

Township explains road tax proposal

By Mary Lou Callaway
Special writer

Asking voters to tax themselves to pave 7 1/2 miles of gravel roads Tuesday, Nov. 4 is not just for the convenience of commuting residents, but to give fire and police personnel better access within West Bloomfield, according to township officials.

The 1 mill tax being asked for three years is expected to raise \$1 million per year, beginning with the December 1987 property tax bill.

That is projected to cost the owner of a home worth \$125,000 about \$62 based on the current millage rate.

Developers will still be expected to participate by paying toward improving major public roads next to their properties, according to Township Supervisor John Doherty.

THOSE GRAVEL roads slated for improvement plus any designated later by the township board are (not necessarily in priority order):

- Drake from 14 Mile to Maple.

- Farmington Road from 14 to Maple with participation from developers.

- Halstead from Walnut Lake to Pontiac Trail.

- Oakley Park from Green Lake to Hagerty.

- Walnut Lake from Drake west to Hagerty.

- Lochaven from Greer north to Hunt to Cooley Lake.

Record rainfalls have been making these roads nearly impassible, Doherty says. "Farmington Road was blocked and had to be closed."

Edward Nagel and Connie Hammer are co-chairs of the committee promoting passage of the road millage.

"We got a late start. We need seed money for printing and mailing brochures," says Nagel. The committee is sending out letters this week to some of the people who could benefit from road improvements, he said.

ONE QUESTION being asked is since the roads are under Oakland County's jurisdiction, why won't the county improve the roads?

Doherty's explanation is that because drivers are paying less for gas and driving lighter cars, the county road commission is collecting less money from gasoline and weight taxes.

The Michigan State Legislature has ruled that 90 percent of state money must go to maintain existing paved roads. That leaves just 10 percent for unpaved roads, said West Bloomfield Planning Director Thomas Bird.

Road improvements made by the county require matching funds, which the township has been unable to generate. Local millage raised if the issue passes next month, Doherty said, will enable the township to enter a tri-party agreement with the county and the road commission on a one-third each matching basis.

If more is raised than needed, the township would assist the road commission in grading, patching and

ditching the more than 46 miles of primary and 12 miles of local public roads within the township, Doherty says.

ONE OF THE most compelling arguments, committee members say, is to relieve congestion on Orchard Lake and Hagerty roads now that the township's population exceeds 47,000.

The other township ballot issues voters will find listed last on their punch card ballots are to beef up police and fire departments with 2 mills for five years and for acquisition of open space by West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation at 0.50 mills for 10 years.



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