

Architects picked for Hills branch of library

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The famed Troy-based Minoru Yamasaki Associates architects will study existing and possibly new sites for an expansion of the cramped Farmington Hills branch of the Farmington Community Library.

The untimely death of a long-awaited bill that would have allowed the library independence and taxing authority doesn't preclude expansion of the existing 38,000-square-foot branch. "It doesn't prohibit us. It makes it more difficult," library director Beverly Papal said.

But the bill's sponsor, state Sen. Harmon Cropsey, R-Decatur, will be re-introducing it sometime soon. When amendments were tacked onto the bill in the waning days of the last legislative session, the Michigan Library Association pulled its support.

Once studies are complete, library trustees will be expected to ask the Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils, the library's major financing sources, for a resolution to place a bonding issue before voters

Once studies are complete, library trustees will ask city councils — their major funding source — for a resolution to place a bonding issue before voters to finance the proposed expansion.

to finance the proposed expansion. "I am hopeful that in early 1989, we will be able to go to the city councils and show the need for an extended facility and alternatives related to that need," Papal said. The proposed expansion is documented in the library's 5-year action plan.

AT THIS point, library officials are considering at least another 25,000 square feet to accommodate space needs at the Hills branch, 33737 12 Mile. But the Yamasaki architects and Texas consultant Richard L. Waters will review exactly what's needed. The architects also will study alternate sites.

"The plan is not to have a third branch. The library board determined it was a needless use of tax dollars. We want to strengthen the 12 Mile branch. It's the main library and it's ideally geographically located," Papal said.

The need for expansion is demonstrated in the library's latest circulation statistics, number of patrons daily and the amount of materials housed. Original planners didn't foresee the kind of growth faced by the Farmington community.

"This building was designed to accommodate the public needs for 20 years when it opened in 1972," Papal said.

One thing that is certain is that the 12 Mile library is cramped. Daily, 1,400 patrons walk through the doors Monday-Thursday. During the seven open hours Saturdays, 1,000 patrons come in. The same is true for the four Sunday hours. "During our peak hours — evenings, weekends and holidays — we literally have no place left for people to sit," Papal said.

The number of patrons in the library, plus all the materials and equipment, has forced library officials to open the auditorium and con-

ference room — generally used for programming — for seating. "When you're forced to do that, there are areas that are largely unstaffed," Papal said.

THE OTHER side of the coin is the lack of space for shelving of materials. To add shelf capacity would mean reducing patron seating, she added.

In 1987-88, library patrons checked out 577,894 books, magazines and audiovisual items. The library consistently led all 59 member libraries in the Wayne-Oakland Library Federation in the amount of materials circulated, according to the library's annual report. An express lane was added to the Hills branch for the quick circulation.

Librarians answered 165,152 requests for information last year, a 160 percent increase since 1977. The Farmington Hills branch drew 84,004 in-person questions; 698 over the computerized reference system and 28,871 telephone requests.

Farmington and Farmington Hills officials aren't denying the cramped conditions at the library, but are wondering how an expansion will be financed.

"I think we recognize the need and the amount of patrons that use the library," Farmington Hills city manager William Costick said. "Timing is what has to be dealt with. How is it going to fit into everything else?"

If the proposed library bill comes again before the state Legislature, Farmington city manager Robert Deadman expects that voters will be faced with a two-part ballot question: bonding for an expanded library and a tax levy for the library.

Costick believes the question of independence and authority to levy taxes for the library needs further discussion. "I think the (existing) system works pretty well."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington Hills officer Mike LaFave stops a motorist on the newly paved and realigned one-mile stretch of Drake Road, between 11 and 12 Mile. Traffic officers have ticketed 278 motorists for speeding over the posted 25 mph limit and warned another 211 motorists since the roadway's reopening Dec. 23.

New road, new tickets

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The new one-mile improved stretch of Drake, between 11 and 12 Mile, is carefully inviting to motorists. But a good number of motorists using the route as a cut-through have been welcomed with speeding tickets.

"We're trying to maintain the 25 mph down there," said Sgt. Ray Cranston, Farmington Hills Police Department Traffic Section supervisor. "We've seen the development of cut-through traffic. With the Grand River and Halsted area crowded, people are using it as a shortcut to 12 Mile."

SINCE ITS opening Dec. 23, traffic officers have issued 278 speeding tickets and 211 warnings. Four accidents have occurred on the newly paved and realigned stretch, Cranston said.

The average speed motorists have been driving when ticketed is 45.2 mph in the city council-designated 25 mph zone. But police have only been tracking

these speeds since late last week, Cranston said. And for the most part, most of those ticketed do not live in the area. That's a change from the past when, in most residential areas where residents demand greater enforcement, most ticketed are residents.

THE LOW speed limit on the paved road was addressed by residents and the city council.

"We cautioned with improvements to the road to that degree, you're going to have an increase, but not in local traffic," Cranston said. "There's been more enforcement on that mile of Drake than any other strip of road in the city."

Ed Krol of the Drake Road Citizens Committee, which worked with city officials on the paving and realigning of the roadway, supports the 25 mph.

"I don't think it (the 25 mph limit) is unreasonable because the city said they wanted to keep the road the way it used to be slow moving," Krol said. "I'm one of the people who drive 25 mph in low gear and they're riding my tush. I usually blow them a kiss. It's transients that are causing the problem."

Farmington Observer

(USPS 187-840)
Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Economic News, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham, MI 48012. Second-class postage paid at Birmingham, MI 48012. Address all mail (subscription, change of address, Form 3569) to P.O. Box 2428, Livonia, MI 48151. Telephone 591-0500.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
(in Oakland County)
One year . . . \$24.20
(Elsewhere in Michigan)
Newstand . . . per copy, 25¢
One year . . . \$40.00
(Elsewhere in U.S.A.)

One year . . . \$60.00
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