

# Proposed road improvements listed

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills voters will be asked to pay a 1-mill tax increase this year to finance \$2 million of a total \$9 million city share of a three-year road improvement program.

Voters will also go to the polls Sept. 23 to consider financing the remaining \$7 million city share of the road program with general obligation bonds.

Farmington Hills City Council Monday set the special election date in a 7-0 vote and authorized City Clerk Joan Reynolds and City Attorney Paul Bibeau to prepare ballot language for council review.

The proposed 1 mill tax increase devoted entirely to roads — will increase the city's current 8.5-mill levy to 9.5 mills if city officials adopt a proposed \$19.5 million 1988-87 budget.

Councilman Donn Wolf opposed council's proposed 1-mill increase for roads. He called it "the arbitrary raising of taxes," and added that "the cart has come before the horse."

WOLF SAID he would prefer putting the three-year road program to voters and asking them to support a tax increase. "I think this program can be sold. I think the residents of this community will vote overwhelmingly for it."

The proposed tax increase and accompanying bond issue is not designed as an alternative to the city's unsuccessful bid to form a Tax Increment Financing Authority to

finance improvements along the 12 Mile corridor and I-696, City Manager William Costick said.

In April, the city rescinded formation of a TIFA district along a 3.5-mile stretch of 12 Mile, west of Farmington Road, after the Farmington Public Schools filed a suit to halt the financing plan.

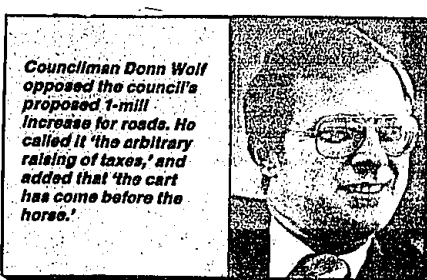
"This (three-year-road) program does not include Haggerty Road. It does not include 12 Mile for major improvements," Costick said.

Within the last two years, the community has grown at such a rapid pace and bounds that problems with the roads "have become so extensive," Costick said. By historically maintaining a low tax rate, the city has fallen behind in keeping pace with growing traffic congestion and deteriorating roads, he added.

"I see no alternative but to get a handle on it," Costick said. "We get complaints from citizens every day. Within just the last six months, you can see the impact (the city's growth) has had on the roads."

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 road program and 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 im-



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provements, and some highway grants.

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

The proposed 1-mill tax increase 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 of \$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.

ALTHOUGH THE CITY could pay for the \$9 million worth of improvements on a pay-as-you-go basis, levying 1 mill annually, it would take about seven years to complete all

the proposed projects. "These are improvements needed now and should be done now," Costick said.

The other preferred method of financing is to use \$2 million to finance the first year of proposed improvements and ask voters in September to support a \$7 million general obligation bond issue to pay for the remaining two years of the program, Costick said.

If voters approve the requested 10-year bond issue, only 75 mills 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.

The three-year road improvement would begin this year and include

the following projects and costs:

- Widening of Fabius 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 Highway.
- Installation of traffic signals throughout the city.

IN 1987-88, the following improvements would be completed:

- A variety of safety improvement projects.
- Tri-party road improvement program, with one-third of total costs shared between the city, Oakland County and the Oakland County Road Commission.
- Widening of Orchard Lake, from 10 Mile to Grand River.
- Relocation and beautification of Orchard Lake Drive.
- Widening of the 11 Mile-Middlebelt Intersection.
- Resurfacing of 12 Mile, from Inkster to Middlebelt.
- Paving of Halsted, from 12 to 14 Mile.
- Upgrading guardrail along Freedom Road.

THE TOTAL cost for the proposed projects is \$3.2 million, with the city paying almost \$2 million — the amount that would be generated through the proposed 1 mill increase and \$750,000 from the major road budget.

Other needed projects, such as paving 13 Mile, from Halsted to Haggerty, and improving the intersection of 13 Mile and Edith-Mirion are included on the road list, but excluded in the 1986-87 budget. Cost estimates for these excluded projects, however, are included in the total cost of the three-year program.

Although city officials want to widen and resurface 14 Mile this year, right-of-way must be purchased, which might not be completed this year. Farmington Hills also intends to ask West Bloomfield Township to pay a share of the improvements.

If 14 Mile cannot be improved this

year, city officials instead plan to pave Drake Road, from 13 to 14 Mile, and complete the pre-engineering work for improvements to Halsted, from 12 to 14 Mile, Costick said.

In the road program's third year, the following projects would be completed:

- Paving of Tuck Road, from Eight Mile to Folsom, and Grand River to Nine Mile.
- Improvements to the M-102-Grand River Intersection.
- Improvements to the Shilwas-see-Nine Mile Intersection.
- Widening of Orchard Lake, from 10 to 11 Mile.
- Resurfacing projects.
- Ask Tri-party road improvement program.
- Safety improvement projects throughout the city.

General salary increases of about 4 percent, according to existing labor contracts, are also included in the budget. Salaries for the heads of city departments are also expected to increase 4-to-6 percent.

"The salary increases are nothing outlandish. The city has always been a little behind (in salaries compared to other communities of similar size). This will keep us from falling too far behind," Costick said.

serve only if a regular member is absent for two or more consecutive meetings, or for a period of more than 30 days, according to an administrative report to the council.

House Bill 5353, also supported recently by the cities of Clawson and Birmingham, would allow alternate

# Hills voters will consider 1-mill boost

Continued from Page 1

The proposed 1986-87 budget also includes .65-mill — .07 more than last year — for capital improvements. The \$809,000 in revenue generated from .65-mill will be added to \$500,000 in reserves to finance a series of continuing projects listed in the city's six-year capital improvement program.

In the coming year, the proposed .65-mill levy would purchase fire apparatus and Department of Public Works (DPW) equipment. It would also finance minor drain improvements, limited sidewalk construction, parks and recreation facility improvements. New computers will also be purchased for the city clerk's office for use in elections.

In addition to being faced with a proposed 1-mill tax increase, voters will also be asked on June 23 to consider approval of a special 0.5-mill levy for five years to pay for development of parks and recreation fa-

cilities. 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.

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 and the 0.5-mill special park levy wins voter approval.

On the revenue side of the proposed budget, the city is expected to receive a property tax revenue increase of \$1.5 million, due to significantly increased construction, Cos-

tick said. The strong national and state economy is also expected to boost the city's share of state shared revenues by seven percent.

The only expected decrease will be in the city's share of federal shared revenues, due to the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction legislation.

Major changes in the expenditure side of the proposed budget include

the hiring of new staff. Nine new positions will be added to the police department. The new position of deputy chief will be added to the fire department.

POSITIONS WILL also be added in the 47th District Court, Farmington Community Library, engineering and special services departments, and DPW.

A bill allowing an alternate member to serve on a city's zoning board of appeals when a permanent member is absent received unanimous support Monday, May 5, from the Farmington City Council.

Presently, under Public Act 207, alternate members are allowed to

Other significant expenditures include \$127,000 for computer and software equipment — a second phase in the city's computerization program.

The proposed budget also reflects increases for local roads, refuse collection, \$80,000 for reappraisal of industrial and commercial properties, and \$20,000 for beautification projects.

presently only if a regular member is absent for two or more consecutive meetings, or for a period of more than 30 days, according to an administrative report to the council.

House Bill 5353, also supported recently by the cities of Clawson and Birmingham, would allow alternate

members to serve whenever a regular member is absent.

In Farmington, granting of a variance by the six-member zoning board requires a majority vote, according to City Manager Robert Deardman. The bill would allow "an opportunity to have a full board at most meetings," he added.

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