

Towns cooperate to save

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THE LATEST example is the school district's request to the cities to regulate skateboarding. Farmington Hills refused. Farmington introduced an ordinance. But now that Farmington Hills isn't acting, Farmington officials label the matter until Tuesday.

"Here is where I can see a snag. It wouldn't be feasible to adopt an ordinance prohibiting skateboarding in the schools only in the city (of Farmington)," Farmington Mayor Shirley Richardson said.

The city managers often work in conjunction on issues that can affect both cities, including county issues and state legislation.

A request to rezone the Muirwood shopping center at Drake and Grand River to allow a major grocery store several years ago tested relationships between the cities.

"If that went through it would have had the potential of having an adverse effect on downtown. It didn't go through," Deadman said.

Vagnozzi agreed.

"Many Farmington Hills residents see this downtown as their downtown," he said.

Business signs are another issue in which both councils watch what the other is doing.

"Neither city council wants to put merchants in either city at a competitive disadvantage," Deadman said. In fact, as Farmington Hills grew into a major metropolitan community, any pressure on either city to sever ties and set up a lot of their own programs and facilities was cut short by simple economics.

IT JUST made more economical sense to work together. The cities even share public works equipment.

"We have loaned equipment back and forth that would be too expensive to buy," Deadman said.

But the cities also share history and similar philosophies. When Richardson began planning the 125th Anniversary of Farmington as a village, she immediately called Farmington Hills for participation. That spirit held true for the recent Desert Storm celebration, as well as Farmington Hills' big Year 2000 planning effort.

The cities also have worked together on tree plantings as well as the recent selection of community symbols.

And there's the Founders Festival. "It's a Farmington-Farmington Hills parade as far as I'm concerned," Richardson said.

But they don't want to merge

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Just because the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills share and cooperate doesn't mean they want to become one big city.

"There is a bit of a different character in the two communities," Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said.

Despite the similarities in the structure of the city councils and city governments and many common needs, there are enough differences between Farmington and Farmington Hills for each to continue its own cityhood and identity.

Farmington, for example, has sidewalks and street lights, and snow removal is a lot quicker because

there are fewer roads. Farmington Hills is a more vehicular community.

And then there's just the feeling residents in both cities have. Many Farmington residents like the small-town atmosphere Farmington provides and the fact that a downtown area is within walking distance. On the other hand, many Farmington Hills residents like their sprawling neighborhoods and more suburban atmosphere.

BESIDES THAT, there's history on the side of not becoming one city. The move to become one city was defeated in the early 1970s when Farmington voters overwhelmingly said they wanted to maintain their own identity.

"The older people in the communi-

ty were not willing to make a sacrifice to be part of a larger city," Farmington Mayor Shirley Richardson said.

Plus, both communities are in different points in their lives. Farmington is developed. Farmington Hills is almost — but not quite — developed. Farmington is busy separating its sewers, while Farmington Hills is busy trying to build drainage systems, for example.

City officials, however, expect continued cooperation in the future. That's particularly true with the current property tax assessment fee that comes in effect next year. Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said.



Farmington Mayor Shirley Richardson reads stories aloud from her family's collection at the August reading program in the Farmington branch of the Farmington Community Library system. Listening and watching intently right under the book is Alexandria Perri of West Bloomfield, and (from left) Hilary Michalak and Emily Michalak of Farmington Hills, Tony Hammond and Tina Hammond of Farmington Hills, and Jason Hunter of Novi. Farmington and Farmington Hills were the first communities in the state to start a district library together.



photos by SHARON LAMIEL/DI staff photographer

Crew chief James Young of Waste Management Inc. picks up garbage on Dorchester, near 13 Mile and Halsted roads in Farmington Hills. The six-year joint rubbish and recycling contract with Waste Management Inc. is another example of Farmington and Farmington Hills working together to avoid duplication and to save money.

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Gouty arthritis can be caused by excess in the use of alcohol, but the vast majority of people with gout are not guilty of overindulgence. In most cases heredity determines how well your body will handle uric acid, the chemical which in high blood levels leads to gout.

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