

# Costs are cited

## Hills won't join county's solid waste disposal group

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

**'The city would realize a sizable increase in solid waste disposal cost under the county plan.'**

— Dale Countegan  
Hills official

Faced with the almost certain possibility of greater costs, Farmington Hills will not join Oakland County's proposed Solid Waste Disposal Authority.

The Farmington Hills City Council voted 7-0 Monday to maintain the city's current solid waste disposal system rather than enter into agreement with the county for participation in its disposal authority.

Although other factors entered into City Manager William Costick's recommendation not to enter into contract with the county, projected costs of city participation in the countywide disposal system was touted as the greatest concern.

The county plan — mandated by Public Act 641 of 1978 — calls for the creation of a countywide system with participation limited only to Oakland County communities.

The plan is based on solid waste disposal in a combined operation of an incinerator and landfill. Participating communities would be required to finance the disposal system based on each community's proportionate share of refuse delivered to the county's disposal sites.

THE COUNTY'S primary facility, according to the plan, would be at the Oakland County Service Center in Pontiac, Costick said. The county's proposal is based on disposing approximately 600 tons of refuse with enough communities participating to meet that demand. County officials set a Dec. 13 deadline for communities to decide on participation, Costick said.

The system would be operated by a municipal solid waste board with representatives from each of the participating communities. A partner-

ship would be formed with the Oakland County Executive and Oakland County Board of Commissioners to develop a plan of financing and operations, Costick said.

Under the county's plan, Farmington Hills would pay \$15-\$22 a ton for refuse disposal in 1989 — the projected starting date of the county's system. At \$15 a ton, Farmington Hills would pay approximately \$380,000 for 26,000 tons (based on the city's average 100 tons of refuse a day). At \$22 a ton, the city's projected cost would be \$572,000.

"My guess is that it will be even higher than that," Costick said.

THE COUNTY'S projected \$15 to \$22 a ton is an average cost based on its plan to use both an incinerator and landfill to dispose of refuse from participating communities.

A major factor in city officials' decision not to participate in the county's plan is the city's current contract with Holloway Landfill in Salem Township, Washtenaw County.

Under a current five-year contract with Holloway Landfill, Farmington Hills pays \$4.75 a ton. In 1989, the city would pay a projected cost of \$6.98 a ton, Costick said. That works out to approximately \$181,000. By continuing with Holloway

landfill to force haulers to use them," Countegan said. "Haulers would have a tendency to want to use other facilities at a lower cost to remain cost competitive."

Private haulers could use the county's scheme as a reason to increase fees, Costick added.

landfill has 800 acres with many years of capacity remaining, Costick said.

Landfill officials are adding another 160 acres with three years of disposal capacity. The state Department of Natural Resources recently issued Holloway a construction permit for development of another 160 acres with a projected 12- to 20-year capacity.

"It is going to be in business for some time," Costick said. "I think we are covered. I feel comfortable we are covered." Unlike Oakland County's solid waste plan, the

Washtenaw County plan allows communities in other counties to dispose of waste in landfills within its borders. "Thus, the city of Farmington Hills can continue to use Holloway at a substantially lower cost than proposed by the Oakland County plan," Countegan said.

ALTHOUGH THE city would have the option of joining the county's system in the future, Costick assured council that the Holloway Landfill will be in operation for years to come. The city is in the third of a five-year contract with the landfill. The current contract runs to September 1987.

If landfill officials want to terminate the contract, the city must be given a two-year notice. The city can terminate the contract with six months notice, Costick said.

Costick told council he is certain Holloway Landfill is capable of operating for years to come. Currently, the

ALSO OF concern to city officials is flow control requirements under the county's plan, Costick said. The plan would require that all refuse from the city must be processed at the county's facility.

"This requirement would eliminate any opportunity for the city or private sector to secure lower cost disposal service elsewhere," Countegan wrote.

The city also would be required to enforce flow control that would require the licensing of all refuse haulers working in the city. The city would have to make sure refuse haulers used the county's landfill or incinerator.

"In light of the higher disposal cost projected for the county facility, it would be almost impossi-

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