

No safety issues, but motorists feel groove after construction on I-275

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Motorists report feeling a groovy pull traveling along I-275 since the concrete surface was diamond ground.

Safety-wise, there's nothing to worry about, a Michigan Department of Transportation spokesman said. The state road agency did a traction study, which found the new surface to be safe.

"We've gotten some calls from people that say there is some sway," said Rob Morosi, MDOT spokesman. "That could be the case."

"That will wear off in time. General wear and tear will take care of it. We'll continue to monitor it every year until the road is

rebuilt."

In an effort to quell traffic noise, MDOT diamond ground 2 millimeters off the randomly skewed surface on north and southbound lanes between Five and 10 Mile.

The grooves, which went in a mixture of patterns, were designed to enhance traction. However, tire friction contributed to a loud roar that led to readings of 95 decibels and higher.

Federal and state regulations

require noise abatement for anything over 67 decibels.

After milling off the original concrete surface, which was part of a \$50 million project in 1999, a longitudinal-pattern (length-wise) tinning was installed to maintain traction.

Engineers performed a traction test along with a sound study of the resurfaced freeway in mid-October. A water runoff test was also completed, Morosi said.

"You don't want puddles to

form on the lanes, which could freeze," he said.

The freeway is built so middle lanes sit slightly higher to allow for water to roll off to the side, Morosi said. The recently completed I-96, M-14 and I-275 overpass is constructed and tined the same way.

With a specialized trailer, engineers measure friction levels and wheel drag to make sure vehicles are able to stop at a safe and assured distance, an MDOT engineer said.

"When we go to adjust the surface as we did on I-275 to reduce noise, we need to make sure they (friction levels) remain at an acceptable level," said Mark Chaput, manager of MDOT's Transportation Services Center in Taylor.

'General wear and tear will take care of it. We'll continue to monitor it every year until the road is rebuilt.'

Rob Morosi
—MDOT spokesperson



Neighbors: Larry Shoup is with Families Near I-275. The freeway isn't visible from the Farmington Hills resident's backyard, but the noise is always present.

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"We have said all along that there is no solution that will provide total peace and quiet for people who choose to live near a freeway," said Gregory Rosino, state transportation director. "I think our efforts have made a significant improvement while protecting the longevity of the road surface."

MDOT in 1999 reconstructed I-275 between Five Mile and Ten Mile. The work involved a method of tining - cutting grooves in the road to aid water draining - that caused significant tire noise, Shoup said.

After the reconstruction, there was an average of 83 decibels measured along the road between Five and Ten Mile, Shoup said pre-construction decibel readings aren't available. But he said many residents along the road report noise is greater than it was before 1999.

This summer, contractors recut the tines so they ran more parallel to car tires, reducing noise.

Of the work done this summer by the state, Shoup said, "We're very appreciative of the 5.4 reduction in the decibel level, but the question is, is it good enough? The only way to find out is to ask residents."

Surveyed residents will be asked to answer no more than 10 questions, he said. Of those surveyed informally so far, "Those closest to the roadway don't notice a difference at all. As you proceed further away, some residents feel some benefit," Shoup said.

If a significant number of residents express dissatisfaction about road noise levels, he said the next improvement to seek would be better noise barriers; of earth, wood, concrete or brick.

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County Coats for Cold collection ends Dec. 17

The 2001 Coats for the Cold collection, sponsored by the Oakland County Sheriff's Office, will run now through Dec. 17.

Sheriff Bouchard began the project 16 years ago, and it continues to grow with each passing year. More than 50 locations throughout the County have been secured as Coats for the Cold drop-off sites.

The new or clean, used coats collected during the next couple of weeks will be given to several different charitable organizations, which will then distribute the coats to those most in need at no cost.

"Coats for the Cold is an easy and heartfelt way to make a difference this season," Bouchard said. "It doesn't have to cost you a penny to participate. A helping hand and a giving spirit can keep someone less fortunate warm this winter."

Those interested in making a donation are encouraged to call Nicole Gee, Community Liaison, at (248) 858-5009 for the nearest drop-off location.

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