

Barrier squabble continues in Lathrup Village

By CRAIG PIECHURA

The barricades won't be going down at the border of Southfield and Lathrup Village judging from the response Monday night by residents of both communities.

The Canterbury Gardens Homeown-

er Association and a group of residents of Wiltshire Street in Southfield have gone on record in opposition to the barricades — built more than 20 years ago by Lathrup planners — which separate the two cities and prohibit through traffic.

Last weekend Mrs. Ellen Gagliardi

of 17351 Wiltshire circulated a flyer throughout the Southfield subdivision urging residents to attend Monday's Lathrup Village council meeting and demand that the barriers be torn down. The flyer was headlined "Save a gallon of gas a week" and stated that gas is being wasted by detours made manda-

tory by dead end streets. However, the unusually large crowd that turned out for the Monday meeting was predominantly pro-barricade — even though most of those in attendance lived in Southfield.

In an informal show of hands, about five persons raised their hands indicating that they would like to see the barriers removed, while approximately 25 raised their hands to show that they want the barriers kept.

"Taking down the barriers would open up the neighborhood to a considerable amount of traffic," said Steven Keys of 17255 Roseland, Southfield. "I'm not a Lathrup resident but for our protection and for the safety and integrity of our neighborhood, we don't want Lathrup to tear down the barricades."

Nearly three-quarters of the audience clapped loudly after Keys spoke and others spoke up in support of his position.

Likewise, most of the audience doubted Mrs. Gagliardi's figures estimating that "100,000 gallons are wasted yearly" due to the detours caused by barricades.

"There is a federal law right now that gas lights in front of our homes must go out," said Mrs. Gagliardi. "We are told to take shorter trips and fewer trips. I can make much shorter trips without the barricade. I now must

drive three-quarters of a mile to get to Southfield Road which is a block-and-a-half away. And the traffic on this circuitous route I must drive is horrendous."

LATHRUP MAYOR Richard Cogger, who's been on the city council for 21 years, said he'd heard all the pro and con arguments about the barrier before — except the energy angle.

He said that the favorable reaction from Southfield residents over the barriers is typical, although usually not as overwhelming as Monday night's response.

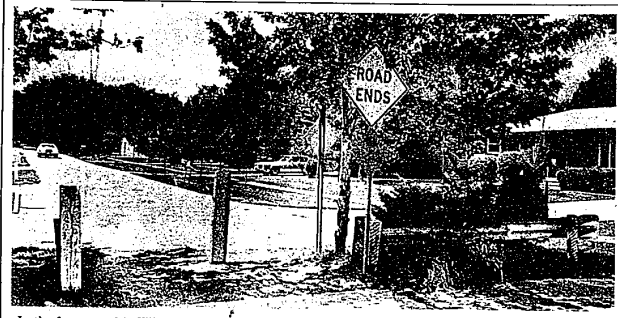
"Most of the streets were never opened," Cogger said. "The border between the two cities has never been completely open. On one or two streets we allowed traffic on them part of the time Twelve Mile was undergoing construction. The space between Wiltshire was opened so fire engines could go back and forth."

Southfield Mayor Donald Fracassi remembers very well when the barricades weren't open during the Twelve Mile construction. During that time his party store burned down, and Fracassi blames the barriers for the slow response time by fire officials.

"I'm opposed to the barriers, personally, on the standpoint of public safety," Fracassi said. "It was really hot about it for a while. We in the city, of course, feel barricades are not necessary in any case."

But Fracassi also admitted that he is probably in the minority among Southfield and Lathrup residents who live near the barricades.

"There's almost an equal amount of those who'd like to tear them down and those who want to keep it up," Fracassi said. "A lot of the people who live around there like the uniqueness of the lack of traffic for their children."



In the foreground is Wiltshire Street in Southfield. In the background is Wiltshire Street in Lathrup Village. And never the twain shall meet if the majority of residents from both sides who spoke Monday night at a council meeting have their way. (Staff photo)

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