

# Sewer costs remain uncertain

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The improvements will benefit all 16 communities in the Evergreen-Farmington system, even though Farmington Hills and Southfield have suffered the greatest sewage overflow problems.

The city councils want an assurance that communities, such as West Bloomfield Township, Birmingham, Auburn Hills and Birmingham, will pay up when it's their turn to tap into the additional sewage flow capacity provided by the improvements.

"My concern is that the origins of the flow should carry the expense," Robinson said, referring to communities north of Farmington Hills and Southfield.

Southfield councilman Steve Hurte told his colleagues that at one time, Beverly Hills tapped into the Southfield system and it was years before anyone was the wiser.

"What prevents them, the communities to the north, from doing the same thing?" Hurte asked.

Frank Naglich, Oakland County project engineer for the Evergreen-Farmington system, told the coun-

cils that attorneys can address pay-back concerns in the contracts that must be signed by both city councils. The contracts are expected to be reviewed by each council at their regular March 14 meetings.

BECAUSE THE county does not meter sewage flow between communities, Farmington Hills councilman Ben Marks suggested an automatic escalator clause in the contracts to ensure other communities pay their share.

Southfield councilwoman Suzanne Goldstein asked about growing Au-

burn Hills' participation in the improvements from the start.

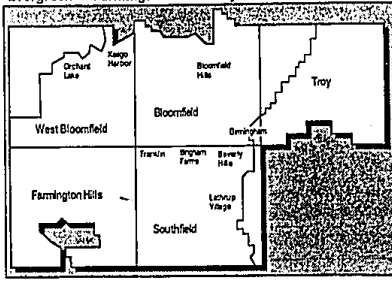
"We know at the moment Auburn Hills is a favorite son," she said, asking if it would join in the federal grant application and help foot the majority local costs.

"I have no way of knowing," responded Roger Smith, Southfield public services director.

But Blaisell said the grant application is ready to go by the April 1 deadline and cannot be delayed.

"The concern is that you can't change the grant application. We are at the 11th hour."

Evergreen - Farmington Sewer System District



Roger Smith, Southfield's Department of Public Service director, reviews an Evergreen-Farmington Sewer System District report Monday night.

## State ranking to help project get federal aid

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

It's not cheap. But the federal government is expected to help.

Farmington Hills and Southfield officials are keeping their fingers crossed that a federal grant will come their way to pay more than half of the estimated \$48.5 million improvements to the deteriorating Evergreen-Farmington sewer system.

"The state sets the priority list. At the moment, we're number one," said Frank Naglich, county project engineer for the Evergreen-Farmington system.

The 55-percent federal grant available through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would pay some \$24 million of the total cost. Farmington Hills and Southfield would benefit the most from the improvements and pay the most.

The two cities are applying for the federal grant to pay for the first construction segment, expected to be finished with 1987 federal money. A grant would again be sought for the second segment, expected to be financed with 1988 federal money.

**'The state sets the priority list. At the moment, we're number one.'**

— Frank Naglich  
county project engineer

IF THE cities receive the grant for the first segment, the local share would total an estimated \$13.8 million. Of that, Farmington Hills would pay \$8.7 million and Southfield \$5 million, said Tom Blaisell, Farmington Hills public services director.

If the second segment is also financed with a federal grant, the local share would be an estimated \$11.9 million. Farmington Hills would pay \$7.7 million and Southfield \$4.2 million, he said.

If the first segment grant is received, construction would begin a year from now. The second segment, provided the grant was received, would begin a year later, Naglich said.

BONDS WILL be issued to pay for the local share of the Evergreen-Farmington improvements. Farmington Hills' estimated total is \$11.5 million; Southfield's is \$14.2 million. Both cities have been saving money to make the bond payments.

"I don't anticipate it being a problem," Farmington Hills city manager William Costick said.

Sewer charges most likely will not be increased because Farmington Hills has some \$6 million in the sewer fund to make the bond payments.

Southfield has some \$12 million set aside.

"Over the past 20 years, we have been saving for it. We're anxious to have it in," said Roger Smith, Southfield public services director.

NEXT IN line for federal grants is the so-called super sewer, the North Huron-Rouge Valley Wastewater Control System, and the First Hamilton relief line, south of Farmington Hills and Southfield.

Together, the three projects will greatly improve sewage flow to the Detroit Wastewater Plant on the Detroit River.

"All three of them are dependent on each other. The green light is on," Blaisell said.

THE PROBLEM with the existing system, built in the 1950s, is overloaded sewage lines. Most weren't built to handle the amount and type of development in the Oakland County communities.

Also of concern is Detroit's authority to turn off the main line going to the sewage plant when overflowing begins, Smith said.

Because there has been no place to put the overflow, diluted sewage has seeped into homeowner basements, back yards and, eventually, the Rouge River.

The EPA's interest in the projects and its willingness to provide financing has been sparked by the environmental damage caused to the Rouge by overflowing sewage.

With or without a federal grant, Smith said, the federal government has ordered the communities to improve the sewage system.

In addition to the major \$48 million improvements, each community will receive orders from the state Department of Natural Resources, which certifies grant applications, to make local improvements to accompany the major improvements.

## Backup relief

### New sewage system may be operating in 2 years

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

If all goes as planned, relief will be on the way within two to three years for flooded basements and back yards in Farmington Hills and Southfield and for sewage overflow into the already polluted Rouge River.

Relief will be in the form of \$48.5 million in improvements to the overburdened Evergreen-Farmington sewage system and the lines that carry the flow to the Detroit treatment plant on the Detroit River.

The proposed improvements, expected to be financed in part by federal Environmental Protection Agency grants, will add capacity to the sewage lines and stop sewage overflow spilling into basements and the Rouge River.

Improvements are needed for an expected boom in development in the northwest section of Southfield, along the Farmington Hills border, at 11 Mile and Inkster, said Roger Smith, Southfield public services director.

Properties in the rapidly developing 11 Mile-Inkster-Franklin area are currently hooked up to existing sewers. When the interceptor is built, it will serve the area, Smith said.

IN FARMINGTON HILLS, improvements will provide relief to recurrent flooding in the Kendallwood subdivision, north of 12 Mile near

Farmington Road, and Lincolnshire subdivision, south of 11 Mile near Middlebelt, said Tom Blaisell, Farmington Hills public services director.

Two other major system improvements — the North Huron-Rouge Valley Wastewater Control System and the First Hamilton relief line — also will provide increased capacity. The two projects rank behind the Evergreen-Farmington system as a federal financing priority.

Part of the problem with the existing system are its small pipes, which were not expected to handle the amount and type of development occurring in Southfield and Farmington Hills. The system was installed in the 1950s.

First-segment construction will ease Kendallwood's problems. A large underground storage facility will be built behind Dunkle Middle School, on 13 Mile, between Farmington and Orchard Lake Roads.

The storage facility will release sewage at a controlled rate into the lines and carry it to Detroit. Relief lines also will be built in the Kendallwood subdivision to provide additional capacity to the existing lines.

Improvements also will be made in Southfield near Eight Mile and Berg roads. Basements in this area are flooded when Detroit turns off the valves and the Farmington-Evergreen interceptor begins to back up, Smith said. "Because of these capacity problems, we have backups," Smith said.

THE SECOND segment also will address capacity problems. Capacity will be added to a major sewer interceptor. A relief line north of I-696, near Middlebelt, and continuing through Southfield to Eight Mile, will be built.

An additional outlet/relief line will be built that will tie into the Middlebelt Interceptor. This outlet will relieve sewage backup in the Middlebelt sewer and, in turn, relieve some of the problems that Farmington Hills' Lincolnshire subdivision has experienced, Blaisell said.

Both cities will be forced to make local improvements to accompany the major improvements. Southfield will be ordered to develop a maintenance plan and make minor repairs on existing lines, Smith said.

Farmington Hills will have to improve internal lines in the Lincolnshire subdivision, for example. "Once we have the capacity available on Middlebelt Road, we have to get it from Lincolnshire internally to the interceptor," Blaisell said.

Construction of the First Hamilton

relief line will reduce the chances of Detroit turning off the valves when lines going to the treatment plant are overloaded. The installation of the line, to be completed by Detroit, is expected to be built simultaneously with the Evergreen-Farmington's first segment, Blaisell said.

THE RELIEF line will take Evergreen-Farmington sewage along another line. Detroit could still interrupt service, "but it's a much lower chance of shutting off the First Hamilton connection than the present connection," said project engineer David Waring of consulting engineers Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Bloomfield Hills.

The estimated \$18 million local share would be split between the North Huron-Rouge Valley Wastewater Control System and the Evergreen-Farmington. Farmington Hills and Southfield would pay about 70 percent of the estimated \$9 million Evergreen-Farmington costs, Blaisell said.

"We're still working out the costs," he added.



Southfield council members Barbara Talley and Steve Hurte take notes on a presentation about the Evergreen-Farmington Sewer System District.

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