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"What you've seen here is well over \$50 million," Hills Director of Public Services Tom Binsell said. "We haven't got that in the pocket, so we have to aggressively go after federal funding."

In addition, the communities have asked consultants such as Purdy and Wes Butch, a senior project manager with DLZ, civil and environmental engineers, to identify smaller pieces of the puzzle. Things like signal timing or adding a turn lane won't cost as much, but could improve traffic flow and reduce the accident rate, Binsell said.

"After we've identified recommended alternatives," Butch said, "we prioritize improvements. Which gives us more bang for our buck, which are more easily fundable. I think it would be hard to expect construction to begin before four or five years from now."

Between now and then, officials will hold public meetings required by federal law. Those won't be completed until this winter, after which a specific plan will be selected, beautifica-

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tion and landscaping designed, and plans made to make up the loss of any wetlands or other valued resources, Butch explained.

And then all officials have to do is figure out how much construction will cost and where they'll get the money.

"There's a lot that has to happen," Butch said.

Among the solutions suggested thus far, the most unique may be "roundabouts," or circular intersections. They can accommodate more vehicles because traffic approaches at an angle, and then merges. Common in Europe and Australia, they are only now being introduced in the United States, with a few projects proposed in Michigan.

Another plan would have traffic headed onto Northwestern from southbound Orchard Lake Road taken through an underpass across 14 Mile. The road would only be recessed; no

Existing crash rates at major intersections

● Higher than average crash rate
● Less than average crash rate

