

# Suburbia In '70s: Tribalism Vs. The Metropolis

By TIM RICHARD

It's hardly news to say that the suburbs will continue to grow in the 1970s.

What will be news will be the changes in your life. These changes will be more profound than making a bigger income, doing more traveling, paying higher taxes. To your government the changes will be far more complicated than just building more streets and sewers and schools.

In 1970 in the suburbs will see:

- A subtle trend toward metropolitan approaches to public problems, although "metro government" is probably a long way off.
- A growth of "tribalism" at the residential level.
- New freeways which will, at one and the same time, bring us closer to Detroit and make us more independent.
- A new cultural force - the community colleges - which will make our area more sophisticated and increasingly affect our politics.

### Multi-Town Approaches

ON THE SURFACE, your hometown government may appear to change little during the 1970s.

True, Redford Township may become a city; the two Plymouths might merge, and the Farmington area will either see a new city formed from the township or a consolidation.

In terms of actual governmental services, however, your city or township or school district will almost certainly continue to become weaker as these suburbs become more economically integrated into the Detroit metropolitan area.

Your sewer and water services already come from a regional utility. Your police department will still carry the city or township's name, but its officers will be trained in regional

schools, and its operations will be tied in to regional computer systems and cooperative pacts.

Your city councilmen or township trustees will go through the motions of passing a local zoning ordinance, but they will actually be responding to the grandiose plans of the State Highway Department and private developers who are getting their ideas from metropolitan plans.

If your municipality has a downtown, it will become an area of specialized shops and will be dwarfed by giant regional shopping centers.

Your city council may appear to be dealing with your trash problem, but it will be making deals on a multi-town or even multi-county basis, because there simply will be no more room for a dump within your municipality's boundaries, as, in fact, there is none in some now.

What you think are the biggest environmental problems of our era—air and water pollution—will not be handled by your town at all, but by county and regional agencies.

Your hometown has already been long out of the health business and will stay out.

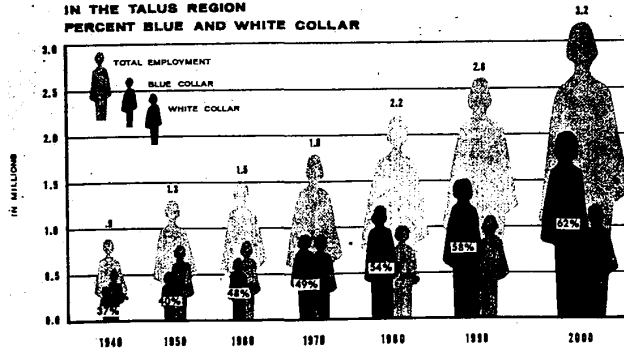
Your area's intellectual tone will be set not by the local high school, local theater group or local orchestra, but by the community colleges.

Your local board of education's discretionary powers, already small, will diminish even more. There will be regional boards, stronger regional approaches to special education, probably regional technical high schools, possibly regional bargaining with teachers' unions.

Your municipal fathers make many decisions today on the basis of the effect on the property tax base. But the importance of the property tax will decrease. Gov. Milliken has already proposed wiping out the local school tax and the substitution of a statewide property tax; and your city fathers are asking for even more state and federal aid.

Thus, your institutions will still be there, but their powers and their room to maneuver will be reduced, and regional

## EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN THE TALUS REGION PERCENT BLUE AND WHITE COLLAR



WE'RE BECOMING A WHITE COLLAR working force, and the 1969-70 period will mark a major change. For the first time in the region's history, the number of white collar workers will exceed the number of blue collars. (Data: TALUS)

agencies will do the actual job.

One such agency is the seven-county Huron-Clinton parks authority. Another is the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority. Still others are county governments and intermediate school districts.

One of the most important will be the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). It will probably not become a "metro government" in the 1970s or '80s—indeed, it may never become that.

But SEMCOG is either already doing or will do regional planning, regional police training and coordinating, regional computer services for your home town, regional bus services (through SEMTA), regional approving of federal grants to your town, perhaps regional air pollution controls...

You may continue to think of Detroit as a central city and your town as a suburb. Actually, Detroit and 400 other local governments will be part of a giant metropolitan complex—partners, not mother and children.

It will be difficult for us as a newspaper to cover, difficult for you as a reader to comprehend. But it is coming. We're part-way there now.

### The Tribal Revolt

THERE IS A STRONG cross-current running against the tide of metropolitanism, bigness and order. This opposition is commonly called "community-ism" or, more scientifically, "tribalism," to borrow a term from Marshall McLuhan.

It is part of a world-wide revolution against forces that can't be seen or touched—a revolt against colonialism, internationalism, even nationalism. Nigeria has been torn apart, India was never put together, and some experts think the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics can't stay tightly glued for long. Says Time Magazine ("The Next Decade," Dec. 19):

"Sociologists agree that more and more people probably will share the hippie's quest for new free-form, intimate social groups. The swinging-single apartment houses and the sedate, self-contained villages for the retired ... may prove to be the models for other communal forms. There may be such things as occupational communes, and different age groups may emulate the old in banding together in Yankee-style collectives."

Thus, while people in Plymouth know in their heads they're part of the same metropolitan area as Madison Heights, and the people of West Bloomfield have the same intellectual feeling toward Garden City, in actual practice those folks rarely see each other. They think metropolitan, but they feel tribal.

It does not follow, however, that this tribal feeling will strengthen city and township home rule. The home rule concept has been too irreversibly weakened to have a rebirth.

Rather, it means that community groups will ignore municipal boundaries—sometimes crossing them, more often existing without them.

The community groups may be formed around a housing project, such as a subdivision or an apartment complex; they may owe their loyalty to a single high school, such as North Farmington, even if the adult residents never graduated from it; a neighborhood shopping center can even serve to identify the community.

While metropolitanism will breed its own backlash movement of tribalism, the tribal feeling itself will have one important limitation. No longer does a married couple buy one house and live there until they die; no longer does the bachelor or maiden lady stay at home with the parents a lifetime.

Instead there is mobility, and the social pressures seem to compel a couple to move from lovenest apartment, to small house, to big house, to condominium as their family needs change. The tribe is strong, but it has a quick turnover.

### New Freeways Coming

THE WESTERN SUBURBS—what we call Observerland and the areas to the south—have tended to feel more independent of Detroit compared to such areas as Southfield, Birmingham, Royal Oak or Warren. With the exception of the north part of Farmington, most of Observerland has poor connections with Detroit. The roads carry

local traffic and are tedious for crosstown or downtown trips.

This will change before 1975, and the work has already begun. The agent of this change will be the extension of the interstate highway system.

• A north-south leg called M-275 will run along roughly the Haggerty Road corridor from northwestern Oakland County almost to Monroe. Thus, western Farmington, Livonia and Westland and eastern Plymouth will be on a major Detroit bypass.

M-14, which comes halfway from Ann Arbor to Plymouth, is already being extended eastward along the Schoolcraft Road corridor. Thus, Plymouth (whose older residents still think of it as an isolated community and not part of the metropolis), Livonia and Redford Township will have direct expressway connections to Detroit and Ann Arbor.

Two major interchanges are in or adjacent to the Observerland area.

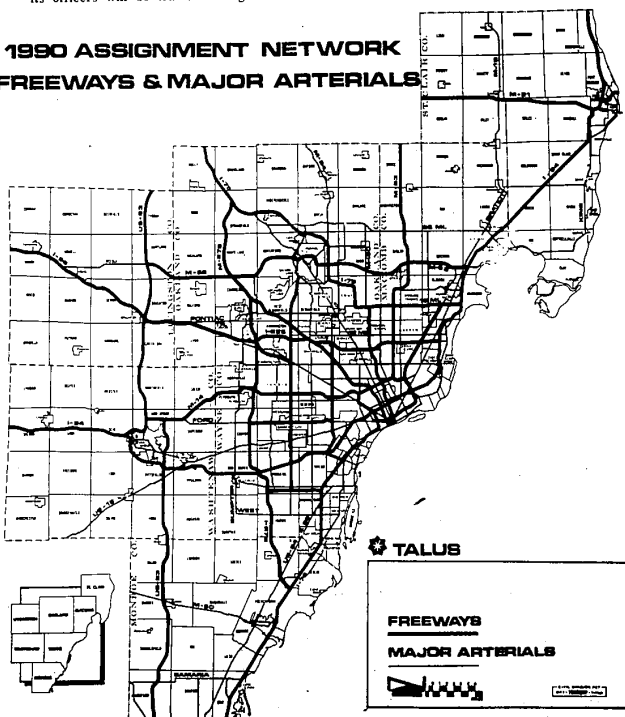
• I-96/I-696/M-275 will be in eastern Novi, just west of Farmington. TALUS projects this as the site of a potential "new town" of 75,000 to 100,000. Sears' new project in northwestern Farmington Township will be close to the interchange. So will that township's industrial park.

• M-14/M-275 will be in northeastern Plymouth Township. Already, office, apartment and commercial projects of various sizes are being talked up.

Two other highway projects are proposed by TALUS. One is a Ford Road expressway from M-275 to Telegraph Road, right through

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### 1990 ASSIGNMENT NETWORK FREEWAYS & MAJOR ARTERIALS



THE FREEWAY SYSTEM of southeastern Michigan should look like this by 1990. And by 1975, the M-275 freeway in the Haggerty Road corridor and the M-14 freeway in the Schoolcraft corridor should be completed.

For later years there are two other area projects—freeways in the Ford Road and Middle Belt Road corridors. (Source: TALUS)

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