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Challenge Of The 1970s Building Upon Existing Blocks

By Our Staff

Looking into the future is risky at best but reasonable projections can be made by analyzing existing conditions, current trends and events of the past decade.

A preview of the '70s for the entire Farmington Area indicates the brakes will be applied during the first half of the decade. Beyond 1975, the picture is unclear.

There will be development and growth, of course, but not as rapid as the boom of the '60s. The latter part of the decade will see the beginning of a "new" growth—developments unknown to the '60s and affected by mass transit, new towns around Farmington, high-rise construction, and entirely new land use planning concepts.

REGIONAL PLANNERS do not foresee any immediate "new growth" for the Farmington Area. Instead, during the '70s Farmington will be building upon what it has.

Studies made by the Transportation and Land Use (TALUS) planners indicate Farmington will not become involved in any burst of fresh growth. Instead, Farmington's future challenge is to "improve the trend."

"Improving the trend," as defined by TALUS, means Farmington must weed out the undesirable developments, improve existing facilities, and better develop what it now has. During the '60s a definite trend of growth was established. The challenge of the '70s is to enrich that trend.

There will not be any boom in the '70s because there are not any large tracts of vacant land available in the Farmington Area for development.

THE BIGGEST ADDITION will probably be the Sears shopping center planned for the northwest part of the township. Pullie may develop a planned residential community, but that may not happen until after 1975.

The township has a new "planned residential district" (PRD) zoning ordinance which envisions a new way to build subdivisions. But there are no more than two tracts of land left which are adequate for a PRD development.

The industrial park will be expanded, but the industrial growth in the '70s will not be as great as it was in the '60s. Toys department store will be completed on Orchard Lake Rd.

There probably will not be any major residential subdivisions built soon. As long as tight money conditions remain, high mortgage costs will preclude a great number of people from buying new \$80,000 homes. Developers will be wary of sinking investments into new subdivisions without an availability of customers to move in.

Most of the residential development in the 1970s will be multiple housing, primarily of the townhouse variety. After 1975, there might be a beginning of high-rise multiples—in the downtown Farmington district and near regional shopping centers in the township.

BY THE END of the decade, all of the mile roads should be paved and Orchard Lake should be paved and widened to four lanes from north to south. Advance will also be made on paving residential streets in the township.

Farmington Township will obtain cityhood before 1975, although the City of Farmington Hills may only be half of the present township area.

Cityhood will signal the beginning of a number of services in the residential subdivisions such as paved streets, municipal garbage service and a DPW.

By the end of the '70s, the area's population will exceed 75,000. For the present city, population will climb to 12,000 before 1975 and level off. If the current annexation is accomplished, the city will reach a population of 50,000 by 1980. The township will grow to 45,000 in 1970 and 65,000 persons by 1980.

GERALD HARRISON, executive director of the Farmington Board of Commerce, agrees with the analysis that the '70s will basically be a continuation of the '60s in the Farmington Area.

"With the present zoning now in effect," says Harrison, "I would say the maximum in industrial development has now been reached in the Farmington Area."

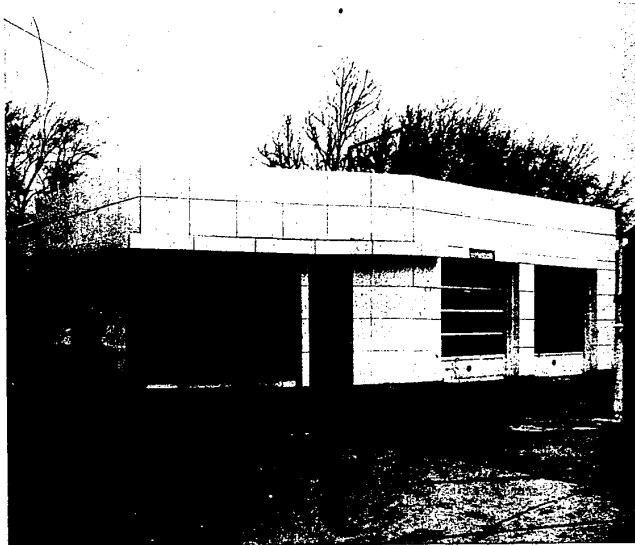
The undeveloped land at Drake and Grand River will develop early in the '70s. Sewer and water may be put in out there early next fall.

The acreage between Halstead and Old Grand River on both sides of the expressway will be developed by 1975 if the new expressway south of Hagerly (I-275) is not held up.

Farmington will not have as great a growth in the '70s, projects Harrison, "because percentage-wise we have just come through our greatest stage of development."

"I would guess in 1970 we would have 60% of our land developed. Even if we completely develop our land by 1980, we would still have only a 50% increase."

"I don't visualize anything very dramatic or new in the '70s. I see a continuation of what was started in the '60s. The actual growth in Farmington began in 1954. From 1954 to 1960 there was very little



DECADE'S CHALLENGE -- Regional planners and Farmington government officials see the challenge of the '70s as building upon and improving what now exists. An example which occurred in the late '60s is converting an

abandoned gas station into a modern florist shop. Much like Dogwood's undertaking of building a home out of the old red barn, Farmington in the '70s will be building new faces. (Evert photos)



industrial development because the major thrust of the city and township governments was not particularly interested in that kind of growth.

What effect could mass transit have on Farmington? "I suppose it would depend on the type to be utilized," answers Harrison. "But if mass transit made it easy to get to the core city, it would be an asset to an area like Farmington."

AN EXPANSION in municipal services is foreseen by local historian Lee Peel.

"In the '70s, people will demand better services such as roads and sidewalks. There will be a continuing demand made for more and better services from governmental agencies."

"Because the only way to provide these is with bigger taxes. I think property taxes will continue to gradually go up."

"In the next decade, Farmington is going to have a crisis of junk. The great problem will be what to do with waste as land becomes more scarce—there will be no place to dispose of trash."

The architecture of the '60s will change from the era of the planners. Homes will have to go up instead of out—and there will be a tendency toward no glass because of vandalism. People will withdraw more, and crime will increase before it is contained.

"Blacks will come to Farmington in the '70s—whites like it or not."

"The problems of the aged in Farmington will increase. There will have to be some impetus to help

the older people in Farmington in the next decade," Peel concludes.

WHAT CHALLENGES will the '70s have for the Farmington School District?

Probably not any serious challenges during the first half of the decade. But the housing picture seems destined to change, and that alteration will bring new challenges for schools.

As home prices rise, more and more pressure will be placed upon apartment owners to allow school age children. Within a couple of years, apartment restrictions will begin to relax and during the mid-70s families with school age children will begin moving into multiples.

This movement, if it occurs, will accelerate the number of school age children moving into Farmington and present demands for new school buildings.

WHAT DO THE '70s hold in store for Farmington? Continued growth at a less rapid speed for the next five years. Beyond 1975, a small spurt created by a relaxed economy.

The end of the decade could see the following introduced to the Farmington Area: mass transit; high-rise apartments; an integrated population; a new post office and library; a "downtown" strip along Orchard Lake; a fully developed northwest section; senior citizen housing; a completed urban renewal project in the southeast section; and a proposal on the Nov. 4, 1981 ballot to consolidate the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

today's hot line

what's inside

A Look Ahead

What will the '70s hold in store for the Farmington Area. For the city—redevelopment. For the township—cityhood. And for the schools—changes in methods. Our staff takes a look at the '70s and presents projections for each governmental unit in separate stories inside.

Pages 4-A, 6-A

Eat Too Much?

Eat too much over the holidays? If so, you are probably over the indigestion by now, but what about those extra pounds? A visit to the Farmington Community Center may help.

Page 4A

When To Vote

A proposal has been made to hold school elections on the same days in Oakland County. The suggestion is intended to result in more favorable votes on millage questions. A report on the plan, plus local implications, is given inside.

Page 5A

Director's Back

The Farmington Players have announced that the director for its winter production is an actor and director who was seen on the Players stage in the early '60s. Who is it?

Page 5B

60 - Year Marriage

A Farmington man and wife are celebrating 60 years of marriage with a dinner today. Their story and picture are in the women's section.

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upcoming

A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST as a black man graces the office of Wayne County Sheriff William Lucas, who is also black. A boyhood in New York's Harlem burns in his soul. A career as a teacher, an FBI narcotics and vice buster, deputy U. S. district attorney and first black undersheriff bolsters his confidence. A sense of purpose—to bridge the gap between urban blacks and suburban whites—whets his appetite for a first fling at politics. Read about it Wednesday in your home town newspaper.



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