

Northwestern Highway, close up

Continued from Page 3

Northwestern is becoming a problem — one that both city and MDOT officials are looking at.

The first change on Northwestern will come this summer when MDOT adds 11 new crossovers (turning loops), to improve traffic flows, with the help of city money. The city's exact share has not yet been determined.

Plans are also being discussed for the proposed widening — one lane in each direction — of Northwestern. That, too, will cost the city money.

THE MEDIAN along Northwestern is also becoming an issue. Although the state is now mowing the grassy medi-

ans after several years of allowing the city to do it, developers are calling for improved landscaping to complement the appearance of the rest of the corridor, Costick said.

Although most of the office buildings are built on speculation, most developers "have a good idea, or know in advance, that a certain amount (of the building) will be leased," Costick said.

There are the most reputable and bigger names (in developers) along Northwestern. They are able to attract big occupants.

Northwestern's developers may not be nationally known, but the corridor boasts recognizable names in the metro Detroit market — Jona, Solomon

Group, Etkin, Brooks & Layne, Beachum & Roesser.

And the businesses in the Northwestern offices are even more recognizable.

Construction Association of Michigan, Massachusetts Mutual Insurance, Chrysler Purchasing, Ramco-Genarben, United Savings, Bezno-Bestak and Paychex Inc. Insurance agencies, law firms, and architectural firms also occupy the office complexes.

DESPITE THE highway's rural beginnings, it seems there was a good likelihood the highway would eventually serve as a commercial and office corridor to some degree.

"It was always considered to be a hot economic activity (area)," Joachim said. And it would have been even more so if it had been extended (beyond Orchard Lake).

Homeowner associations in neighborhoods abutting Northwestern fought in court to stave off the commercial growth.

The city also battled developers' rezoning requests and have entered into consent judgments rather than await court decisions. The consent judgments have allowed office developments that

could be restricted. Stricter setbacks and landscaping requirements are the rule on Northwestern.

Yet stricter requirements have produced what many consider to be a first-rate office corridor in terms of both aesthetics and architecture. "It's beautiful," city planner Ed Gardner said.

AND DESPITE being a prime location for both housing and access to the metro Detroit's freeway system, the physical appearance of the gently rolling corridor is the top attraction, he added.

The corridor "offers an office setting that is well-landscaped. It doesn't give the image that one is going to work in an asphalt jungle," Costick said.

As a developer, Gary Jona of Jona Construction (the Wellington and North Valley projects) said the lack of mixed land uses on Northwestern has created a consolidated corridor that's visually pleasing.

With strict landscaping and setback requirements, Jona and Gardner say increased construction costs along Northwestern can generally be found in landscaping, grading and building materials.

Representative chosen for river cleanup team

It appears the city of Farmington was ahead of its time viewing sewer system issues.

"In the early 1970s, council believed it would be in the best interest of the community and the region for the city to separate its combined sewer system," City Manager Robert Deadman told the city council Jan. 6.

Because Farmington could not prove its combined sewer overflows here adversely impacting the upper branch of the Rouge River, needed federal funds were not made available for this purpose, he added.

The U.S. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) adopted a resolution in July, recognizing the river and its basin as a "valuable resource."

"We find it (the resolution) contains many of the concerns exhibited by the Farmington council years ago," Deadman said.

"ONE OF the elements in this strategy is to eliminate all combined sewer overflows to the extent practical," Deadman added. The city manager told the council a total separation of the municipal area system is "not feasible."

The DNR recently formed a Rouge River Basin Committee to provide guidance in cleaning up the river. Director of Public Services Earl Bill was appointed Jan. 6 as Farmington representative to the committee, which will have members from all affected municipalities, community groups, industry and regional and federal agencies.

The committee's first meeting is scheduled this month, Deadman said.

Farmington is the only community in Oakland County on the upper branch of the river with combined sewer overflows. Only a "small portion" of Farmington is served by the combined

sewer system; the remainder is served with a separate storm and sewer system, Deadman added.

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*Art 51.1	Interiors I (Studio)	M	1:10-4:00	
*Art 51.2	Interiors II (Studio)	M	1:10-4:00	
*Art 51.7	Materials & Construction	M	9:10-12:00	
*Art 52.3	Interior Design Internship	F	9:10-12:00	
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