

With the upcoming expiration of two dedicated police millages and declining general fund revenues, Rochester Hills residents will soon have to decide how fund police services.

The millage doesn't expire until 2013 but the city's Police and Road Fund Technical Review Committee has been working on funding alternatives for the past year. As part of that effort which will result in recommendations to the council, the committee is looking for input from residents.

"The committee has come up with four proposals and we would like to know what residents think. They might have other ideas we haven't consider that they can offer, too," said Don Cline, who chairs the Police and Road Fund Technical Review Committee. "It's very important that people let us know what they think. Our police services are an integral part of maintaining safe community and property values."

Since incorporating as a city in 1984, Rochester Hills has maintained one of the lowest millage rates in Oakland County. That includes a cost effective contract for police services with the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, Cline said. In 2011, Rochester Hills spent \$8.7 million for 57 officers compared to Auburn Hills which spent \$12.7 million for 52 officers.

Working with key councilmembers and administrative staff, the committee developed four possible solutions to resolve the police funding issue:

- Proposing renewal of the two expiring millages for a combined 1.2 mill dedicated police millage to be levied for 20 years.
- Proposing a 20-year dedicated police millage which would fully fund police services.

- Proposing a change to the city charter to include a perpetual dedicated police millage to fully fund police services
- Proposing a dedicated millage to fund "quality of life" services such as parks, local roads, green space or road construction.

Earlier this year, the committee made a presentation to Rochester Hills homeowners association representatives about the city's police funding issues. E-mails were also used to solicit input.

The committee has scheduled a public hearing for to get public input on police services funding. Residents can also submit their input online at. The deadline for submitting comments and suggestions is Feb. 1.

Read more about the police funding at www.rochesterhills.org.