

Hills' development to ease in decade ahead

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

The 1980s saw Farmington Hills endure its adolescent growing pains. The 1990s, city officials predict, will see the city come of age as a premier residential community, enriched with a quality environment and a respect for its historic past.

"I think by the year 2000, we will turn the corner. We will be a lovely place to live," Farmington Hills Mayor Jean Fox said.

Few, if any, would disagree with Fox. "Our challenge is to preserve the residential character of Farmington Hills. To do that, we have to develop programs to enhance the appearance of the city and its environmental quality," city manager William Costick said.

With optimism, city officials expect the 1990s will see the resolution of problems that surfaced in the 1980s because of the city's unprecedented residential and office growth: inadequate roads, traffic congestion and sanitary sewer and flooding problems.

THE 1990s will:

- See the dawn of curbside recycling to reduce the burgeoning problem of solid waste and accompanying astronomical disposal costs.
- Test city leaders on how they address the need for improved roads to accommodate more traffic without destroying the environment and making a city of concrete.
- Challenge city leaders to maintain city services — including increased recreation areas, cultural facilities, an expanded library and services for senior adults — while maintaining an acceptable tax rate.
- Involve city officials, residents and business leaders in beautifying the city, in subdivisions and along major and local roads.
- See efforts to preserve the community's past with its historic houses and maintain the longstanding residential character of the city.

CITY OFFICIALS will be challenged again as growth continues to move west. Farmington Hills will no longer be one of the newest, outermost communities on the fringe of suburbia.

"We've all seen an era of suburbs come and go. We've seen what were to be garden spots of suburban growth hit by decreasing values and increased crime," Costick said.

"Hopefully, we are smart enough now that we have learned from the first wave of urbanization that we

looking ahead at...

THE '90s Farmington Hills

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— William Costick
city manager

can stop decline. We have to upgrade the old and adapt to change and the new," he added.

In the 1990s, Fox sees stronger efforts in beautifying the city, in making it a pleasant place to live. Heavy traffic, she hopes, will be moved to larger roads — a new N-9 and the proposed Haggerty Road connector — to get congestion off local roads.

One of Fox's goals as mayor is to introduce an ordinance regulating paper signs on store walls and windows, to further beautify the city.

Costick would like to see strong beautification efforts along the city's major corridors, such as 12 Mile, Northwestern Highway and Orchard Lake Road.

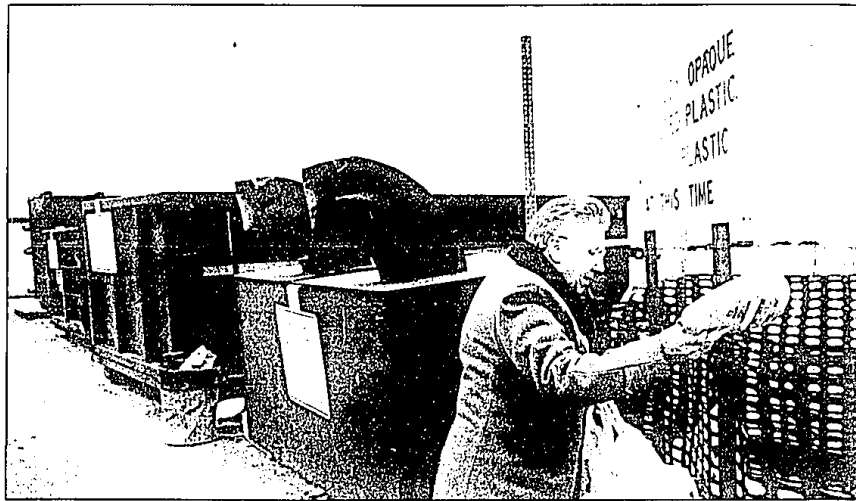
THOUGH CITY councilman Aldo Vagnozzi believes the city's growth will continue in the new decade, both he and Fox believe there must be some controls on density to again provide a pleasant appearance for the city and quality living conditions for residents.

"We'll have to look at the need for revitalization as our housing becomes older," Vagnozzi said.

Recent efforts to improve and beautify older areas, such as Old Town, formerly called Section 36, is an example of what will be needed, he said.

Fox believes city officials should have been more vigilant 10 or 15 years ago in curbing density. But she also believes "thinking has changed. We are beginning to turn the corner on density. Most people now want open space."

In the 1990s, Costick would like to see a slowdown on the building of



Mayor Pro Tom Aldo Vagnozzi deposits plastic containers at the Farmington Hills Recycling Center.

office centers. Of great concern are those built for lease, with no major corporation as a tenant when the facility is built.

"The vacancy rates are high. The same is happening in neighboring communities. How will that affect us?" Costick said. "We're seeing a lot of transfer growth, not new growth. It won't be economically healthy to see new speculative growth."

WITHOUT A downtown of its own, Farmington Hills must rely on the "connectedness" of its residents and the 100-plus subdivisions the city pulls together as a community, Costick said.

And without a downtown, he continued, Farmington and its downtown will continue to serve as a focal point. The 1990s, Vagnozzi and Costick predict, will see increased cooperation between the sister cities.

"Consolidation? Probably not. The characters are too different. And the history in Michigan of nearby communities consolidating is generally 'no,'" Costick said.

Mayor: City needs 'moral fiber'

By Joanne Mallazewski
staff writer

Road improvements, beautification and historical preservation have their definite place in the 1990s.

But Farmington Hills Mayor Jean Fox would like to see a move toward a "more civil environment" and a strengthened "moral fiber."

"I really would like to see us do something about strengthening our moral fiber," Fox said. "I guess it's something that a city council can't necessarily do. But I feel it's something we can focus attention on."

Our era of drug use and violence at home, in the streets and in the schools is "something we can turn the corner on," she said.

Though a city council would be hard-pressed to make changes in society, Fox said government can reflect the need for change, for return

to values. The mayor said that one way in turning youths away from drugs and alcohol is to involve them in the community in which they live.

"When we were younger, we were taught to be committed to giving something back. That you are involved in your community," she said. "Ninety percent of the kids would like to be involved. If they knew how and what to get involved in."

To that end, Fox is suggesting that government, both the city and schools, should allow youths to become involved in various projects, such as beautification.

"IT ISN'T a question of money. It's a question of letting the kids go out and give back to the community. This would get kids involved in this is my country and I want to get involved in it."

Youths also could be better in-

olved in the annual Rouge Rescue cleanup and the cleanup of other streams and environmentally sensitive areas in the community, Fox said.

They could be equally involved in helping to beautify the city by helping to plant flowers and bushes in areas sorely in need of color and vegetation, Fox added.

The mayor also would like the 1990s to be a decade where generations again become involved with another in Farmington Hills to help make "a more civil environment."

"Senior adults have a contribution to make. They can show youths there's a lot more to life than the newest pair of pants on the market. I think we've got older people in this community that have lived a life. They can show youths how they lived, what's really important in life," Fox said.

Cash is the key to Hills' Year 2000 dreams

By Susan Buck
staff writer

More than a crystal ball and a magic wand will be needed to prepare Farmington Hills to be the most livable city in Michigan in the year 2000, a goal of a yearlong study committee.

Year 2000 project participants who sought to become visionaries during a 1989 study were encouraged at the onset to drop their paradigms — that is, abandon old-fashioned and close-minded thinking. They were not required to consider costs or financing of projects.

CALL THE committee's summation wish lists or dreams now. But in a decade, many will be necessities, according to committee members.

"In the year 2000, 81 percent of the jobs in this country will be related to information and service," futurist and strategic planner Edward Barlow Jr. of St. Joseph said in a video when the report was presented to the city council Jan. 16.

"Only 9 percent will be related to manufacturing and others. In 1950, 50 percent of the jobs in this country were related to manufacturing. Each of us has to take on a zealousness about learning."



The committee's report, printed at a cost of \$32,000, represented the work of six task forces — Beautification and Environmental Preservation, Financial and Economic Vitality, Human Services, Leisure and Cultural, Public Facilities and Services and Public Safety.

Participants came from a mix of professional fields. Each task force had its own resource people.

THE CITY council discussed Year 2000 plan recommendations at its annual goal and study session Saturday.

Committee recommendations touch upon cooperation with the city of Farmington, Oakland County, Botsford General Hospital and private enterprise.

"We were asked to develop a plan to give decision makers a direction to strive for," said project steering

committee vice chair Paul Jackson. "This is that plan. It represents the hopes and dreams of our family and co-workers who we talked to, listened to and heard what they thought. The success of this document depends on the ability to implement it."

JACK McDONALD, who chaired the steering committee for the project, wants the city council to create a new committee encompassing the Year 2000 project's steering committee. That committee is composed of chairpeople and vice chairpeople from each task force.

The new committee would help implement the goals, objectives and strategies over a two-year period, McDonald said.

"It will give us the opportunity to prioritize the recommendations, which has not been done, to draw up a strategic plan, both short-term and long term, and to give us the chance to create dialogue," he said.

McDonald praised the caliber of the volunteers.

"When we first started, we had a personality test to determine whether people were docile, subject to manipulation or assertive," he said in jest. "This whole group was assertive. It took three months for us

to determine the definition of a goal and a strategy and what the difference was."

APPROXIMATELY 150 people, who met at least once a month, devoted 10,000 man-hours to create the 60-page, full-color document.

"I would like to express our great gratitude for the more than 10,000 hours that have gone into it," Mayor Jean Fox said.

"I'm sure that this is a minimum that is far exceeded by the devotion of the people who have given their dreams to the city. I would like to be able to be the fairy godmother who says, 'There, I snail you and those dreams will come true and your stagecoach will be out there and the horses will not turn into mice.'"

"I WOULD only like to say that now that we have this document printed and we sit here tonight, it looks a hell of a lot easier than it really was," said councilman Perry Sever, mayor-elect in 1989.

"To be a volunteer in this community is worthwhile and this is the paycheck for it. I hope we can implement it."

It is hard to comment on excellence, councilman Ben Marks said.

"It makes me feel very proud to

call these people who worked so hard, my neighbors. I respect them. I love them and thank God for Farmington Hills."

Councilman Aldo Vagnozzi looks forward to being able to spend more time discussing each task force's proposal.

"I'm impressed by the fact that we have a dynamic, creative leadership in this community. I pledge my support. It would be a tragedy for this to be on the shelf," councilwoman Nancy Bates said.

FULL APPRECIATION of the project participants will increase as the year 2000 approaches, councilman Jon Grant said.

Information changes every two years, said Barlow, who was present at the meeting in the city hall.

"For us, it seemed like to change every two weeks," said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, Farmington Downtown Development Authority executive director, who worked on the Public Facilities and Services Task Force.

In addition to McDonald, Strip Sittsamer, Jacksons and City Manager William Costick, the Year 2000 project's steering committee consists of Peggy DuPont, Edwina Eg-



Jack McDonald

gleston, Jerry Ellis, William Hatton, Martin Krohner, Leslie Kusek, Barbara McCann, Richard Poehlman, Karen Ross, Mary Stahl and alternates Sidney Alexander, Betsy Ganata, Gail Haynes, Marla Parker, Steve Roffman, Stuart Selis and Charlotte Yaverski. Resource people were David Call, Edward Lumpi and Shirley Shotton.

A peek at an ideal city — 10 years down the road

By Susan Buck
staff writer

An attractive community is composed of equally dynamic residents. Following are the goals suggested by 150 persons who served on six task forces during the year-long Year 2000 project.

Their objective: to make Farmington Hills "the most livable city in the state of Michigan in the year 2000."

Among the varied suggestions were: establishing a city bird, tree and flower, lengthening the school day and year, attracting global development, adding an artificial indoor ice rink; and providing a new court facility and adding a third judge.

"We as a city have an obligation to plan to prevent deterioration of properties in the future," said Jerry Ellis of the steering committee and chairman of the Financial and Economic Vitality Task Force. "Responding to and fighting the deterioration of the city is likened to mak-

ing love to a gorilla. You can't stop until the gorilla stops."

THE GOALS, according to each task force, are:

- **Beautification and environmental preservation**
 - Create a unified visual impact that provides a positive impression of the community to visitors and residents alike by establishing and implementing a visual master plan.
 - Create a clean, healthy and attractive environment, minimizing pollution.
 - Develop and implement beautification and preservation standards to foster community desirability.
 - Educate people of all ages to become more environmentally and historically conscious; promote volunteerism.
 - Promote natural resource and community historical preservation.
- **Financial and economic vitality**
 - Maintain a sound financial position.

- **Promote development consistent with objectives of the master plan to balance land uses to physically, economically, environmentally and socially benefit residents.**
 - Rehabilitate and redevelop commercial, industrial and residential areas of the city in a systematic manner.
 - Deliver cost-effective city services.
 - Maintain an equitable balance between revenue sources to ensure an appropriate city tax rate.
- **Human services**
 - Have a world-class system of education in Farmington/Farmington Hills.
 - Be a 100-percent drug-free and substance-abuse-free community.
 - Enhance the health care services and improve their availability for all people, at all levels of health: disease prevention and detection, health maintenance and promotion.
 - Provide an affordable transportation network for all residents.
 - Provide sufficient and afford-

- able independent and supportive housing for all residents of Farmington Hills.
- **Leisure and cultural**
 - Increase availability and accessibility to all artistic, cultural and recreational endeavors
 - Develop new facilities, programs and activities to increase availability and accessibility for all artistic, cultural and recreational endeavors.
 - Develop and improve various modes of transportation — including recreational — to local, metropolitan and outlying leisure and cultural activities, programs, events and facilities.
 - Provide a clearinghouse of public information of all leisure and cultural activities, programs, events and a retrieval system of that information current, readily available and user friendly.
 - Increase and expand the understanding, use and appreciation of leisure and culture.
 - Promote and support leisure

- and cultural organizations, programs and facilities.
- **Public facilities and services**
 - The city should provide a means of mobility to include pedestrian, non-motorized and a motorized transportation network that will ensure an aesthetically pleasing and pragmatic result.
 - The city should develop service facilities to meet the needs of a growing community, including facilities to serve cultural and recreational needs.
 - For air quality and noise levels, provide a balance between progress, continued growth, new technology and tranquility.
 - Assure accessibility to reliable, cost-effective public utilities.
 - Provide an integrated system to enhance communication between local government, citizens, the business community and educational institutions.
 - Control the generation, management, disposal and reuse of solid waste.

- **Encourage safe and efficient energy sources, management and usage.**
 - Encourage the efficient distribution and management of water lines, sanitary sewer lines and surface drainage.
- **Public safety**
 - Expand court facilities and staff based on projected increased caseload due to area growth.
 - The Farmington Hills Police Department must maintain adequate staffing to cope with projected population growth and increased density, along with business development, traffic congestion and higher crime rates.
 - The police department must continue to develop support services and advanced technology to cope with an increasingly sophisticated and mobile criminal element. It must replace obsolete systems and equipment in communication and weaponry.
 - The police department must