



SPAGHETTI ROADS? Not really. What looks like spaghetti bits dumped on map of Oakland county is the beginning of a preliminary plot of inadequate segments of county roads. When Shyamal Basu and Eileen West finish, there'll be still more "spaghetti" representing 674.4 miles of primary, 690.8 miles of local and 547 miles of subdivision roads that now fail to meet state standards of road adequacy.

Transit's plan's okay, but . . .

Board blasts funding plan

Public transit is probably an expensive necessity in southeast Michigan, but let's be fair in the way it is to be financed.

That's the position of the Board of County Road Commissioners of Oakland county.

In a recent position paper and policy statement about Governor Milliken's public transit proposal for our seven-county southeast Michigan area, the road commissioners accepted the principle of public transit but took sharp exception to the governor on four points.

The road commissioners agreed with the governor that traditional energy sources can no longer be considered limitless and that Michigan needs a long-range transportation program to provide balanced transportation for all citizens. They conceded that public transit is a necessity in the Greater Detroit metropolitan area, including Oakland county.

They particularly applauded the governor's recognition that the automobile will continue to be the primary mode of transportation into the foreseeable future and that continued attention to roads to accommodate cars safely remains a primary responsibility of government.

"Some of these premises may not be in accord with our personal wishes, but they express the realities with which we must live," the road commissioners' statement said.

"There is so much merit in the governor's proposal that we are puzzled by some of the negatives he saw fit to include," the statement continued.

Singled out for criticism were "inequities" in the financing proposal, the likelihood of Detroit domination of policy-making for the seven-county system and lack of solid assurance of adequate funds for vital road needs.

The entire transit system proposed by the governor would cost an estimated \$2.5 billion. The \$800 million first phase would consist of construction of rail transit in Detroit's Woodward, Michigan and Gratiot Avenue corridors, a \$107 million people mover in Detroit's central business district, and widely expanded bus service in Detroit and the suburbs.

Financing of this first phase would, according to the governor's proposal, be 80 percent from the federal government, 10 percent from the state, and

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Banish holes, congestion? Here's how!

Voters hold key to road improvement

Think you'll live to see the day when the county roads in Oakland county are free of those long familiar bone-jarring chuckholes and interminable rush-hour traffic jams?

If you have a life expectancy of ten years or more . . . and if you want good roads enough, it's a real possibility!

Working closely with the planning division of the Oakland County Road Commission, the Citizens Research Council of Michigan has charted a concentrated 10-year improvement program that will qualify 99.7 percent of the county's road mileage as "adequate" under state standards.

That's a tremendous leap forward in anyone's book. At the end of 1974, only 21 percent of the county road system's 2,388 miles of roads rated as adequate.

The program calls for significant improvements for every type of road in the system, as follows:

Primary Roads

- Widen to four or five lanes the 50 miles of primary roads that are presently critically congested and another 50 miles of primary roads considered likely to become critically congested in the next five to ten years.

- Pave the approximately 100

miles of unpaved primary roads in rural areas.

- To keep abreast of surface deterioration (chuckholes!) on presently paved primary roads, resurface about 50 miles of these each year.

- Spend \$1 million a year for the ten years to improve (flair, signalize where necessary) inter-sections on the primary road system.

Local Roads

- Pave 340 miles of "mile-type" local roads.

- Remaining mileage of local roads to be gravelled periodically, with emphasis on correcting base and drainage problems.

Subdivision Streets

- The road commission would budget \$4 million a year for the 10 years as its matching share of cost for paving 400 miles of the present 547 miles of inadequate

subdivision streets in unincorporated areas.

Five years ago, the road commission took stock of its existing road needs and of those that might be expected to develop in the 20 years between 1970 and 1990. Best estimates at the time put a price tag of \$1.8 billion on meeting existing and anticipated road needs for the 20 year period. That figures out to an average of \$89 million a year for Oakland County roads — exclusive of city and village streets!

Obviously impossible. The road commission knew it. So did Citizens Research Council when it studied the problem in 1973 and 1974.

But one fact struck Research Council consultants. Fully two-thirds of the road needs for the 20 years were needs that were here and now in 1970 — urgent existing needs.

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OAKLAND ROADS

1974 ANNUAL REPORT



HORSES? NO: BIKES. TRANSIT? YES

But don't abandon car yet

The horse and buggy may not return to popularity, but you may be relying more on the bicycle, bus and transit train for trips you used to make by car.

Blame it on that worldwide energy crisis that suddenly shattered our complacency in 1973.

According to the experts, your lifestyle and your pocketbook are in for changes — for the worse.

For openers, soaring gasoline prices, a nationwide speed limit of 55 miles per hour, and periodic uncertainty about home heating.

And there's more.

Those rising gasoline prices and the lowered speed limit are the result of a national policy to restrict use of petroleum products so as to reduce our reliance on foreign oil sources.

But people must be moved, energy crisis or no. If not exclusively by car, how?

One proposal likely to mater-

ialize is public transit. Don't expect it to be a total solution, however. It doesn't pretend to be. At best, transit will supplement — not replace — the car. It will be costly to create and operate in relation to its somewhat limited benefits.

For example, a public transit system proposed for our seven-county area of southeast Michigan carries an estimated price tag of \$2.5 billion. That's billions — not millions! Yet at its peak capacity sometime after 1990 it will accommodate only about 7.6 percent of all trips.

So, transit or no, the car will remain our primary standby.

But the implications of it all won't exactly make your day.

It all figures to cost you more for gasoline, for construction and operation of public transit, and for the roads that your car and transit buses will share.

In this Issue. . .

Almost everything you've ever wanted to know about Oakland county roads. Their future, how they fit into your future transportation needs, how they will fare with the coming public transit — page one.

Meet some interesting people who work at the Oakland County Road Commission — page four.

Your chance to talk back to the road commission. See questionnaire — page eight.

Was last winter really worse, or was it your imagination? — page five.

Latest on county's oldest un-built road — Northwestern highway — page eight.

First report of an independent financial audit ever published in an Oakland Road Commission annual report — page six.

Award-winning road commission — page two.

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