking for solutions. Mr. Mackey has offered us absolutely nothing today.'**

Tom Zloutcha  
—Woodhill Street resident

Woodhill Street resident Tom Zloutcha felt put off by the MDOT chief operations officer's response.

"He did not offer one bit of MDOT provisions to help us," Zloutcha said. "We're looking for solutions. Mr. Maki has offered us absolutely nothing today."

Nine Mile Road resident Joan Barber didn't mince words, either. She's fought a 20-year battle to get a sound wall next to her historic home, which sits next to the freeway.

"I'm disgusted," she said.

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"Otherwise why have a symbol if no one is going to look at it?"

Marcia Van Creveld, who served on the cellular tower study committee, termed the

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termed the tower as an "instrument of commerce."

A Meadowbrook subdivision resident agreed.

"The tower is not to save souls; souls are saved inside a church," said Tom Zloutcha. "... It is a strictly an advertisement for this church."

No church officials spoke during the public hearing. AT&T Wireless' John Riley said First Church of Nazarene wanted a cross on top of the 100-foot mono pole, which will include at least two antenna before it's built. AT&T is leasing space from Nazarene church.

The tower is less obtrusive than allowed and will sit amid trees, Riley said. The horizontal portion of the cross could be used later for antenna.

"This is really a creative way to minimize impact on the community," he said.

The mayor, who asked that the request be delayed from Feb. 22 to notify residents, didn't want to having a cross on top, Vagnozzi said it sets a bad precedent.

"What prevents someone from putting on a sign or 'AT&T' for instance?" Vagnozzi asked.

Those things are covered in the city's sign ordinance, said attorney John Donohue, who cautioned council members about treading on a "slippery slope" over symbols and freedom of speech. A cross doesn't violate the ordinance, he added.

"They could have 16 crosses on a tripod," Donohue said. "You don't have to call it a 'cross.'"

Councilman Jon Grant added, "You can call it a T."

Van Creveld suggested the cellular tower ordinance, which city officials say is one of the most restrictive, needs fine tuning. The ordinance doesn't include reference to religious symbols.

"Perhaps our ordinance doesn't address enough of the issues," she said.

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