

Fast Growth Brings Problems

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warehouse in Livonia, which would employ an estimated 3,000 people.

• Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Company will open its new \$1 million building in Farmington Township this year.

• During 1966, the industrial and commercial building permits issued in Livonia reflect a total building valuation in excess of \$18.2 million.

This list is by no means complete, but it gives some idea of the magnitude of the industrial explosion in this area.

Linked to the growth of business is population growth. The population of Livonia, presently 100,000, is expected to leap to 200,000 in the next 15 years.

Plymouth Township, which boasted a population of 8,364 in 1960, is expected to mushroom to 30,000 by 1980. Canton Township plans for a jump from 6,000 to 10,000 in 1970 and 20,000 in 1980.

Farmington Growth

The City of Farmington, coupled with Farmington Township and the two villages, should grow from 45,000 to 77,000 by 1980.

Redford Township, the largest township in the United States, has a total of nearly 90,000 residents, but it is well built up at present and planners do not expect significant further growth.

Two main reasons for such growth are migration of families from the inner Detroit area and the tremendous industrial growth of the area.

Planners expect that industrial growth will be responsible for an increasing share of the population growth as time goes on.

The Livonia School District presently has 30,000 children in its system, a new high school on the drawing boards, and no end in sight. Other school systems are faced with the same dilemma.

More Public Works

Departments of public works are finding that needs for sewers, water systems and paved streets are outstripping their ability to provide such facilities. Fire and police departments are having trouble meeting community needs and are faced with increased labor costs and recruitment problems.

In trying to cope with the problems of industrial growth in the area, two main problems emerge: 1) Money; 2) Coordination.

More Taxes

Always a source of dispute and disagreement, taxes are necessary to provide the money to pay for the services needed both by industry and by residents. Millage elections have, by and large, been successful in this area, but property owners are becoming increasingly irked at steadily rising property taxes.

It is in this area that industry is a particularly good neighbor for the communities in this area.

It is clear that industrial development raises the tax value of land. Many communities in the area, Livonia and Farmington and Plymouth Townships among them, have industrial parks. Some communities have industrial de-

velopment specialists working to attract industries to the area.

In fact, a big plant can become a prized plum, and often there is intense competition between communities to attract industries.

To see just how important industry is to the tax revenue of a community, let's look at a few examples.

• The Burroughs Corporation plant on Plymouth Road in 1966 paid nearly \$900,000 to Plymouth Township, almost half of the Township's tax receipts.

• The General Motors Diesel plant in Redford Township paid just under \$1.5 million in real estate and personal taxes.

• The Chevrolet spring and bumper plant on Plymouth Road was responsible for \$800,000 in taxes paid to the City of Livonia.

• The Ford Motor Company plants in Livonia produced a total of over \$3 million in tax revenue.

These figures make clear that even though industrial development in the area produces problems for the communities involved, industries pay their way.

In fact, without the industrial tax base, it is doubtful that communities such as Livonia could survive.

The coordination problem is more difficult to detail.

Part of the difficulty is illustrated by the problem facing a large manufacturing plant in Plymouth Township, which has been ordered to follow a recently passed state law governing the disposal of solid wastes.

The plant will not be able to burn its rubbish because state laws on the subject are being enforced, nor will it be able to use its own dump.

Instead, the rubbish will have to be trucked to a dump, at a cost of many thousands of dollars each month.

However, the plant manager looks across the Plymouth Township-Livonia boundary, and sees fires burning in various dumps in Livonia.

Quite rightly, he is irked at such differing attitudes toward enforcement of the law.

In time, such differences between local government units will be resolved, but in the meantime the coordination problems are enormous.

The problem is that while each of these local government units has information and authority within its own boundaries, it has neither information nor authority over problems in other areas. But problems are no respecter of local government unit boundaries.

Air and water pollution, traffic planning and the building of roads, waste disposal. These are only a few of the problem areas that spread throughout the entire area served by The Observer Newspaper Group.

Years ago, the attitude used to be: If Livonia has an air pollution problem, it's their problem. But attitudes have changed, and authorities in adjacent communities realize that one community's problem is often a very real problem for the others.

Coordinated efforts, however, have been hindered by lack of any focal point for ideas and solutions. ever, have been hindered by study and evaluation of prob-

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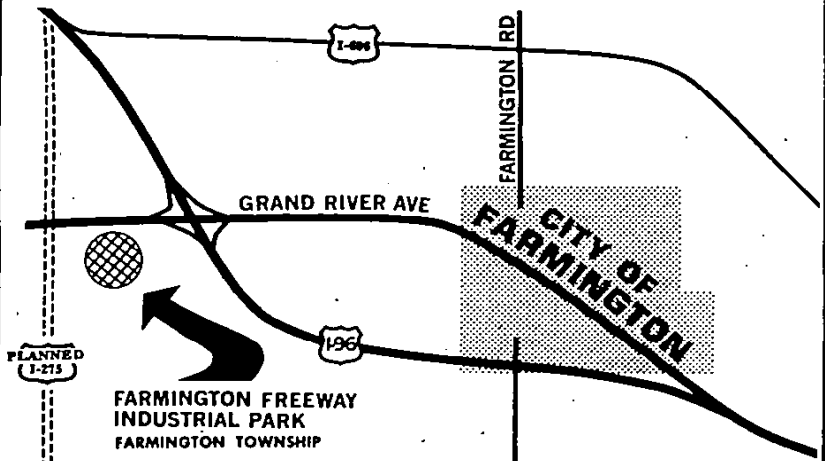
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