

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
JANUARY 22, 2026, 6:00 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Trafelet called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Brickner, Countegan, Lindquist, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet

Commissioners Absent: Aspinall, Grant, Ware

Others Present: City Planner Mulville-Friel, Staff Planner Mellem; Police Chief Piggot, Assistant Police Chief Moore, Police Captains Gloria and Kelly; Fire Chief Unruh, Fire Marshall Baloga, Deputy Fire Chief Olszewski; Director of Central Services Aranowski, IT Manager Lee, Senior System Analyst Barth, Senior Buyer Lumpkin; Director of Special Services Schnackel; Director of Public Services Rushlow, City Engineer Saksewski, DPW Superintendent Schueller

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Stimson, supported by Mantey, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

REGULAR MEETING:

A. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN (CIP) 2026/2027 THROUGH 2031 – 2032

ACTION REQUESTED: Set for Public Hearing

The Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is a strategic planning tool for the City's capital needs over 5 years. The CIP is not a budget but rather is a comprehensive document that includes the major programs and projects the various departments would like to accomplish over the next five years. The CIP is updated annually and is provided to the City Council to use as a guide during the budget process.

Department Directors reviewed the capital improvement accomplishments of the 2025/2026 year and laid out their desired capital projects for 2026/2027. A complete detail of the information is provided in the Capital Improvements Plan 2026/2027 - 2031/2032, which, after approval and adoption, will be available at the City Manager's Office.

The following minutes provide a summary of 2026/2027 requests by department.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Piggot, Assistant Police Chief Moore, and Police Captains Gloria and Kelly were present on behalf of the Police Department.

Chief Piggott reviewed the accomplishments of the past year, highlighting that all required computer equipment for CLEMIS upgrades was successfully purchased and that the project has been completed.

Current CIP Requests include:

- Replacement Body Armor: Police officer ballistic vests have a five-year life expectancy, and over 54 officers have body armor that will expire this year, at a cost of approximately \$64,800. The department intends to pursue available federal grants to potentially offset a portion of the cost.
- Workstations/Office Furniture: Workstation office furniture and a mobile command post have appeared in prior CIP requests, but have not yet been approved at the city manager level. Last year, the department explored replacing carpeting, desks, and office furniture. However, after a space assessment, it was determined that facility space limitations would not allow for additional workstations to accommodate new personnel. As a result, the department chose to pause the purchase and conduct building studies to determine whether future investment would be prudent before proceeding with the purchase of the replacement items. The office furniture request is therefore rolled into the 2026/2027 year, with an estimated cost of \$173,000.
- Mobile Command Post: The Mobile Command Post vehicle has been in service for 24 years and needs replacement. The estimated total for this project is \$450,000.
- Next Generation 911 System: The current system, Emergency Call Works (ECW), has been in use for over five years, has reached end-of-life status, and will no longer be supported by Motorola after the end of 2026. Oakland County is transitioning to a new system known as Carbyne. The upgrade will require significant investment in the dispatch center, with a total project cost of \$423,996.38. The first-year payment will be \$150,637.76, with annual payments of \$68,339.65 for years two through five.
- Motorola P25 Radio System Dispatch Position Upgrade: The dispatch center was previously remodeled and built to support six workstations, but only five workstations were fully equipped due to budget constraints. Increased dispatch activity levels involving police, fire, Farmington Public Safety, and special events justify the need for a sixth fully equipped workstation. The estimated cost for this upgrade is \$146,995.
- Grappler Vehicle Apprehension System: Vehicle pursuits are increasing, and PIT maneuvers can result in damage and liability. The Grappler system uses a nylon band deployed to stop fleeing vehicles by capturing a wheel, which brings the vehicle to a safe and controlled stop. The system can only be installed on full-frame vehicles, and the department is proposing equipping 12 full-frame vehicles to evaluate effectiveness and liability reduction. Cost would be \$85,000.

Commission Questions and Discussion

Commissioner Trafelet asked about dispatch call volume. Chief Piggott stated that the combined dispatch center handles over 78,000 calls for service annually, including police, fire, and Farmington Public Safety. Police calls average approximately 51,000 annually, fire calls range from approximately 17,000 to 18,000, and Farmington Public Safety averages approximately 11,000 calls per year. The department no longer provides dispatch for Franklin or Bingham Township.

Chief Piggott discussed future planning considerations related to Oakland Community College (OCC). Significant investment is occurring at the OCC Farmington Hills campus, which may become a 24-hour campus. OCC currently contracts with the Oakland County Sheriff's Department for dispatch services. However, 911 calls originating at OCC are routed to the city's dispatch center, creating potential

coordination challenges due to different radio systems. OCC's dispatch contract expires in 2027, and discussions are anticipated in the 2026 budget year regarding the possibility of the city providing dispatch services to OCC, which would increase call volume and further justify the sixth workstation.

In response to questions about new facilities being proposed at the OCC campus, Chief Piggott stated that plans include a three-sheet ice rink, a field house, relocation of athletic services to the Farmington Hills campus, potential on-campus housing, and related commercial uses such as a restaurant and hotel. The city already provides after-hours law enforcement backup due to OCC's limited overnight police presence.

In response to questions about the asset forfeiture fund. Chief Piggott reported a combined federal and state forfeiture balance of approximately \$2.5 million. Forfeiture funds are limited to law enforcement purposes and cannot be used to supplant the regular operating budget. The department attempts to spend these funds prudently and views them as a resource for items that cannot be accomplished through the normal budget process.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Unruh, Fire Marshall Baloga, and Deputy Fire Chief Olszewski were present on behalf of the Fire Department.

The department experienced the busiest year in its history, with 14,121 total runs. The department also recorded its busiest year for fires, responding to 137 fires of varying intensity.

Chief Unruh provided a recap of approved projects, current status, and upcoming requests:

- A state-funded Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was constructed as an addition to Fire Headquarters. The EOC is designed to manage both man-made and natural disasters affecting the city.
- The department is exploring plans for the EOC to serve as a backup facility for Oakland County, as well as several smaller surrounding communities that have expressed interest due to logistical challenges associated with using the county facility in Waterford.
- One ambulance is currently under construction in Columbus, Ohio. Delivery is anticipated in late February, with deployment shortly thereafter. This unit will be designated as Squad 3 and assigned to Station 3 at Grand River and Middlebelt.
- One fleet vehicle is pending delivery.
- The department is in the process of placing 21 new mobile data computers into service. The project was originally budgeted at \$170,000 and was completed approximately \$30,000 under budget. The mobile data computers integrate directly into fire department vehicles and provide access to computer-aided dispatch and mapping systems. The devices are used on scene, including during ambulance runs, for patient care reporting. Reports are transmitted to the cloud and received by emergency room staff while care is still being provided. The units eliminate the need for paper reporting, allow patients to sign waivers electronically, support insurance billing, and are designed to be water-resistant and durable.
- Bay floor refurbishment at all five fire stations is planned once weather conditions allow, with completion expected by June.
- An engine purchased in the 2024–2025 budget year is expected to be completed and placed into service around September or October.

Current CIP requests include:

- Replacement of the current battalion chief vehicle, which is several years old and nearing 100,000 miles.
- Purchase of two replacement squads.
- Purchase two utility vehicles to replace existing fleet vehicles.
- Refurbishment and replacement of all turnout gear extractors and washers.

Commission Questions and Discussion

In response to questions, Chief Unruh provided the following information:

- Chief Unruh confirmed that the aging population, growth in assisted living facilities, and broader demographic changes are contributing factors to the increased runs. He explained that an increasing number of residents do not have primary care physicians and rely on emergency rooms for healthcare, resulting in increased demand for emergency medical transportation.
- One EMT unit is being added in the current year, and two additional units are being requested for the coming year. He explained that some existing squads, such as Squad 7 and Squad 8, are not currently staffed and serve as reserve units.

Chief Unruh also discussed challenges associated with diesel-powered ambulances, noting issues related to emissions systems and sensor failures that can lead to extended downtime. The department plans to try gasoline-powered engines in future ambulance purchases.

CENTRAL SERVICES (TECHNOLOGY)

Director of Central Services Aranowski, IT Manager Lee, Senior System Analyst Barth, and Senior Buyer Lumpkin were present on behalf of the Department of Central Services.

Director Aranowski reviewed in detail the accomplishments of the 2026/2027 year as listed in the CIP document.

Current CIP requests include:

- Infrastructure and software enhancements to support various departmental initiatives
- Upgrade more than 25 servers and associated software licenses to improve performance, compliance, scalability, and support.
- Upgrade primary file storage
- Complete a full city website redesign; the last major update occurred in 2021.
- Evaluate replacement of outdated POTS telephone lines and hardwired alarm systems.
- Paging system (emergency alert and general paging) will alert employees and residents in and around the buildings.
- Assess upgrading on-premise LaserFiche software versus migrating to a cloud-based platform.
- Implement a comprehensive paging and notification system in public-facing city buildings for emergency alerts.
- Explore acquisition of new financial reporting, performance management, and transparency software in coordination with the Finance Department.
- Continue evaluating potential smart city initiatives, including wayfinding, electronic signage, and smart pole deployments.

- Continue the ongoing installation of video cameras at strategic locations to enhance public safety and situational awareness.

Commission Questions and Discussion

In response to questions, Director Aranowski said that:

- Budget preparation is underway. The department enjoys strong support from the City Council, the Mayor, and the City Manager for technology investments.
- Video camera feeds for 13 city facilities are transmitted and stored via connected fiber through AT&T Fibernet.

SPECIAL SERVICES (PARKS AND RECREATION)

Director of Special Services Schnackel was present on behalf of the Special Services Department.

Director Schnackel explained that the City Council had approved an interlocal agreement with Oakland County Parks related to Heritage Park recreation. The agreement is potentially a 30-year renewable agreement and includes a one-time \$4 million payment to the City following a six-month planning period.

The City is currently in the planning phase, developing a Park Operations and Maintenance Plan to define City and County responsibilities, capital investment roles, and long-term operations. The City will retain ownership of Heritage Park, with consideration of a name change to "Heritage Oaks."

The interlocal agreement could result in more than \$10 million in long-term capital investment at Heritage Park, allowing City park millage funds to be redirected to other parks. The agreement is expected to be returned to the City Council for review and approval by the end of March, with a transition period to follow.

The department continues efforts to reduce its nearly \$6 million annual draw from the general fund by pursuing partnerships, sponsorships, fee adjustments, and cost reductions. For instance, the City received a \$500,000 State of Michigan grant for the Heritage Park playground project, which was previously included in the capital plan. The playground project is the first phase and includes improved parking and other accessibility features.

The Heritage Park splash pad is beyond its useful life and is anticipated to be addressed as part of the Oakland County partnership.

All previously approved capital projects and equipment purchases for the fiscal year are either completed or in progress and expected to be completed before year's end.

Current CIP requests are listed in the CIP document, and include:

- Vehicles, equipment, and infrastructure for parks, golf, and ice arena: \$1,904,000
- Acquisition of parkland: \$1,500,000
- Costick Center/Senior Center: \$30,000,000
- Continued updates to the HAWK

Commission Questions and Discussion

In response to questions, Director Schnackel provided the following:

- Heritage “Oaks” Park will continue to be owned by the City.
- Regarding the proposed new Oakland Community College ice arena, the City does not anticipate negative impacts to the City’s ice arena, due to the different levels of hockey programming and the ongoing collaboration with OCC.
- Regarding the Costick Activity Center, the Sports Facilities Company was contracted by the City beginning in March 2022 to analyze Special Services operations, including the Costick Activity Center. A 60-page report was provided to the City Council outlining strategic recommendations. The Costick Activity Center, constructed in 1963, is no longer receiving capital investment and is being maintained to continue operations while future options are evaluated. City Council approved moving forward with architectural and engineering analysis and issuance of an RFP to study the Hawk campus for a potential location for the replacement of the Costick Activity Center. Two potential locations on the Hawk campus are under consideration: the former baseball field area and the existing softball field. The study will evaluate feasibility, cost, site impacts, and design considerations for a new activity center of approximately 30,000 to 40,000 square feet. The new facility would be smaller, more efficient, and fully modernized, and would continue to support meetings, exercise classes, swimming, pickleball, and group programming.
- The Meals on Wheels kitchen would be included in the new facility. The program currently serves more than 300 meals per day and supports the identification of vulnerable, homebound seniors during emergencies. Both Meals on Wheels and congregate meal programs have continued to grow since the pandemic.
- Discussions are occurring between Oakland County and the developer of the Boys and Girls Club site, involving approximately 14 to 15 acres on the northern portion of the site being utilized as a park.
- The City participates in the Nine Line corridor initiative, a non-motorized mobility network connecting multiple communities. Oakland County is providing planning assistance and funding to explore park access and trail connections along the corridor. Farmington Hills participates in quarterly meetings related to the Nine Line and has a limited but strategic segment connected near I-275. The project focuses on improving connections between cities and parks by creating continuous, safe routes for bicycles, strollers, and pedestrians. Enhancements address gaps where sidewalks or bike paths previously ended, improving overall corridor continuity.

PUBLIC SERVICES (Sidewalks, Transportation, Sewer/Water/Drainage, and DPW Equipment)

Director of Public Services Rushlow, City Engineer Saksewski, and DPW Superintendent Schueller were present on behalf of the Public Services Department.

Director Rushlow reviewed significant accomplishments/completed projects of the 2025/2026 year as listed in the CIP document. He pointed out the ongoing construction of the Gateway Interchange Project at I-696 and Orchard Lake Road, including landscaping and signage. Foundations for the signage were installed in late November, with work now paused due to winter conditions. The project includes large LED-backlit letters spelling “Farmington Hills,” mounted on architectural walls, programmable for color changes.

Also in progress:

- Repairs and resurfacing of exterior wood soffits at city facilities where needed.

- Trailer-mounted emergency generator that can be transported to facilities that don't have a standby on-site emergency power generator.
- Replacement of the permanent on-site generator at the DPW facility due to the end of its useful life.
- Replacement of deteriorating permeable brick pavers in City Hall parking areas; replacement will maintain the permeable design consistent with LEED standards.

City Engineer Saksewski provided "before" and "after" photographs of major road projects completed in the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

Current CIP requests are listed in the CIP document, and include:

Citywide Facilities Improvements (32 city buildings)

- Replacement of fire alarm systems in multiple City buildings.
 - Roof repairs and replacements at DPW facilities.
 - HVAC system replacements at various City buildings.
 - Repair or replacement of the City Hall elevator due to frequent breakdowns.
 - Continued implementation of electric vehicle charging stations as previously planned.
- Discussion followed with no consensus reached: Should this line item (\$50K/year) be continued? The City is not using electric vehicles, and the production of EV vehicles is shifting more to hybrid vehicles. It is not the City's responsibility to provide free charging to the general public. On the other hand, only 3 charging locations are proposed for the City Hall campus. Perhaps the line item should remain, but be zeroed out in some years.

Sanitary Sewer

- Continuing pipeline rehabilitation program
- New lift stations, including adjacent to the new Robertson Brothers development (Sarah Fisher property). The new pump station will include a permanent on-site backup generator.

Water Main: Westbrooke Manor No. 2, 3, 4 subdivisions water main replacement

Sidewalks:

- Sidewalk installations in conjunction with road construction projects.
- Farmington Road east side from Glen Muer to 14 Mile.

Old Franklin Walkway Discussion:

Commissioner Mantey spoke regarding a resident request related to an unimproved walkway easement through wooded property near the former Old Franklin school site. The walkway easement was granted to the City in 2018 when the school property was sold. The property is now proposed for a lot split and residential development, raising questions about preservation and improvement of the walkway.

Engineer Saksewski pointed out that the item had been listed in the CIP sidewalk table since 2022 as a future project, without a specific year. Commissioners discussed concerns regarding the use of public funds for improvements on private property, long-term maintenance obligations, and potential neighborhood conflicts. No consensus or action was taken regarding this issue.

Engineer Saksewski reviewed the planned 2026/2027 major road projects, local road reconstruction projects, and local road rehabilitation project candidates.

Major road projects:

- Farmington Road from 10 Mile to 12 Mile is planned as a preventive maintenance project involving heavy overlay to extend roadway life. The project includes approximately \$2 million in federal funding secured through the Oakland County Federal Aid Committee.
- Farmington Road from 13 Mile to 14 Mile is identified as the worst roadway segment in the City and is scheduled for major reconstruction. Approximately \$2 million in federal funding has also been secured for this segment.

Local road reconstruction projects include Greencastle Subdivision, identified as a high-priority rehabilitation project. Richland Gardens Subdivision Phase 2 is planned following completion of Phase 1 storm sewer improvements. Gravel road conversion is planned for Rockshire, and reconstruction is planned for the Rhonswood/Fendt area.

Local road rehabilitation project candidates include Kimberly Gardens, Reserves at Woodcreek, and Cass Road south of 9 Mile Road. These projects will be bid together, with final selection dependent on bid pricing and available funding.

DPW Superintendent Schueller provided an overview of recent and planned Department of Public Works fleet and equipment purchases, as listed in the CIP document. Proposed 2026/2027 equipment replacement will total approximately \$1,720,000 and includes:

- Two 10-yard dump trucks.
- Refurbish existing equipment
- Replacement of a hydro seeder used for ditch restoration and grading work.
- Replacement of the sign shop truck with a boom for street sign installation.
- Replacement of mechanical and vacuum street sweepers.

Additional Commissioner Questions and Discussion:

Commissioner Mantey brought up the following points:

- Why was the Tuck Road bridge project placed within the drainage category? Staff clarified that the structure conveys drainage beneath Tuck Road and is classified as a bridge by the State of Michigan due to span length, despite appearing as a roadway.
- The Commission had discussed the county-owned detention pond at 13 Mile and Farmington Roads during the CIP review last year. The pond is not maintained and is an eyesore, when the area outside the fence could be used as a small recreation area with benches, etc. It had been suggested that installing a stage gauge in the pond area could measure water that is in the basin for any period of time. Staff reported no progress on this installation, noting again that this is a county-owned facility, and the detention basin is currently restricted to drainage purposes only.
- The City recently adopted a public art ordinance requiring certain developments to contribute to an art fund. Public Services should be a part of this effort, as medians and rights-of-way along major corridors such as Orchard Lake Road, Twelve Mile Road, and Grand River Avenue would provide public visibility for art installations. Public art can also be functional, as applied to bus shelters, bicycle racks, and other streetscape elements.

- It was suggested that a line item placeholder or a narrative reference to public art be included in the CIP to acknowledge future expenditures and planning considerations. The CIP could acknowledge the public art ordinance and encourage future coordination among departments without committing funding amounts.
- The Master Plan emphasized enhanced transit amenities, including bus shelters. Commissioner Mantey noted that he had discussions with SMART regarding interest in expanding bus shelters, noting that coordination with the City is necessary to leverage available funding. Commissioners acknowledged that these items are reflected in the Master Plan but are not currently included as funded projects in the CIP. These priorities should be referenced in the CIP narrative as planning considerations/long-term goals.

Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy:

Director Rushlow explained that City policy, based on guidance from the City Attorney and City Council, limits municipal sidewalk snow removal due to increased liability exposure. The City currently contracts for limited sidewalk clearing along Twelve Mile Road, primarily on the north side between Farmington Road and Halsted Road. Sidewalk clearing typically occurs when snowfall exceeds four inches.

Master Plan Transportation Map and CIP Coordination:

- Commissioner Mantey referenced the Transportation Master Plan. Map 7.5 identifies approximately 20 targeted pedestrian and bicycle path improvements. He encouraged stronger alignment between the Master Plan and the CIP, noting that some improvements could be incorporated into future capital planning requests. City Engineer Saksewski said that he used the map as a reference when evaluating road projects and identifying opportunities to close gaps, and several items from the Transportation Master Plan are already addressed through existing or planned CIP projects.
- Commissioners and staff discussed the multi-community Nine Line Corridor project, where the City is exploring the replacement of sidewalks with a dedicated asphalt non-motorized path to improve safety and regional connectivity. The proposed path would connect the I-275 trailhead eastward toward downtown Farmington. The project is envisioned as a joint effort between the City of Farmington Hills and the City of Farmington, with plans to pursue state Transportation Improvement Program funding as a regional project, which will also include a connection to Shiawassee Park.

Farmington Road Reconstruction and Sidewalk Scope:

Commissioners discussed sidewalk improvements associated with the Farmington Road reconstruction between Thirteen Mile and Fourteen Mile Roads. The project will focus on filling an existing sidewalk gap from Glenmuer to Fourteen Mile Road with standard five-foot concrete sidewalks. The project does not include widening or conversion to a bike path for this segment.

Further discussion included:

- The potential to connect via a non-motorized pathway from Heritage Park to downtown Farmington.
- Prioritizing the needs of seniors, who need to walk in their own neighborhoods (including along Farmington Road), but who also need to have benches available along the way. Could benches be placed in rights-of-way? Or alternatively, could property owners be asked if the City could provide a bench along the sidewalks but outside the right-of-way?
- Could functional art elements be placed within the right-of-way?

- Commissioners Mantey and Stimson advocated for wider sidewalks or multi-use paths to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, noting that many cyclists currently use sidewalks due to traffic conditions. Staff clarified that sidewalks narrower than ten feet cannot be designated as multi-use paths under current standards and that widening sidewalks presents challenges, including right-of-way limitations and impacts on trees.
- Commissioner Stimson noted that overgrown vegetation makes some sidewalks impassable.

Chair Trafelet asked whether federal transportation funds could be rescinded. Staff reported that recent discussions with MDOT and SEMCOG indicated funding remains assumed but uncertain due to changing state and federal revenue streams. Approximately \$4 million in federal funding has been secured for the two major 2026–2027 road projects, and right now, the assumption is that those funds are in place to go forward.

Chair Trafelet closed the discussion and indicated he was ready to entertain a motion.

MOTION by Brickner, supported by Stimson, to set the Capital Improvements Plan 2026/2027 through 2031/2032 for public hearing at the Planning Commission’s next available meeting.

Motion discussion:

Commissioner Countegan said he opposed the inclusion of Sidewalk project #12, Rock Ridge to Oak Crest Drive, as he believed this represented public funding for a project on private land.

This item will remain part of the CIP draft for consideration at the public hearing.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS:

None

MOTION by Brickner, supported by Lindquist, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen Aspinall
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem