

DDA, contractor agree on sidewalk repairs

By Noroon Fick
Staff writer

After a yearlong dispute, the Downtown Development Authority and the general contractor for phase one of the DDA-sponsored streetscape improvements reached a settlement to repair cracks in new downtown sidewalks.

On Aug. 11, the DDA board of directors agreed to pay Farmington Hills-based Concord Cement \$1,500 to make repairs to the patterned sidewalks along Grand River and Farmington Road last summer.

"We were anxious to have the project complete and have the downtown looking good," said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, DDA executive director.

"It was far less costly and far more timely for us to pay them \$1,500 instead of going to court."

The \$640,000 phase one began in spring 1988 and is the largest of five phases in the \$1.4-million streetscape improvement project geared for the revitalization of downtown Farmington.

Concord completed the sidewalk repairs the week of Aug. 14, but other punch-list repairs — electrical

fixtures and labeling panel boxes — are needed to finish the work in the phase one contract.

THE DISPUTE started last summer when the DDA notified Concord about "excessive" cracks on the new sidewalks, saying they were unacceptable, but Concord argued the cracks were "natural" for outdoor concrete.

"We paid for a new job and that's what we wanted," Strip Sittsamer said. "We wanted it to look nice."

"Outside concrete usually cracks, but with all the structures and the staging of joints near the bases of the lightposts, the cracks were more than usual," said Phil Pegoraro, Concord president. "It (the cracks) was caused by a little bit of everything."

Although the DDA paid \$1,500, the cost to repair the sidewalks was about \$4,000, Pegoraro said.

Since last summer, the DDA has withheld \$23,200 from the \$291,000 Concord contract to make sure all sidewalk repairs and other punch-list repairs were made, Strip Sittsamer said.

The final payment is expected to be made in October after small elec-

trical repairs and panel box labeling is complete, Strip Sittsamer said.

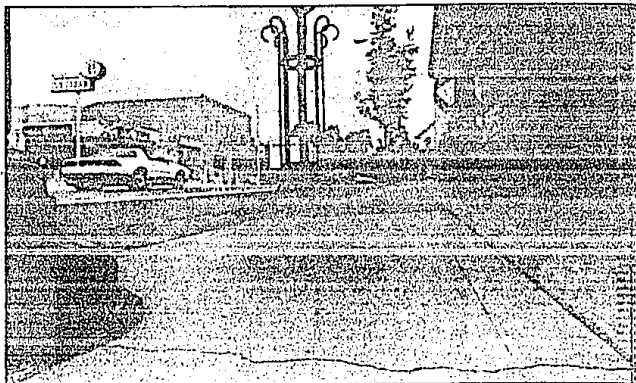
SOME DRIVEWAY and aggregate sidewalk cracks were not required to be repaired in the settlement, Strip Sittsamer said.

The exposed aggregate cracks occur around the tree grates, which make them less visible and they would be hard to replace," she said. "The driveways are not as problematic and they would create more of an inconvenience to repair."

Some of the driveway cracks may have been caused by people removing barricades too soon and allowing traffic to drive over the new concrete, Strip Sittsamer said.

The \$640,000 phase one included pedestrian lighting, patterned sidewalks, new trees and new curbs on Grand River, between Oakland and School, and on Farmington Road, between Oakland and State. The city lots at city hall and north of Grand River were redesigned, repaved, lighted and landscaped. A lighted crosswalk was added on Grand River. Sidewalks, lighting and landscaping were added along Thomas.

The entire five-phase, streetscape improvement project is expected to be completed by 1993.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Cracks, like the one visible at the bottom of this picture, began appearing in downtown sidewalks installed in summer 1988. This view

— the east side of Farmington Road, just south of Grand River — was photographed in July. The crack has since been repaired.

Intersection rebuilding scheduled

All four legs of the intersection of Middlebelt and Nine Mile in Farmington Hills will be rebuilt at a cost of \$850,000 this fall.

A joint project of the Oakland County Road Commission, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and the Farmington Hills City Council, the new road will be five lanes, with curbs and gutters and tapers on each leg more than 500 feet in all directions.

Federal road hazard elimination-safety funds will pay for \$500,000 of the cost. Farmington Hills will make a direct contribution of \$115,000. The city and the county will split the remainder of the cost.

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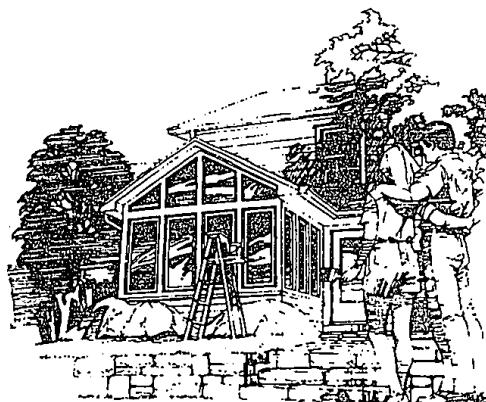


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