

PRESS & GUIDE

Stimulus funds may go to Michigan Ave. work

By Jason Carmel Davis, Press & Guide Newspapers

January 28, 2009

DEARBORN - For some time now, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) officials have said the funding may not be available for much-needed repairs on Michigan Avenue in West Dearborn.

However, recent political changes have some believing additional funding may be available in the near future that would lead to the stretch of Michigan Avenue between Washington and Brady being repaired sooner than later.

During a Dearborn City Council briefing session earlier this month, MDOT officials said a portion of the funding in President Barack Obama's proposed economic stimulus package could go toward fixing the pothole-ridden portion of Michigan Avenue sometime this year. Obama on Friday said it appears the U.S. Congress is on target to approve a massive new stimulus package by Feb. 16.

Additional funding could come from another source, according to Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly, who said he's pleased with the latest developments, as MDOT in the past said it would not get to the Michigan Avenue work until as late as 2014.

"We told them, 'no, that's not good enough'," O'Reilly said Thursday. "So, we're glad these new options have come about."

Late in the summer of 2008, MDOT crews came to Dearborn to perform some much-needed repair to the pothole-addled area of Michigan Avenue in West Dearborn. MDOT Spokesperson Rob Morosi said MDOT would make substantial repairs to Michigan Avenue in the West End of Dearborn that will last until the road can be fully reconstructed, which will come in 2010, he said.

Those substantial repairs consisted of taking out all the old coal patches in the road and putting in a hot, mixed-asphalt base; but those repairs weren't good enough, according to O'Reilly.

O'Reilly had said the patchwork that has been done isn't what he expected and that he wants MDOT to come back to add to what has been done.

Morosi Friday said MDOT crews would return to the area in spring 2009 and that the next phase of repairs would take "several weeks" to complete.

"We have every intention of coming back out and doing a more permanent repair job than we did," Morosi said. "A lot of that depends on the amount of funding that is available."

The last time the section of Michigan Avenue was completely reconstructed was in the early 1980s, according to MDOT. In 2003, MDOT did an overlay between Evergreen and Greenfield roads. The road was reconstructed in the same area in 2003 and 2004.

Morosi said the Michigan Avenue project is a priority to MDOT and the region. He also said funds from the economic stimulus package may be available for the job. Morosi said the complete rebuild of Michigan Avenue would cost between \$15 million and \$20 million.

"That is something that is being considered, but it's not definite," Morosi said.