

Wednesday, December 31, 1969

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Township Trebles Services

By Our Staff

Farmington Township doubled in population during the 1960s but had a much larger increase in services to its residents.

Police and fire protection, water and sanitary sewer and other types of services about tripled during the decade.

THE TOWNSHIP'S population started booming in the late 1950s and continued through the '60s. About 20,000 more persons live in Farmington Township today than in 1960.

Almost as many persons that now live in Farmington Township moved into Farmington Township during the 1960s.

A great majority of the township's new residents came to make a home. Almost 90% of the township's residents own or are buying their homes.

The '60s did mark beginning of rental housing to Farmington Township. All the rental housing—Kendallwood Apartments, Independence Green and others—were built during the decade.

Nearing the end of the decade, the level of rental housing in Farmington Township is approaching the average for Oakland County. In 1960, practically no rental housing was available.

The equalized valuation of the township reflects the population increase of the decade. In 1960, the equalized valuation was about \$67 million. Now the figure is about \$195 million.

(Evert photo)

THE PERCENTAGE of industrial growth paralleled the population growth. The industrial equalized valuation jumped from approximately \$2 million in 1960 to about \$16.5 million now.

The main impetus to industrial development in the township was completion of a sanitary sewer arm in the southwest area.

The Tarabusi Sewer Arm, paid for by voted millage, allowed industrial development near Halstead and Grand River. The area, possession of which is now being disputed by the city and township, has an ultimate value of \$150 million.

Gerald Harrison, former superintendent of the Farmington School District and now executive director of the Board of Commerce, feels the voted millage to allow industrial development was one of the most important events during the decade.

"The thing that I see is somewhat singular about Farmington is that the township did tax itself for sewer and water so that the industrial park could be developed. If that had not been done, there would still be vacant land out there," Harrison says.

"This goes back to the Industrial Development Committee which was organized in the late '50s," Harrison adds. "A one mill tax was put on the ballot so that the Tarabusi Sewer Arm could be built. The taxpayers were saved some of this money when a federal grant was obtained to help finance the project."

Township Supervisor Curtis Hall agrees that the sewer arm and industrial development committee were important steps for the community's tax base.

"The township government was criticized for even appointing an industrial development committee," Hall recalls. "Some people didn't want any industry at all."

Hall says the township's voters approved the one mill levy for 20 years to pay for the sewer arm needed for the industrial park. While urging passage of the tax, Hall says he told voters the millage might be needed for only three to four years.

The industrial park began paying its way much sooner, and only 0.6 of a mill was levied for only two years to pay for the sewer arm.

THE TARABUSI Sewer Arm was only one aspect of the sanitary sewer and water projects completed in the township during the '60s. The township joined the Detroit water system and constructed the Farmington Interceptor Sanitary Sewer.

All totaled, between \$20-\$30 million was spent on water and sewer projects in the township during the decade.

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City Doubles, Expands

By Our Staff

In the '60s, the City of Farmington changed its complexion from the rural community of the '50s to a modern, booming, metropolitan suburb.

In 1960, the city had a population of 3,000 and was basically a rural village. The downtown area was served by local merchants—the general store, the meat market, the corner hardware. There were no shopping centers and only residents shopped in town.

By 1960, the city's 1.7 square miles were filled with 7,000 persons and the signals of change were already recognized.

DURING THE '60s, a "new" downtown was built in the City of Farmington, new subdivisions constructed, and an industrial belt located on the city's border.

By the end of the decade, the city's land area expanded to 2.6 square miles and is filled with an estimated 12,000 persons. But the actual growth of the city has been much greater during the '60s than land area and population figures indicate.

In 1960, the city's total assessed valuation was in excess of \$18 million. A 1960 State Equalized Valuation (SEV) factor of 1.13 provided a total equalized valuation of \$20.6

million. Equalized valuation broken down was: commercial, \$3,089,000; industrial, \$977,000; and residential, \$12,290,000.

In 1969, the city's total assessments were recorded at \$42.6 million. An SEV factor of 1.15 resulted in an equalized valuation of \$49 million. Equalized valuation broken down is: commercial, \$5,370,000; industrial, \$4,273,000; and residential, \$39,957,000.

These figures translated mean that in the past 10 years city's equalized valuation has increased 150%. After subtracting cost of inflation, the city's actual new growth increased by 125%.

THE POPULATION growth during the '60s was almost as projected; slightly higher because of apartment developments in the past 10 years. And that was part of the story of the decade. In the '50s, there were no apartment projects in the city. During the '60s about 600 apartment units were built.

The apartments resulted in a higher density of population in certain areas of the city than earlier anticipated, but the introduction of multiples is only a small part of the story of Farmington's growth during the '60s.

THE BIG STORY probably

was development of the downtown business district. Thirty new commercial enterprises were located including a 70,000 square-foot department store, Federal's, which opened in 1968. Nine hundred off-street parking spaces were provided in what is now the downtown center.

Also, municipal off-street parking facilities were added in the southwest and northeast quadrants of the business district for an additional 150 cars.

City offices moved into two new municipal buildings in the '60s. The new city hall was occupied in 1963 and the new DPW building and yard in 1962. The DPW building was expanded in 1968.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT part of the city's boom was industrial growth. Industrial assessed valuation was less than \$1 million in 1960 and jumped to \$4 million at present, a 400% increase.

During the decade the number of industrial firms grew from 20 to 85. The industrial belt was developed along Eight Mile, east of Farmington Rd. Industry also moved in along Nine Mile.

The two largest industrial firms to locate in the '60s were Mills Products with a 100,000 square-foot building and Chrysler Industries with a 80,000 square-foot building.

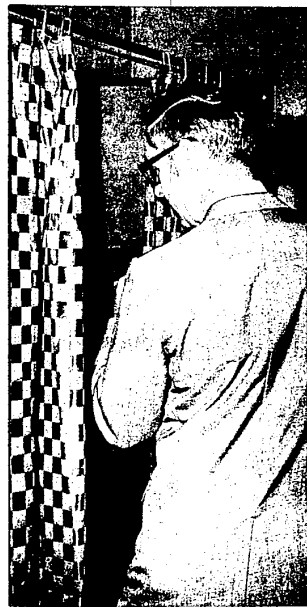
While industry boomed, the number of commercial firms rose from 90 to 186. Although primarily in the downtown area, some of the commercial development occurred along Grand River also.

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH may not have been dynamic as industrial and commercial, but during the '60s the number of residences increased by 70% in the city.

New subdivisions built in the city include Farmington Meadows, Farmington Oaks, Twin Valley, Chatham Hills and Wood Craft. Now under construction is the Drakes Heights subdivision.

It was during the '60s, also, that the city converted from wells to the Detroit Water system.

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THE DECADE'S AUTHOR—The history of the '60s for the Farmington Area was written by decisions made by residents at the polls. The voter was the author of the decade and the tallied votes recorded the accomplishments of the '60s and hopes for the '70s.



STORY OF THE '60s—One of the major events of the '60s was redevelopment of the downtown center and new growth along the Grand River business strip. The above picture (taken in the '50s) shows the following businesses on the south side of Grand River east of Farmington Rd.: Moore's Drugs, Gambles Department Store, Edison office, Hocking-Gilles Shoes, Farmington

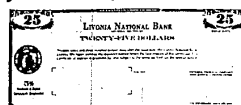
Meats, and Dr. M. L. Hutton's optometrist office. The picture below was taken in the '60s and does not show all the changes. Businesses located on the same strip today are: (from left) Farmington Hardware with a renovated exterior; The Bon Ton Galleries; Farmington Office Equipment; and Fads 'n Fashion.

(Evert photos)

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