

Shortages lead Detroit Water to impose watering bans

BY SUE BUCK
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High temperatures, dry weather and problems associated with the water distribution system in this area have the Detroit Water and Sewerage system calling for water restrictions in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

The regulations became effective Wednesday.

"The Detroit Water and Sew-

erage Department is concerned that in the event the high demand for water continues, they may not be able to provide the capacity of water necessary during peak demand periods," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff in a notice. "This could result in low or no water pressure in areas throughout the service area."

Lauhoff's office is employing emergency water restrictions under the city code to provide

enforcement authority.

Water service customers in both Farmington and Farmington Hills with odd-numbered addresses will be allowed to water lawns and engage in other outdoor water uses on odd-numbered days. Even-numbered addresses will be allowed exterior water use on even-numbered days.

The Detroit department will determine when these water regulations will end and the

announcement will come through Lauhoff's office. Violation of these emergency water regulations is a misdemeanor offense punishable by a maximum fine of \$500.

Thomas Biasell, Farmington Hills director of public services, said the most common query he gets during water restrictions is, "Does that apply to us?" The answer, he said, is yes.

Biasell urged water customers not to sprinkle lawns at peak

usage times; in the morning when people are showering, and in the evening when water is used for cooking.

He said it is rare for fines to be levied. "What we have found is that neighbors are quite vigilant. If somebody is sprinkling on the other side of the street, neighbors talk to each other. This usually works very well," Biasell said.

The longest period of water restrictions in recent years was

in 1988, when restrictions lasted a month and a half.

To demonstrate that residents take water restrictions seriously, Biasell said the Farmington Hills city offices get calls when people spot that the City Hall fountain is running during a restriction period. He said the fountain uses recycled water.

Staff Writer Kevin Brown contributed to this report.

Farmington Road project on again, off again, on again

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Definitely, probably, maybe. That was the best way to describe the up-and-down plans for the Farmington Road widening and reconstruction this week.

Finally, an announcement came Wednesday morning from Craig Bryson, public information officer for the Road Commission of Oakland County, that the roadwork was expected to begin Wednesday, July 18.

The start date was originally Monday, then delayed to Wednesday, given a maybe July 20 or 23 status, and then pressured back to Wednesday.

"It's that fluid," Bryson said. "There's a whole lot of details which have to be worked out. The contractor wants to get moving, and we want to get moving."

Bryson explained even though this is a county project, MDOT has to approve the details and scheduling. Federal funds pass through MDOT to the county.

Plans for the annual Farmington Founders Festival in July influenced the Road Commission's decision to divide construction over a two-year period. The first portion, from Eight Mile to Nine Mile, is expected to be completed in November.

"This section of Farmington Road will be widened from four lanes to five, with the addition of a center left-turn lane,"

Bryson said. "During construction, two lanes, one in each direction, will remain open to through traffic at all times but an alternate is recommended due to expected traffic delays."

Access to all businesses will be maintained at all times, though some side streets will be closed at Farmington Road.

About two weeks after the project starts, traffic will shift to the westerly two lanes of the existing road, so that the contractor can construct the new northbound easterly lanes.

Next year, the road commission will reconstruct Farmington Road from the end of this project just south of Nine Mile north to Grand River. Farmington Road will be widened to five lanes north to Slocum only. Bryson anticipates that the stretch between Slocum and Grand River will be finished prior to July 15, 2002, in time for next year's Founder's Festival.

Safety and road capacity concerns drove the road commission's decision to widen areas to five lanes, Bryson said. "We don't like four-lane roads in general anymore," he said.

The commission prefers a center turn lane rather than having motorists making left turns from a through lane.

The total project cost for both this year's and next year's portions is about \$7.8 million. Lanzo Construction of Roseville is the contractor.



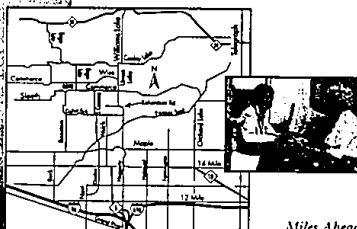
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