

Farmington 'Downtown Concept'

A glowing portrait of a mile-long stretch of Grand River as a solidly commercial shopping magnet is painted by Farmington City Manager John D. Dinan in projecting the community's business growth for the next five years.

Dinan foresees the continuing development of Grand River from Farmington Rd. at the west to Orchard Lake Rd. at the east as giving the city a "new look" in the form of a "downtown concept."

ALREADY THRIVING at the poles of this strip are the Farmington Center at one end and the Plaza at the other, and complete commercialization of the in-between area is expected by the city manager.

Key factor in launching this growth, Dinan states, is the current construction of the new Federal department store which is due to open its doors this spring.

Facing Grand River, the 70,000-square-foot plumb is expected by community leaders to serve as an added lure to other retail installations to share an expected boom both in foot and automotive traffic.

Dinan anticipates that the emerging downtown growth will result in the radial expansion of Farmington as an area trading center.

ACCESS TO FARMINGTON was improved in the past year by the widening of Orchard Lake Rd. south to Eight Mile Rd., and in 1968 Farmington Rd. will be similarly widened between Eight and Nine Mile Rds.

Dinan disclosed that talks also have been launched with the State Highway

Department in quest of a westbound I-96 exit at the junction of the freeway and Farmington Rd. This, too, would make the city's mercantile area more accessible to residents of Livonia and Detroit.

Commercial expansion to the west of the city also is on the drawing boards, with two neighborhood shopping centers contemplated for the recently annexed territory which runs west to Halstead Rd.

Dinan says that together the two

centers would represent \$10 million in new construction.

INDUSTRIALLY, the city of Farmington has about reached its peak, barring decisions by owners of the remaining acreage which is zoned for industrial use to make a sudden move.

However, completion of the Alta Berger Industrial Subdivision in the Eight Mile and Farmington Rd. sector is a real possibility in the next year or two, according to the city manager.

The 25-acre parcel is about 90 per cent occupied, he said, and scattered remaining chunks have drawn the interest of at least three small manufacturers.

Dinan cited this industrial area as an example of planned development by the city and said its current total assessed valuation of approximately \$3 million represents four times the value the land would have carried as residential property.

Westland Future Tips Given

Westland representatives were told what it takes and what they can do to attract new industrial and commercial development into the city.

The tips were given by two persons at a Westland Industrial and Commercial Development Corp. meeting in City Hall.

The speakers were David Wilson, industrial analyst for the C & O Railroad, and George Hillman, area development consultant for Consumers Power Co.

Wilson said that the five important factors a company looks for when locating in a new community are market, labor, transportation, power, which he described as essential, and raw materials, which he said is less important since it can be transported to the site.

HE ALSO SAID that Westland has

a tremendous local market and skilled labor force, being on the fringe of the metropolitan Detroit area, in addition to excellent transportation and adequate power.

One more factor is needed to apply the previously-mentioned aspects; a physical site for a company to locate on.

He also stressed that the physical site must have the necessary utilities on hand, must be accessible by railroads and trucks.

Another important aspect is that the site must be properly zoned for industrial use, Wilson said in pointing out that the city's promises to rezone the land at the time of development doesn't hold much water as many firms have been stung on getting an option on a site and having their rezoning requests denied.

Wilson also said that proper zoning controls and protects the land.

THE RAILROAD REPRESENTATIVE then advised the Westland persons that when a site or sites are available, advise the railroad, gas, and utility companies, who are contacted by prospective industrialists.

Hillman stressed the importance of promotional efforts in getting new commercial and industrial growth. He displayed numerous brochures and advertisements.

Selling your city to prospective industrialists "isn't much different than selling Fuller brushes," Hillman said. "I must get out (of the office), knock on doors, and see people."

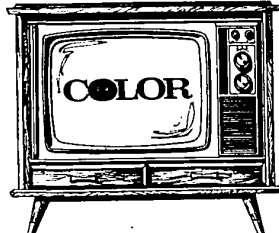
He also said that there are an estimated 16,000 development groups in the country, all trying to lure industry to their hometown.

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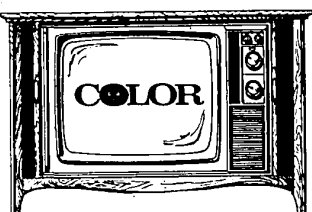
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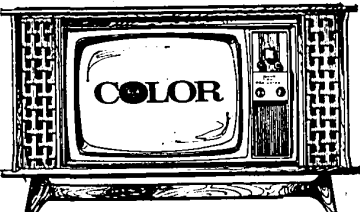
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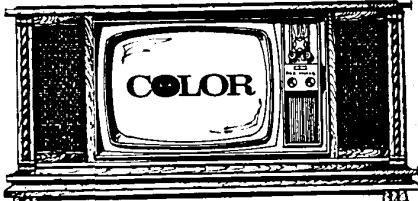
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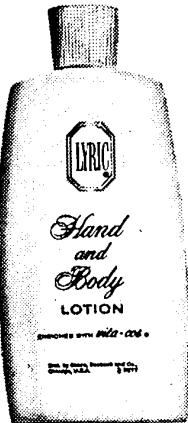
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