

# Hills urges continued funding of federal grant

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

In light of anticipated cuts in federal programs, Farmington Hills officials are urging President Ronald Reagan and the U.S. Congress to maintain current funding levels of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

In a 5-2 vote last week, Farmington Hills City Council adopted a resolution urging maintenance of current funding or at least no more than a 10 percent reduction from the 1985-86 level. But the resolution's adoption was not without heated debate.

The adoption of such a resolution was requested in late January by resident Aldo Vagozzi, a supporter of the housing rehabilitation program financed with a portion of the city's annual share of CDBG money.

The rehabilitation program provides low-interest loans to help low-to-moderate-income families improve their homes.

Council members Donn Wolf and Jerry Soronen opposed the resolution.

"I think the whole Community Development Block Grant in the president's budget, as proposed, is the right thing," Wolf said. "Because of a small grant we get, we are adding to the deficit. This is part of the whole problem. Everybody has their little cause."

The Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction act — mandating automatic cuts in every federal department and government program — that Congress passed and Reagan signed just before Christmas, will spell severe cuts in programs such as CDBG.

**COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION**, however, urges Congress to avoid cuts in

CDBG funding because of successful improvements made through the program.

Farmington Hills officials in January expected the city would receive \$309,056 in CDBG money — a 15 percent reduction over last year.

But officials had been warned that the city's share could be trimmed by another 15 percent — to \$260,000.

The National League of Cities has since warned city officials that they can expect a total 30-percent cut in CDBG funding.

Under a proposal made in January, city officials planned to allocate the anticipated \$202,056 into administrative costs, housing rehabilitation program and for capital improvements.

Fifteen percent or \$50,000 was allocated for administration, \$130,056 (38 percent) for housing rehabilitation and \$159,000 (47 percent) for capital improvements.

City officials also have an additional \$30,000 to add to the CDBG total from repayment of low-interest loans

awarded through the rehabilitation program.

A public hearing is scheduled for 7:30 tonight in city council chambers, 31555 11 Mile, to receive residents' comments on how the money should be spent.

Through participation in the CDBG program, Farmington Hills has been able to "improve public utilities, streets, eradicate pollution, improve storm run-off, and carry out many or numerous public work-type-improvements in low and moderate income neighborhoods," according to the resolution.

**THE USE** of CDBG money has improved "the quality of life for many residents that might otherwise find it difficult to accept special assessments or higher property taxes for these needed public services," the resolution continued.

The resolution also stresses the importance of housing program to "low and moderate-income families and in-

dividual and especially to numerous elderly citizens."

In supporting the resolution, Councilmen Ben Marks and Terry Sever maintained cuts should be made in other federal programs, not the CDBG.

"We need to assure the people in line (for low-interest loans). We need to assure the people in need," Sever said.

But Wolf insisted that cuts in federal programs are necessary if the deficit is to be reduced.

"We have to face up to it, we are contributing to it. I don't think Washington has any business fixing up homes in our city."

The government should "fix-up roads, not driveways," Wolf said.

**MARKS DISAGREED.**

"There is no question about it. I disagree wholeheartedly with Mr. Wolf," he said.

City officials should direct the federal government on how money should be spent, Marks added.

Soronen supported sending a resolution to Washington but opposed the measure when council decided against specifying what other programs should be cut to maintain current funding of the CDBG program.

Councilwoman Jan Dolan suggested that the CDBG program should be funded with money allocated to finance Reagan's Star Wars defense program.

"Let's help people to live instead of to kill them," she said.

But Dolan's motion to specify using money for Star Wars for the CDBG program was defeated in a 4-3 vote.

"I don't think it (specifying Star Wars) would add anymore teeth to the resolution," said Councilman Marks, who opposed Dolan's suggestion.

Wolf, Sever and Mayor Joe Alkate joined Marks in opposition.

When the council opposed Dolan's suggestion, however, Soronen said she would oppose a resolution if it didn't specify taking the money from another program.

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