

Chatham Hills prepares for street repair

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hearing to review the roll has been scheduled for March 16 at the beginning of the regular council meeting.

"It would be awfully easy for me to sit here tonight and vote against this," Councilman Ralph Yoder told the group before voting. "I can't in all conscience do that. The longer you wait, the more it will cost. The roads have to be fixed and the city cannot afford to pay for this by itself."

COUNCILMAN RICHARD Tupper asked the property owners to "bite the bullet" and accept the repairs, with Councilwoman Shirley Richards adding, "I concur. It is time to do

the replacement . . . for the betterment of our community."

Homeowners will be assessed \$3,100 per lot for the work, which involves installing a new edge drain system throughout the neighborhood, and filling voids below streets with pea rock where the street base has washed away.

An estimated 30-40 percent of the subdivision's concrete streets will be completely replaced.

The city expects to bid the work and begin this summer, with construction running from July through September, city manager Robert Deadman said.

The city's 33 percent will total more than \$400,000 — a higher percentage than has been offered for

any such project in the city, according to Deadman. The city usually pays 15-20 percent for such projects, he said.

"If we do nothing, your roads will continue to fall apart," said city engineer Dave Mariner of Orchard Hills & McClintock of Livonia. "I think we've given you a roadway system . . . you can live with."

THE ISSUE of major street repair to Chatham Hills has been discussed for several years. About 10 years ago, city officials discovered many residents running pump water toward the streets, where it was getting under the pavement and causing base erosion. Adding to the problem were the sand and clay

street bases, engineers said.

The subdivision's homeowners council and city officials met in 1985 to discuss the situation, which eventually drew everyone together for Monday's meeting.

Deadman said between 30-50 percent of the \$24,000 in local road money spent per year is going to keep the Chatham Hills roads usable. "This patching is using up far more than the community can afford," he said. A cement truck has reportedly fallen through one street and children in the area have stepped into the voids.

"We're not happy living with the liability," Deadman added. "I don't think you're happy living with unsafe roads."

Most of the Chatham Hills subdivision streets were built in the 1960s, before the city annexed the neighborhood in 1967-68, according to city officials. The Oakland County Road Commission was responsible for installing the original streets, Deadman said.

Many residents said they felt the roads were not properly installed and maintained, while others opposed the assessment because work will not be done directly in front of their property. One man called the situation "a repair problem that got out of hand."

OTHERS SAID the assessment was unnecessary because "the road has already been paid for." Other comments were made about additional interest paid if the assessment were paid over a period of months, which the city allows.

Still others spoke in favor. "Take a walk after a rain, and you'll see the problem," one resident said. "I think you have to do the whole thing — not a patch job."

Mayor William Hartsock said the assessment requests shouldn't "come to anyone's great surprise. I'm sure you would agree there isn't anything for free. There is no provision that once a road is put in it is guaranteed for life."

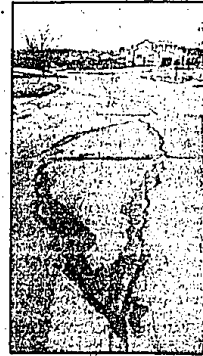
A new drainage system will be installed along both sides of the subdivision streets, which will capture surface water and carry it through the storm sewer system into the Caddell Drain. Pea stone will be used to fill voids in the street base, allowing moisture to flow through more easily.

lion, with the city paying 33 percent and property owners being assessed for the balance. (See related story).

Other major roads, including Farmington Road from Shawwassee to 10 Mile, Power Road from Grand River to 10 Mile and Shinwassee from Farmington Road to Mooney Street. These are scheduled for repair or replacement. Cost estimates total \$24,000. Highway revenue bonds will be sold to finance a portion, with cash reserves in the major street fund also used.

Projects for the city's local street system are also under way. Streets in the Alta Loma and Woodcroft subdivisions are being seal-coated at a cost of \$13,500 and \$15,000 respectively, and the city will spend \$54,000 to repair a base failure and sealcoat a portion of Arundel Street. Money from these projects will be taken from the city's general fund, and local road and street funds.

"The major unknown factor in the proposed program is the cost sharing of the Orchard Lake Road drain project," Deadman told the council. "Until the cost . . . and the sharing formula is agreed to, we are not in a position to estimate the financial impact . . . on the general fund debt service."

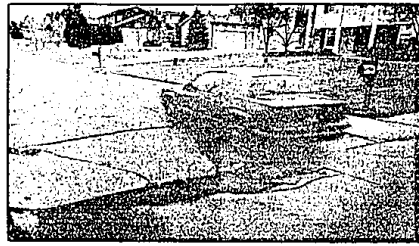


RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Tree Hill shows some of the many cracks in the Chatham Hills concrete streets.

The joints of the concrete roads will then be sealed once the repair and replacement work is done, Mariner said.

Officials said once the work is done, routine maintenance would take care of the roads. "If we can stop the water from getting under the pavement, we can keep roads where they are now," Mariner added. "This is the most cost effective method we came up with."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Heading for Grand River on Smithfield, the cement is deteriorating.

By Casey Hans
staff writer

With the city of Farmington facing a new cycle of major road repairs, officials are pinning their hopes on additional state road funding.

Without state funding — or a continued increase in local property values generating more tax dollars — the city may have to consider raising the debt service millage levy, City Manager Robert Deadman told city council members last week.

Farmington will reach its state bonding limit when the Orchard Lake Road widening project begins during the next two years.

"We will be nearly maxing out on highway bonds when we finish Orchard Lake Road," Deadman said. "State funding is possible, but it's still up in the air."

Also undecided is the funding formula for a new storm drain related to the Orchard Lake project — leaving the city to guess how much they might have to spend during the next few years on necessary road improvements.

DEADMAN'S COMMENTS came during a report to city council on \$7.5 million of road improvements planned for the city between 1987-

89. Some projects are already approved, while others have yet to be considered by council, he said. Payment will come from a variety of sources, including state, federal and local funds.

Farmington's \$2.8 million share will be divided between the highway fund with \$1.1 million, the city's general fund with \$944,000 and special assessments to property owners of \$840,300, Deadman's report said.

In search of state help, the city council voted unanimously last week to go on record supporting three new state Senate bills which would permit the state highway department to issue bonds for construction of state roads and establishing a new program of state matching road dollars for local governments.

One of the bills would permit a local government to assess, impact fees to developers, Deadman said.

THE PROPOSED legislation would also increase the gasoline tax, bringing in an additional \$18 million dollars for the state and creating "a considerable amount of money to flow into the city," Deadman added.

Under the proposals, an estimated \$90,000 would be earmarked for Farmington, and the city would have the option of bonding 40 percent of

that, Deadman added.

But whether or not additional state funding is obtained, planned road repair projects for the city are needed. They are, according to Deadman's report:

• The widening of Orchard Lake Road, which has been at the top of the city's list for road help over the past several years. Farmington will pay \$248,800 of the \$3.1 million estimated for the Orchard Lake widening from Grand River to 10 Mile, according to Deadman's report. Widening work will also be done in Farmington Hills north to 11 Mile. It is expected the city will use its bonding authority to finance this project.

• Another related project, the Orchard Lake Road Storm Drain, will allow proper drainage for the widening improvements and will bring the area into compliance with the master plan. The drain project will cost an estimated \$2.1 million, and will be shared by the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills, the Oakland County Road Commission and the federal government. The cost-sharing plan for this project is not finalized.

• Chatham Hills concrete subdivision streets which need replacement, according to city engineers. Estimated repairs will run \$1.2 mil-

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