

editorial opinion

Stop light long overdue at lethal intersection

Tucked away on the border between Farmington Hills and Southfield is a deceptively quiet intersection—Ten Mile and Inkster.

But a ride through the intersection by suburban residents could prove dangerous, if not fatal. Such was the case for a 35-year-old woman two weeks ago who was killed at that very intersection.

Statistics over the last three years show the intersection is a hazard. Farmington Hills police report 21 accidents since 1974. Southfield police report 22 accidents have occurred on their side of the intersection.

Yet, the corner is only policed by a blinker light—red for Inkster traffic, yellow for Ten Mile traffic.

Oakland County Road Commission officials say it could be another one to two years before a stop light is installed at the corner.

THAT'S RIDICULOUS.

A primary responsibility of government is to provide for the health, safety and welfare of its people.

A stop signal should be installed by the time the snow flies.

Regrettably, officials say this is impossible because of the construction costs and red tape involved between the City of Southfield and the county road commission. Ten Mile is under coun-

ty jurisdiction and Inkster under Southfield's jurisdiction.

Farmington Hills officials have been disgruntled with the accident rate at the intersection and say they would be willing to foot part of the bill just to get a stop light installed.

Government has to learn to respond, quickly. A stop light should have been installed a long time ago. The accident rate has increased dramatically each year.

IF GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRATS find it too much to install a stop light, other measures should be taken to make the intersection safe.

•The highly wooded areas obstructing drivers' view on each corner should be cut down.

•Warning signals should be installed to adequately alert drivers that they are entering a dangerous intersection.

•Police agencies should patrol the intersection so cars are made to slow down along the route.

•Spending priorities should be changed by the governmental bodies involved so funds are made available to get the necessary construction going as soon as possible.

A nuisance for government officials it will be, but it's time action was taken before any other persons are killed or maimed.

STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor



The Ten Mile and Inkster intersection has proven to be a dangerous one for drivers. (Staff photo)

Detroit'll give up Rouge but take federal funds

What business is it of a smart-aleck suburbanite, you may ask, if Detroit wants to practically give away one-third of that lovely Rouge Park?

It's their park, isn't it? If they want a federal solar institute there, isn't that Detroit's decision?

No, frankly it isn't Detroit's decision to make alone. We suburbanites, both as regional citizens and Americans, have sound reasons to squawk at the Rouge Park shenanigans of Mayor Coleman Young's administration.

The politics of it all is Byzantine, so get ready.



Tim Richard

DETROIT. ITS mayor and council are offering 328 acres of Rouge Park to the federal government for \$1 to induce the feds to build a \$20 million solar research institute in the area.

Meanwhile, with the other hand, the Detroiters are asking the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation for \$4 million to buy 30 acres of riverfront property. The purpose is to make a chain park along the Detroit River from Belle Isle to the Renaissance Center.

The economics of it is pure hayseed. Detroit buys parkland in one part of the city and tries to give it away in another part. That imbecility would be purely Detroit's business if it were buying the riverfront land with its own property tax money.

But it's not using its own money. It wants to use federal money to buy the riverfront land, and that's where all the rest of us Americans come in. We must object.

DETROIT, we have been told at great length, is in tough shape, losing business and good residents and spawning nothing but problems. Everybody else ought to help out—so the theory goes.

The theory, unfortunately, doesn't work, and Detroit's thinking on parks is an elaborate case in point.

Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority (HCMA) parks in its bailiwick. So HCMA collected proper-

ty taxes from Detroit and five counties, and proceeded to develop 10 metroparks in the hinterlands of the region.

In recent years, Detroit has changed its mind and has begun complaining that HCMA is siphoning tax money out of the big city and transplanting it to the boonocks. Bills appeared in the Michigan Legislature to force HCMA to develop something in Detroit.

HCMA's response was an offer to take over the operation of Belle Isle, there being no sizable chunks of land available to develop a new park and Belle Isle being a regional facility anyway.

TO MAKE A LONG story short, Detroit said no to the Belle Isle plan, just give us money.

HCMA isn't about to give away our tax money, so under pressure from the legislature it started negotiations on the riverfront park idea.

Again Detroit's response was negative. Just write us a check, and we'll spend it, Detroit said. And Detroit went on to offer one-third of Rouge Park for \$1 and ask for \$4 million to acquire riverfront parkland.

It's pretty obvious Detroit's administration and council are less interested in parkland and high finance than they are in controlling money and controlling jobs—our money and their own municipal union's jobs.

As I said, the politics of it is Byzantine; the economics is hayseed; and as for municipal management—well, Detroit's a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to live there any more.

Will post office kiss & tell?

To the dismay of larger charitable organizations, Congress is seeking ways to tell you things you always wanted to know about the finance of charities but didn't know how to find out.

The House post office committee is working on legislation requiring charities using the mails to disclose in every solicitation some of their most sensitive financial information—the amount they spend to raise money and pay other operating costs.

The theory is that contributors should know what they are getting or not getting for their money. The legislation will provide some benchmarks for the public to prudently judge various organizations which are competing for the charitable dollar.

EXECUTIVES OF A number of well-known charities are wary. They feel that the legislation will hinder operations by raising costs and confusing the public, while failing to stop fast-buck artists who flaunt the law anyway.

The sponsors of the bill claim it wouldn't impose a vast new set of regulations on charities and wouldn't create a new bureaucracy. The proposed laws would be enforced by the United States Postal Service and would simply require charities to report in each solicitation how much of their contribution is actually spent on charitable work and how much on other fund-raising costs.

Nothing in the measure sets a limit on how much charities can spend for expenses, but its sponsors expect the charities with the lowest ratio of expenses to contributions would probably enjoy the greatest public support.

CONGRESS HAS WORRIED for a number of years how to police charitable contributions. Americans contribute \$26 billion a year to philanthropic causes.

While much of that is given to local institutions



by HANK HOGAN

such as churches and schools, billions of dollars are raised each year by broad appeal through the mail, on television and on radio.

A Senate investigation in 1974 disclosed a number of cases in which donors and beneficiaries appear to have been short-changed.

One group raised \$10 million over 10 years to help asthmatic children, but spent only 15 cents of each dollar on the children's behalf.

There was also a group of missionary fathers in Baltimore who raised millions of dollars through nationwide fund-raising sweepstakes but apparently very little was spent for overseas missions.

THE CHARITIES retort that they should be required to supply the information only to those who are really interested. To do more would increase the cost of raising money.

They also claim that some fund-raising techniques are appropriate for one organization but are entirely inappropriate for another.

A massive, broad appeal is more expensive than door-to-door solicitation by volunteers, but it is difficult to raise money for problems like alcoholism, epilepsy and venereal disease on a door-to-door basis.

What it boils down to is that some charitable organizations are designed to help the less fortunate but others exist to give their staffs jobs.

If the cost of raising money is more than half of that collected, the wrong charity is benefiting.

It looks as though Congress is on the right track this time.

Traditional business districts keep pace with times

One of the most important but least recognized factors that affects the character of individual suburbs in which we live is the kind and texture of commercial development.

Livonia, for example, is substantially affected in its basic character as a city by the fact that its two main commercial areas are shopping centers. Rochester, on the other hand, has a thriving main street and the atmosphere of a small, intimate town.

Two outstanding examples of excellence in commercial development in this area are the downtown shopping districts of Plymouth and Birmingham.

Both are based on the classical model of the downtown of a small town. Both are planned for diversity, intimacy and a wide range of human-scaled shopping and browsing activities. Both have as their core lovely parks. Kellogg in Plymouth and Shain in Birmingham.



by PHILIP H. POWER

And both downtown business merchant communities contribute much more than is commonly recognized to their parent cities' tax base. In Birmingham, for example, downtown businesses contribute an estimated 35 per cent of the total city tax revenue.

RECENT events, moreover, give strong indication that the downtowns of both Plymouth and

Birmingham will continue to evolve with the times.

In Plymouth, former mayor and city commissioner Harold Guenther earlier this week announced plans to rehabilitate the old brick building next to the railroad tracks on North Main into a modern restaurant mall, with the added possibility of a summer theater.

"The only hope for the future of Plymouth is to develop unusual businesses and shops that will attract people from all sections and put the city on the map again," Guenther said.

Plymouth contains only two square miles, with little room to develop an industrial tax base. What's worse, Plymouth's main industry, Daisy Air Rifle, moved to Arkansas some years ago.

"There was a time when Plymouth was known around the globe," Guenther explained, "when the Daisy Air Rifle was manufactured here. Now we must do something to bring back that sort of attention."

"So we have to turn to business. And I am hoping that in the proposed mall we will have the type of shops that advertise in national magazines and attract people—and mail—to us," Guenther added.

The Plymouth industrialist explained that he got the overall idea for his development strategy on a recent trip.

"On our recent trip to Williamsburg, Va., Mrs. Guenther talked me into going miles off the beaten path just to pick up an article she saw advertised in one of the specialty magazines. We could have such things right here in our city," Guenther said.

DOWNTOWN Birmingham has long been regarded as one of the finest, most diversified shopping areas in the entire state.

Recently, however, local merchants have become aware that further progress was necessary to continue to compete effectively with other developing shopping areas.

Working in the finest tradition of local self-help, a group of downtown Birmingham businessmen started meeting informally to develop ideas and begin the process of getting wide community support.

Improvement of parking, more flexible zoning regulations, and imaginative development of underused parcels of land, and a host of other ideas are on their minds.

Sparkplugged by Meyer Kershenbaum, whose family owns the Kay Baum shops, the group has already reached out and established linkage with the chamber of commerce, through its new executive director, James Zeder.

While nothing is in the formal stages, long-time Birmingham observers say the group represents one of the most positive forces seen in Birmingham in many years.

THE VIGOR and vitality of America has traditionally come from the business community in many important ways.

In two suburbs, much alike yet very different, we have two examples of the foresight and imagination of local businessmen, working to make their community better.

It's enormously encouraging, and I wish these men—and others like them throughout these suburbs—all the success they deserve.

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