

'89 is year of wastes in city

Continued from Page 1

1989, in addition to regional concerns facing many southeastern Michigan communities.

Generally, city officials are pleased with the direction, yet cautious in their approach.

"The thing about Little Farmington, this is an older community. We have to see that a negative trend doesn't set in," said lifelong resident and current mayor Robert Tupper. "I think we're in good shape. The momentum is on the positive side and our job is to keep it there."

THE TWO largest concerns facing Farmington in 1989 are the costs and methods of garbage removal and disposal, and how the older community will cope with new regulations that will require major changes in the city's sewer system. Both Mayor Tupper and city manager Robert Deadman are looking for answers — and cost estimates for the projects — in the coming year.

"Those two things are very important," stressed Tupper. "They're going to come down very heavy as a burden to us."

Solid waste disposal is being reviewed not only in Farmington, but across the county, state and nation. Landfills are becoming expensive and scarce in some areas. Deadman expects to see a plan emerge for this area that will use a variety of op-

Trash disposal and updating Farmington's sewer system are the top two concerns facing the city in 1989. Still unknown: costs and plans.

tions such as recycling, composting, incinerating and landfills.

Regardless of plan, it will cost local communities considerably more.

"In the coming year, there should be some decisions made on solid waste," said Deadman, who heads a consortium of officials from six Southeast Oakland County cities reviewing the problem. The group is doing its own research, and meeting with county officials to try and reach a consensus of what should be done.

IN THE area of sewers, the city is looking at more money and some big changes.

The city council will hear an engineering report Monday on recommended approaches to correcting combined sewer overflows, which during heavy rains carry sewage and storm waters into the Rouge River.

Deadman expects it will cost the city \$50,000 in equipment and another \$50,000 in engineering studies to rectify the problem and meet natural resource standards. He said the

city would use federal and state grants and low-interest loan programs, where possible, to fund the project.

BUT ALSO important, and more visible to residents, is the activity going on in downtown Farmington and the private fix-up and development that it has spurred.

"The spillover effect comes in a lot of different forms," Deadman said. "Property changeovers because people see this as a viable market ... and new buildings on the district's periphery."

The public project, coordinated by the city's Downtown Development Authority, is in its second phase and will last another several years. Private elements include new retail and office space, and several condominium developments.

"The perception — and I think it's right — is that the community is safe, and the services good," said Deadman. "Their needs can all be met here. It's really attracted a lot

of senior citizens. There's also a youth movement back into the community. I think the school figures will bear that out.

"I think that's positive."

ANOTHER NICE surprise for Farmington in 1989 is fast movement of the plan to widen Orchard Lake Road from Grand River to the I-696 freeway — a joint project between the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills and Oakland County. Deadman said construction could start as early as this year, which will give the area a solid north/south route.

According to Tupper and Deadman, the city will also look at several other joint ventures with Farmington Hills this year, including proposed expansion of the Farmington Community Library system and proposals from a joint citizen committee on a Senior Activity Center. The city has also been invited to participate in the neighboring Farmington Hills "Year 2000" project, which they plan to do.

In light of this activity, new growth and improvements, Tupper added that the city must continue to be strong in enforcing zoning laws.

"Our neighborhoods are older; we need to maintain them," he said. "I don't think we should allow variances ... unless they are in true harmony with our code."

Era of openness

Fairness, integrity goals of Mayor Sever

Continued from Page 1

controversy and anger among residents and many elected officials and administrators.

Troubling events included disclosure of a sewer tap-in debt owed by councilman Ben Marks, with city manager William Costick maintaining the debt as an account receivable rather than putting it on Marks' 1987 tax bill. The debt was paid after it came to public light.

Residents continued to charge the city council, administrators and staff with failing at their duties as land use issues loomed. Residents brought to light concerns, such as with builders, that should have been corrected by staff but were overlooked.

"I think we have had a very tough year. And part of the problem is with the rapid pace of growth," Costick said. "There's a number of potential conflicts emerging because of the rapid growth and the discomfort growth causes."

"I look for the day the growth slows down. It's not healthy for the city. And it's difficult for the city staff to keep up," he said. "Sometimes, we're not always aware of the people's feelings."

AT THE first regular city council meeting of the year Monday, Sever pledged to face the challenge of unifying an often argumentative and disjointed council and to channel interest from the public and boards

and commissions in the decision-making process.

To a surprised standing-room-only audience, Sever jumped out of his seat and announced, "I accept the challenge."

In one of his first tasks as mayor, Sever organized a meeting with the heads of the city's boards and commissions, to seek ideas and concerns and to offer them the challenge of greater involvement.

"I'm asking them to be more involved with the decision-making process," Sever said. "I want to encourage free thinking. People have been held back. And the city has been held back with only seven people making the decisions. I want to draw on everybody."

The overwhelming response of 150 residents to the call for volunteers to work on six task forces of the long-planned Year 2000 plan for the city fell right into Sever's expectations for participation.

"We have an opportunity to look to the future. And I think that's one thing we were shortsighted on, planning for the future," Sever said.

The new mayor compared the city to an automobile.

"If you look at an auto, people that own automobiles over the years keep it polished, put money into it ... and it becomes a very valuable asset. It becomes a classic," Sever said. "We the people of this community can develop a classic."

Year 2000 is guide to Hills

Continued from Page 1

manager William Costick said about the Year 2000 plan.

The plan, completed by members of six task forces, is expected to ask and answer what should be the city's goals for the future. Roads, public facilities, social needs, community institutions, economics and finances and beautification are among the issues to be addressed.

"It will solidify the community and help build a consensus and what elements of future planning are important," Costick said.

Roads will continue to dominate as the city rolls into the third and final year of the voter-approved \$7 million bond program. In summer, four to eight miles of roadways are expected to be improved. Engineering plans for major projects, such as the planned widening and repaving of Orchard Lake Road, from Grand River to 11 Mile, also is expected to begin. Farmington and Farmington Hills are working on Orchard Lake together.

"OF THE whole bond program, the Orchard Lake improvement is the biggest. We're beginning to see an impact through the road bond program. Twelve Mile is still a tremendous problem. But I'm hopeful we will be funded and start construction by 1990," Costick said.

Work will continue to secure financing for other major road projects such as the planned 12 Mile boulevard between Farmington and Haggerty roads, as well as the proposed M-9 route along or near

Haggerty Road, connecting I-696 to Pontiac Trail.

Financing also is a question in needed capacity improvements to Eight Mile, Farmington Road to I-275, Costick said.

Solid waste disposal will continue as a growing concern for Farmington Hills, a member of the six-community Southwest Oakland Solid Waste Consortium. Whether the six communities, including Farmington, decide to join the Oakland County solid waste disposal plan or not, some issues remain in the forefront for the community. They are recycling and waste source separation.

"I would expect that during 1989, we'll be making some major decisions. Whether we go with the county or not, some of the components will be the same," Costick said.

The city's park system, the library and senior citizen needs also are expected to dominate in 1989.

A MAJOR focus in the city's park development efforts will be buying and planning for the development of a 10-20 acre park in the city's southeast. The park is expected to have baseball and soccer fields. "We're looking at sites now," Costick said.

Expansion is the focus of the Farmington Community Library in 1989. But the library's needs, Costick said, must be balanced with the needs of senior citizens. "I think we recognize the need and the amount of patrons that use the library. It's growing. Timing is what has to be dealt with. How is it going to fit into everything else?"



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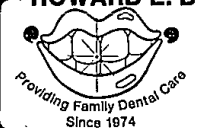
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