

Roads, parks — capital priorities

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

'Both issues affect the whole community. We're talking about the quality of life.'
— William Costick
city manager



AT LEFT: Farmington Hills' new Heritage Park is located on the former Spicer Estate. The 212-acre parcel is rich in historic and natural features. There is a large home and farm buildings as well as fields previously under crop production. The remainder of the property is a natural area with examples of all the natural habitat existing in southeast Michigan — wetlands, meadows, woodlands and hardwood forests, according to the city's new master parks and recreation plan.

CITY MANAGER William Costick calls road improvements and parks and recreation development the "two significant areas" in the updated Farmington Hills capital improvement program.

"Both issues affect the whole community," Costick said. "We're talking about the quality of life."
The state-required, six-year plan is prepared and updated annually by the Farmington Hills Planning Commission. The plan provides city officials with a guideline, including priority listings and financing methods of proposed improvements in drainage, sanitary sewers and water mains, public facilities, sidewalks, transportation, equipment and parks and recreation.

"It requires us to sit down and analyze projects and to also do the budgetary and planning work," Costick said.

The upcoming 1986-87 fiscal year will be the third year the city has updated its improvement plan. "We always try to ensure the first year (of the six-year plan) of funding," Costick said. "Each year, you see a 20 percent change in project priorities and funding."

IN THE last few years, Costick said, the city has been doing "pretty well" in completing projects listed in the plan. "We change it, each year and try to improve on it."

In the still unapproved 1986-87 \$19.5 million budget, city officials are proposing to set aside 1.65-mills of the total proposed 9.8 mills for capital improvements. The 1.65-mills will finance 70 percent of proposed improvements in 1986-87.

The 1986-87 capital improvements budget will include the expenditure of \$614,000 for drainage; \$1.3 million for transportation; \$347,000 for public facilities; \$30,000 for sidewalks; \$100,000 for parks and recreation; and \$419,000 for equipment purchases.

One mill of the 1.65 mills is proposed specifically to finance \$2 million of a total \$9 million city share of a three-year road improvement program. Voters will then be asked to go to the polls Tuesday, Sept. 23 to consider financing the remaining \$7 million share of the road program with general obligation bonds over 10 years.

The city's major road improvement program identifies and lists in priority a total of approximately \$14 million of improvements. The city's share totals an estimated \$9 million. The accompanying proposed tax increase and bond issue addresses only the city's share.

CITY OFFICIALS expect that non-city costs will be financed by the

Oakland County Road Commission, other communities, such as Farmington, Novi and West Bloomfield Township, which share roads scheduled for improvements, and some highway grants.

Construction of the proposed projects in the road improvement plan has been spread over a three-year period, with the first set of improvements scheduled for the 1986-87 fiscal year.

The one mill in 1986-87 would generate \$1.2 million that would be combined with \$750,000 in the city's existing major road budget for a total \$2 million. The \$2 million would finance the city's share of projects scheduled for 1986-87. That would leave \$7 million of the three-year road program still to be financed.

If voters approve the requested 0.5-mill tax increase, only 75-mill 10-year bond issue, only 75-mill would be required annually to retire the debt, Costick said. But with a general obligation bond — issued on the full faith and credit of the city — officials can pledge whatever millage is required to retire the debt, even if it is above the city's 10-mill charter limit.

PARKS AND recreation development is considered as significant as proposed road improvements in the six-year plan.

In addition to the one-mill tax increase in 1986-87, voters also will be asked on Tuesday, June 24 for voter approval of a special 0.5-mill levy for five years to pay for development of parks and recreation facilities. As a special levy, the proposed 0.5-mill would not be included in the city's maximum 10 mills.

The proposed special levy is expected to garner in excess of \$3 million over the next five years to develop recreational facilities, including Heritage Park, the former Spicer property.

The remaining .65-mill (of the 1.65 mills for capital improvements) would finance other improvements suggested in the current year of the six-year plan. The \$805,000 in revenue generated from .65-mill will be added to \$500,000 in reserves to finance projects.

Farmington Hills property owners will pay a total of 10.3 mills this year. If council adopts the proposed \$19.5 million 1986-87 budget based on 9.8 mills (including 1 mill for roads and .65-mill for other capital improvements) and the 0.5-mill special park levy wins voter approval.

Improvements are grouped

Projects span 6 years

By Joanne Maliszewski
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Although Farmington Hills' capital improvements plan serves only as a guideline, projects are listed according to category and scheduled over a six-year period.

To qualify for the improvements plan, a project must cost at least \$25,000, require a substantial amount of public financing, address a major need of the city, and represent a public facility or physical improvement.

Despite six years worth of suggested projects in the plan, city officials — for the purpose of the 1986-87 proposed budget — are focusing on improvements suggested for the coming fiscal year.

Included in the 1986-87 proposed capital improvements plan and budget are the following projects listed according to category.

Knolls subdivision and office development on the north side of the state highway.

- Purchase of property on the southeast corner of Farmington Road and 13 Mile as the site for a major detention facility for the Minnow Pond Drain in the Kendallwood subdivision. The purchase would be financed over a five-year period.

- Continuing construction of the more than \$4-million Caddell Drain.
- Miscellaneous detention basin property acquisition and drain construction. These categories include smaller drain projects. City officials plan to purchase property for detention basins throughout the city.

- Drain construction includes storage facilities, pipe, and culvert enclosures and channel improvements.

- **SEWER-WATER**
 - Construction of a holding basin at Duncel Middle School, north of 12 Mile, that will also provide relief lines for Kendallwood subdivision.
 - Construction of a relief sewer on Eight Mile in Southfield to accommodate extra drainage generated by other facilities included in the Evergreen Farmington facilities drainage plan.
 - Construction of a relief sewer line to redirect all sewage flow from an existing sewer in Detroit. This project would fulfill a contract with the city of Detroit.

- **PUBLIC FACILITIES**
 - Renovation of Fire Station No. 3 at Wheeler and Independence. The project includes expansion of the garage and bay facilities.
 - Renovation of the existing police station into offices suitable for other city departments. Work would

include removal of the cellblock, removal of the sallyport and building of new counters and walls.

- **SIDEWALKS**
 - Construction of sidewalks to complete the mile section on the south side of 13 Mile from Farmington to Orchard Lake roads. The sidewalk would serve North Farmington High School, a nearby swim club and shopping area at Orchard Lake.

- **EQUIPMENT**
 - Purchase of Department of Public Works equipment, including replacement of a grader and a 10-yard dump truck.
 - Purchase of fire equipment. In 1986-87, city officials will initiate purchase of a new aerial ladder truck to be financed over a four-year period. A misquid truck with a midsize pumper will be purchased for fire station No. 3.

Also included in the six-year capital improvements program are the listings of projects suggested under the city's proposed road improvement program, and parks and recreation master plan.

The three-year road improvement would begin this year and include the following projects:

- Widening of Pebble Creek Bridge on 12 Mile, west of Inkster.
- Orchard Lake Road widening, 10 Mile to Grand River.

- Improvements to the 13 Mile and Haggerty intersection.
- Paving 13 Mile, from Drake to Halsted.
- Widening and resurfacing 14 Mile, from Orchard Lake to Farmington roads.
- Straightening the 14 Mile curve, near Inkster.

- Widening 13 Mile at Northwest corner always.
- Installation of traffic signals throughout the city.

PARKS AND recreation projects proposed in the 1986-87 portion of the capital improvements plan include a five-year action plan included in the city's master parks and recreation plan.

The projects include the following:

- Construction of a sports field — three soccer fields, two baseball/softball fields, fitness trail and picnic area — on the northeast corner of 13 Mile and Farmington roads.
- Upgrading 14 Farmington Public Schools sites, including grading and drainage of fields.
- Construction of storage buildings for youth athletic programs.
- Site development at Heritage Park, including park entrance, main road, gate, signs and landscaping.
- Development of nature, hiking and cross country ski trails and sledding hills in Heritage Park.
- Development of picnic areas, picnic shelters and playgrounds in Heritage Park.
- Development of native species arboretum in Heritage Park.
- Construction of a visitor center in Heritage Park. The center would include an interpretative center, meeting rooms, an office, a kitchenette, storage, restrooms, a small concession and an auditorium.

RENOVATION OF the Spicer estate house in Heritage Park is listed as one of the top nine priority projects in the master parks and recreation plan.

But according to the capital improvements plan, work on the historic house is not scheduled until 1987-88.

short takes

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news (item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to: Short Takes, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48324.

NEW IN TOWN
Linda and John Lynch have opened Uniglobe Arboretum Travel, Inc. in the new Arboretum Office Park, 34405 12 Mile, Farmington 48324.

With 350 agencies, Uniglobe is the largest and fastest-growing travel agency franchise in North America. It plans to expand operations to Europe this year.

Arboretum Travel is the first Uniglobe Agency in Michigan. Specializing primarily in corporate travel, Arboretum Travel has the ability to offer lower, more competitive rates on hotels and rental cars because of its affiliation with the Uniglobe Travel network.

The Uniglobe Travel video program is available to travelers can preview their vacation destination, including hotel rooms, prior to arrival. Videos include Hawaii, Mexico and cruises.

The agency is open 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays or by appointment. For more information, call 553-5555.

NEW POSITION
Emmy award-winning videotape editor Sheldon Brown was appointed technical operations supervisor at Grace & Wild Studios.

In the newly created position, Brown will edit videotape for Grace & Wild clients, and supervise the second unit of technical personnel at the Farmington Hills video production and postproduction facility.

Brown brings to Grace & Wild a technical background in broadcast television, most recently as videotape editor and supervisor of electronic field production for WDIV-TV, the Post-Newsweek-owned NBC television affiliate in Detroit.

Brown's appointment follows the company's recently announced plans to expand both its video production and postproduction operations by the end of the year.

TRAVEL SUMMIT
Angel Bakos of the Botstorf Inn in Farmington Hills attended the National Tour & Travel Exchange Association's third annual Spring Tour & Travel Exchange. The meeting, held April 20-23 at the Sheraton Walkill in Honolulu, was attended by 800 delegates from the United States, Canada and Mexico.

At the Spring Exchange, tour operators and travel industry suppliers met in a series of buyer/seller sessions to plan tour packages for 1986 and 1987.

Grace & Wild specializes in stage and remote production, film-to-tape transfers, multiformat editing, and graphics and special effects.

RIBBON CUTTING
Celebrating the grand opening of their new Farmington Hills store, Arbor Drugs Inc. held a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 16.

The Arbor of Farmington Hills store is at 29321 Orchard Lake. Farmington Hills city officials, city council members, as well as representatives of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, joined Don Sturdevant, Arbor vice president of store operations, and Nino Tazzini, store manager, in cutting the ribbon.

The store offers the ArborTech computerized pharmacy system, "Picture/Picture," and other Arbor merchandising features. It carries a complete line of Arbor products, including 1,000 private label items — vitamins, health and beauty aids and over-the-counter products.

The Michigan-based Arbor Drugs Inc., headquartered in Troy, operates 48 stores across southeast Michigan.

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