

Drake Road barricade won't block fire trucks

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

A temporary road will allow emergency vehicles, especially from the Farmington Hills Fire Department, to get down a barricaded Drake Road during the 12 Mile Road boulevard and widening project.

"I'm disappointed the county didn't notify us," said fire Chief Richard Marinucci. "But I guess with progress there's some inconvenience."

Drake Road — at 12 Mile and 13 Mile — was barricaded Monday, Oct. 1 — without notice to the fire department — to make way for work on the intersection of Drake and 12 Mile, Farmington Hills assistant city manager David Call confirmed.

But Call also said that the closing may have been premature because work didn't start at the intersection until this week. The widening and boulevard project on 12 Mile, between Farmington and Drake roads, is being administered by the Oakland County Road Commission.

The closing concerned some firefighters because fire headquarters, station 4, is on Drake between 12 and 13 Mile.

"It definitely is going to affect response time. If you want to fix a road, there are going to be some changes," Marinucci said. "Unless there is an unbelievable emergency, we will not be using the subdivisions (along Drake, north of 12 Mile)."

THAT'S WHAT the temporary road is for. The temporary access was set up the day after Drake, north of 12 Mile, was barricaded. But under no condition is the access to be used by the public.

"It's just for fire and emergency vehicles only," Call said.

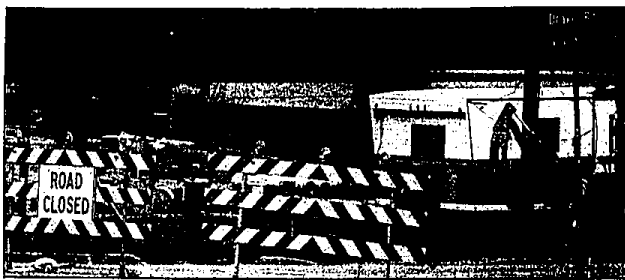
The intersection of Drake Road and 12 Mile will be elevated by about two feet. "The pavement is being removed," Call said.

Drake Road south of 12 Mile has been closed since the summer because of work on the thoroughfare, including drainage and elevation of the intersection, Call said.

The mile-long stretch of boulevard is expected to be open by the end of the year. The two-lane road will be widened to two lanes in each direction and will feature a boulevard median. The eastbound lanes are complete, as are driveways for abutting businesses. Crews are working on the westbound lanes now.

This is the first \$4.5-million phase in a three-phase project to improve 12 Mile between Farmington and Haggerty roads. A \$3.2-million grant from the Michigan Transportation Economic Development Fund will help finance the first phase. The city will pay the difference. The county is providing in-kind services such as inspections for the project on the county road. The city is also picking up other costs, such as right-of-way acquisition.

THE SECOND phase, Halsted to Haggerty, is sched-



This barrier across Drake Road at 12 Mile surprised Farmington Hills fire officials. Fire headquarters are on Drake Road, between 12 and 13 Mile. Until the Oakland County Road

Commission put in a temporary road, fire officials were concerned about getting emergency vehicles through. Drake at 13 Mile is also closed.

be financed with a grant from the Michigan Transportation Economic Development Fund.

The third phase, Drake to Halsted, however, is not eligible for a similar grant because there is no development along that stretch. The other two phases received grants based on the development along 12 Mile and the need to provide access.

"Unfortunately there are no funds available," Call said, referring to the third phase. "We're still looking at other funding methods. But a decision probably won't be made until late 1991, early 1992."

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