



# **FREMONT** Michigan

*“NOW AND ALWAYS - A Fine City • A Great Community”*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Date: January 21, 2005  
Contact: Chris A. Yonker, City Manager  
Contact Phone: 231-924-2101

### **FREMONT TO HOLD TRANSPORTATION FORUM**

The City of Fremont announced today that it would sponsor a “Transportation Forum” to be held on Monday January 31<sup>st</sup>. The event will be held in the Community Room of the Fremont Area District Library from 7-9 PM. The forum is open to the general public.

#### **THE CITY’S GROWTH**

Traffic – we all tackle it every day. To some of us it is just a minor irritation; to some, major frustration. While it can be viewed as an indicator that Fremont is a healthy and growing community, it can also be seen as having a negative influence on the community’s already high quality of life. Sometimes, having too much of good thing can be a bad thing.

Over the years, the City has attempted to address some of the community’s traffic concerns. Capital improvement projects such as widening streets, adding turning lanes, upgrading signalization, enlarging intersections and systematically reconstructing the 30+ miles of streets have helped improve both traffic flow and safety. But more needs to be done.

#### **FREMONT’S “ROADBLOCKS”**

Fremont’s physical layout has a profound effect on how traffic flows through and around the community. It is primarily a lineal town, running more east/west than north/south. State Trunkline M-82 functions as both the main traffic artery and as the Main Street in Downtown. However, there are three physical obstacles that prevent traffic from running the entire length of town on anything other than M-82:

1) Fremont Lake; 2) Gerber Memorial Hospital; and 3) Gerber Products Company.

#### **TRAFFIC IMPACTS ON NEIGHBORHOODS**

These “roadblocks” act to funnel most of the community’s traffic onto M-82, leading to very heavy traffic loads. This heavy traffic then leads to increased accidents, speeding to make up for lost time, and if driver frustration is too high, then the use of alternate routes around town. These “alternate routes” most often are through residential areas, such as Pine, Oak, Maple, Division, Lake and Elm Streets. None of these alternate routes were ever intended to serve as anything more than access streets to individual residential properties.

#### **TRAFFIC IMPACTS ON DOWNTOWN**

Downtown Fremont must endure the traffic, noise and disruption of over 1,000 trucks each day. Total traffic loads, including trucks is now approaching 25,000 vehicles per day. From the standpoint of a Downtown retail business owner, it would seem to be desirable to have as much traffic as possible going past their storefront. But there comes a point when that traffic level is too high and drivers chose alternate routes to bypass Downtown and pedestrians no longer feel safe crossing Main Street and shop elsewhere. The City Council believes that we need to get Fremont back to the way it was meant to be – an attractive, safe and pedestrian-friendly community with that famous small-town charm.

## **PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH**

The recently adopted Joint Fremont Area Community Development & Growth Management Plan prepared by the City and Dayton & Sheridan Townships devoted an entire chapter to Transportation. As part of developing that Plan, the planners distributed a community opinion survey to every household in the study area. Of the respondents, 86% felt that traffic was a serious problem. A similar response came from a community-visioning workshop, where participants ranked traffic concerns as the number one negative of the community.

In order to address these traffic concerns, the City retained the services of a professional transportation planning/engineering firm. Last year, the consultants completed an exciting project to study the way vehicular traffic moves around our community. They reviewed traffic patterns to and from various destinations within the City, as well as the flow of traffic using M-82 as it passes through the City. The results of this Origin & Destination Study are now in and the City has asked the traffic consultants to present their findings in an open forum.

## **PURPOSE OF FORUM**

The Transportation Forum is intended to not only present the results and recommendations of the Origin & Destination Study, but also to discuss other “tools” in the traffic management toolbox that could be used to address Fremont’s transportation challenges. Because of the complexity of the transportation network, there is no single “fix” to the problems. It will require the use of many different techniques to ensure that the community’s residents and visitors can safely travel both to & from and within Fremont. These might include “tools” such as:

- Management of access to properties (such as reducing the number of driveways, especially in the commercial areas)
- Improvement of intersection design & traffic control devices
- Use of traffic calming techniques in residential neighborhoods impacted by current cut-through traffic
- Design & installation of a way-finding signage system throughout town, especially in the Downtown
- The review of the City’s sidewalk network & the establishment of new walks in key area to allow safe pedestrian access to popular destinations, such as Downtown, the schools, the lakefront, etc.
- The continued extension of the new Town & Country Path network to offer an alternative to vehicles
- Establishing truck routes on both the north & south sides of town to get them out of the Downtown & neighborhoods and to increase their efficiency to service our businesses & industries

While not a public hearing, the City Council and Planning Commission are interested in the community’s comments on the above traffic management techniques and to hear of other transportation issues and/or suggestions on how to improve traffic flow throughout Fremont.

###