

Saga of Northwestern remains a 'phantom highway'

By Mary Lou Callaway
special writer

For more than two decades, the mysterious question mark on the West Bloomfield Master Plan always has been Northwestern Highway — will it be built or not?

And today it remains the "biggest unknown" facing local planners, according to township planning director Frank Reynolds.

Planning commissioners, landowners and developers gathered recently in a work session to discuss this unresolved dilemma of the controversial highway extension west of Orchard Lake Road.

One planning commissioner called it

the "phantom highway."

All those attending the session saw it as the key to the development of the so-called "Golden Triangle," formed by the extension from Orchard Lake Road and bounded by Haggerty and 14 Mile roads, and areas beyond.

Since 1957, the extension of Northwestern Highway has faced a seasaw existence. The Oakland County Road Commission was contracted 24 years ago for the highway to be built all the way to U.S. 23 by the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation.

During this time, various court cases and protests against the highway have delayed action on a decision as to

whether the extension would be built.

Numerous alternatives have been proposed. The state highway department has reversed its decision on building the extension several times.

Although the path of the extension remains a part of the West Bloomfield Master Plan, no one is certain about its future.

CHRIS DOOZEN of Gerald Luedke and Associates Inc. of Detroit unveiled a consultant's analysis of the Northwestern alternatives, a 20-page chapter, plus maps, of traffic volume and circulation studies for those attending last week's work session.

Other reports still to come, Reynolds

said, are the impacts of land use, industrial traffic patterns, tax base, aesthetics, wetlands and sensitive environmental areas on the southwest township analysis.

The three alternatives under study in the agency are:

- No extension from the present terminus at Orchard Lake Road.
- Extension through the southwest of West Bloomfield to Haggerty Road to connect M-275 if or when that north-south roadway is ever built.
- Extension to Maple Road which will be a boulevard to Haggerty Road continuing to the proposed M-275 roadway in Commerce Township. M-275

would connect 275 near 12 Mile with I-75 near Davisburg.

Based upon existing and expected development patterns in West Bloomfield, according to Doozen, the effects of thoroughfare alternatives on regional traffic volume show:

- With no change, traffic will increase on all major roads.
- With Northwestern extended through to M-275, there would be no change on Middlebelt, Halstead and Walnut Lake roads. But traffic would increase on Farmington, Drake, Haggerty, West Maple and Pontiac Trail. Traffic would decrease on Orchard Lake and 14 Mile roads.
- With Northwestern extended to Maple, there would be no change on Middlebelt and Pontiac Trail. But traffic would increase on Farmington, Drake, Halstead, Haggerty, Maple and 14 Mile roads. Traffic would decrease on Orchard Lake and Walnut Lake roads.

Traffic would decrease on three roads with a Maple terminus and two roads with an ending point at Haggerty Road.

IS THE STUDY of either terminus economically academic? asked Sheila Oatley. She, along with several other persons in the audience, is a member of the various groups which have opposed the extension of Northwestern Highway for years.

Oatley said a state transportation representative told her "if Northwestern were approved tomorrow, there is no money for it."

She said "the \$90 million cost estimated when the highway plan was shelved is now estimated at \$140 million. Federal money is drying up. I suggest you deal with the economic reality."

Resident Janet Lynn said highway interchanges would expose the community to noise, pollution and misuse of beautiful residential land.

"Finish the master plan first. You're thinking of an expressway as stimulating growth," she said.

Reynolds said the state has nearly completed the M-275 environmental impact study.

Cancer campaign launched in area

April is Cancer Control Month, and once again Farmington and Farmington Hills residents will be visiting their neighbors with lifesaving information

about cancer while asking for contributions to assist in the control of the disease.

Mrs. Kathryn Patterson, Mrs. Sally

McKenny and Mrs. Pamela Stearns, Farmington and Farmington Hills chairpersons, will coordinate the efforts of 716 volunteers to raise their community goal of \$13,000. Last year's income was \$12,454.

The American Cancer Society's '81 fund-raising campaign theme "Pass the buck and share in the cost of living" will set the stage for 30,000 volunteers in Metro Detroit who will participate in the drive from April 26 through May 3.

The National Cancer Institute, an agency of the federal government.

The Society's investment has grown steadily from \$1 million in 1945 to more than \$45 million today. In Michigan alone, ACS will invest \$1.9 million for research projects at Wayne State, Michigan State and the University of Michigan. In addition to the 712 grants awarded, ACS has approved another thousand project proposals.

However, the extra funds aren't available," Victor said. He estimates that it would require \$97 million to put all these projects into operation.

Additionally, the ACS in Metro Detroit spends another 16 cents of each dollar on educational programs designed to inform the public about cancer prevention and treatment. Nine cents of each dollar is allotted for the continuing education of medical persons to assure that health-care providers are aware of the latest advances in cancer management. Programs and services for patients receive 19 cents of every dollar to provide medical supplies, rehabilitative services and counseling.

obituaries

LEO DUDAS

Mr. Dudas, 57, of Farmington Hills died March 28 in Providence Hospital, Southfield.

He was art director for Detroit Diesel Allison. He served with the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and Korea. He was a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles and the V.F.W.

Survivors include his wife, Frances; sons, Roy and Richard; daughters, Theresa McCann and Deborah; parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dudas, sister, Irene Kotowski; one grandchild.

Services were April 1 at McCabe Funeral Home and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, Farmington with the Rev. Thomas Beahan officiating. Burial

al was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery Southfield.

FLORENCE SHARPLEY

Mrs. Sharpley, 84, of Farmington Hills died April 11.

She was a retired librarian with the Christian Science Reading Room, Redford.

Survivors include her daughter, Betty Bohme; three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Services were April 14 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with reader Jean Robinson of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Farmington, officiating. Burial was in Old Redford Cemetery, Redford.

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A question that's sure to be raised again is "Where's it all going?" ACS, along with a number of research institutions, is frequently challenged on the use of its funds.

BERNARD VICTOR, campaign chairman, said the society welcomes the opportunity to clear up misconceptions. Victor said that the most common is that ACS is funded by the United Foundation. The Society doesn't receive support from UF or the government. Its programs are entirely subsidized by private contributions.

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the National Cancer Institute, an agency of the federal government.

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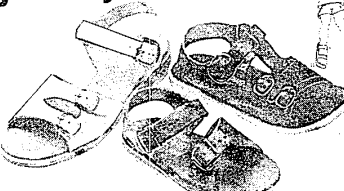
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