

AGENDA
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
JANUARY 15, 2026 @ 7:30 P.M.
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY HALL – CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD, FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN 48336
Cable TV: Spectrum – Channel 203; AT&T – Channel 99
YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FHChannel8>
www.fhgov.com (248) 871-2540

- 1. Call Meeting to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Regular Meeting**

a. LOT SPLIT 3 AND 4, 2025 (FINAL)

LOCATION: 28500 Oak Crest Dr. and 0 Rockridge Lane
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-01-177-025 & 027
PROPOSAL: Combining two parcels then split into four parcels within
RA-1, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED: Lot split approval (final)
APPLICANT: Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis
OWNER: Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis

b. PLANNING COMMISSION 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED: Adoption of report

- 5. Approval of Minutes** **December 18, 2025**
- 6. Public Comment**
- 7. Commissioner/Staff Comments**
- 8. Adjournment**

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Aspinall, Planning Commission Secretary

Staff Contact:

Diane Mulville-Friel
City Planner
Planning and Community Development Department
(248) 871-2540
dmulville-friel@fhgov.com

NOTE: Anyone planning to attend the meeting who has need of special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is asked to contact the City Clerk's Office at (248) 871-2410 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting, wherein arrangements/accommodations will be made. Thank you.

LOT SPLIT 3 AND 4, 2025 (FINAL)

LOCATION:	28500 Oak Crest Dr. and 0 Rockridge Lane
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-01-177-025 & 027
PROPOSAL:	Combining two parcels then split into four parcels within RA-1, One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Lot split approval (final)
APPLICANT:	Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis
OWNER:	Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES
JACOB RUSHLOW P.E. DIRECTOR

INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: September 24, 2025
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Mirandi Alexander, Civil Engineer II
SUBJECT: Rockridge Lot Split
Lot Split 3, 2025 & Lot Split 4, 2025
22-23-01-177-025 & 027

This office has performed a preliminary review of the above referenced lot split plan submitted to the Planning Department on August 19, 2025. The plan must meet the requirements of Section 27 of the City Code (Section C-11-99), which became effective on January 3, 2000. Note that under section 27-130-2c-1, a signed approval of the Engineering Division indicating compliance of section 27-110, Paragraph 2 (H) is necessary. Our preliminary comments are as follows:

1. The plan appears to be combining the two parcels and then splitting the two into four resultant parcels.
2. Public sanitary sewer currently exists between 32400 and 32450 Rockridge. The sanitary sewer must be extended across the frontage of the resulting parcels.
3. Public water main exists on Rockridge Lane with access for all the resultant parcels to tie-in. It is recommended that the proponent connect this 8" watermain from Rock Ridge Lane to the 8" watermain on Oak Crest Drive. Please note this connection may be required should the Oakland County Water Resource Commission identify the connection as a necessity for reasonable operations and water service.
4. A watermain and hydrant currently exist on parcel 3 as proposed. The hydrant may need to be relocated for driveway access and the watermain easement must be maintained.



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES
JACOB RUSHLOW P.E. DIRECTOR

5. The 10' non-motorized access path easement must be retained.
6. Rockridge Lane is already at the ultimate Right-of-way. Therefore, no additional right-of-way requirements will be in effect.
7. Please note that for each resultant parcel, a proposed individual plot plan must be separately submitted for review and approval by the Engineering Division.

September 23, 2025

Farmington Hills Planning and Community Development Department
31555 W 11 Mile Rd
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

Lot Split Review

Case: Lot Splits 3 and 4, 2025
Site: 28500 Oak Crest Dr. and 0 Rockridge Lane
(2301177025 & 2301177027)
Applicant: Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis
Plan Date: August 19, 2025
Zoning: RA-1

We have completed a review of the application for a lot split referenced above and a summary of our findings is below. Items in **bold** require specific action by the Applicant. Items in *italics* can be addressed administratively.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Existing Conditions

1. **Background.** The proposed split includes two parcels (Lot 11- 6.5 acres and Lot 12- 6.02 acres) located at the western end of the Rockridge Lane cul-de-sac. The site is a part of the Franklin Oaks Subdivision which is subject to Building and Use Restrictions established in 1945 (hereinafter referred to as "BUR"). In 1966, the BUR was amended to accommodate the construction of a new elementary school, which occupied the site from 1966-2012. The amended BUR allowed the construction of an elementary school with access to Oak Crest Drive (and prohibited access from Rockridge lane). Following its closure, the school was razed and the property has been vacant, with some remains of a parking lot and foundation.

In 2018, the applicant purchased the subject property and subsequently sought a court ruling that the original restrictions had been waived. The result of this endeavor was a consent judgement between the applicants and the Franklin Oaks Subdivision which would allow the subject property (Lots 11 and 12) to be split into four separate residential lots. The consent judgement has not been recorded and feedback on the lot configuration from the City may impact the final exhibits used in the consent judgment. As drafted, the lots will be subject to the following restrictions:

- The size and configuration of each of the Four Lots will be as closely as will be allowed under the City of Farmington Hills Zoning Ordinance as depicted on Exhibit 5 (*Exhibit 5 was not provided and will be updated based on the findings of the lot split review*)
- A single residence home only may be constructed on each of the Four Lots
- The area within each lot on which a residential home may be constructed will be limited to the areas of each lot depicted on Exhibit 5 as "Buildable" (*Exhibit 5 was not provided and will be updated based on the findings of the lot split review*)
- All of the existing trees within the areas depicted on Lot #4 of Exhibit 5 as "woodlands" will remain and will not be disturbed or removed. (*Exhibit 5 was not provided and will be updated based on the findings of the lot split review*)
- During the development of the Four Lots and the construction of the single residential home on each lot, no construction vehicles shall block traffic on Rockridge Lane or any driveway on Rockridge Road and no construction material shall be staged on Rockridge Rd.
- Upon completion of the construction of the four homes there will be no access allowed to any of the Four Lots from Oak Crest Dr.
- The architecture of the single residential homes on each of the Four Lots will conform to the general architectural style of the existing homes in Franklin Oaks Subdivision.
- Rockridge Lane will not be altered or reconfigured for the development of the Four Lots except as may be required by the City of Farmington Hills to split lots 11 and 12 into the Four Lots as close as possible to Exhibit 5.
- Each of the residential homes to be built on the Four Lots (one home per lot) will be at least 4,500 sq ft. in size.

The application was submitted with a proposed lot configuration that includes four wedge lots at the bulb-end of the Rockridge cul-de-sac. The proposed lot configuration maintains a future easement for road access between Parcels 2 and 3. *However, the applicant has proposed the termination of an easement to the City of Farmington Hills to provide a non-motorized pathway on Parcel 4. The original plans shall be reviewed to determine whether this easement was a required component of this development and removal of this easement requires an amendment.*

2. **Zoning.** The site is zoned RA-1.
3. **Existing site.** The site is 12.52 acres (Lot 11- 6.5 acres and Lot 12- 6.02 acres). The site currently is vacant with sporadic patches of pavement left over from the previous school and parking facilities, with access to Oak Crest Dr. The site is surrounded by woodlands.

4. **Adjacent Properties.**

Direction	Zoning	Land Use
North	RA-1	Single-Family
East	RA-1	Single-Family
South	RA-1	Single-Family
West	RA-1	Single-Family

Site Plan & Use:

1. **Summary of proposed split.** The split will result in four parcels: *The applicant shall provide lot width and depth calculation on the plans. Numbers below may be imprecise.*

Parent Parcel	Parcel	Lot Depth	Lot Width	Size	Zoning
Lot 11	Parcel 1	623'7"	53'3"	3.0 acres	RA-1
Lot 11	Parcel 2	567'3"	67'7"	3.02 acres	RA-1
Lot 12	Parcel 3	411'1"	95'7"	2.53 acres	RA-1
Lot 12	Parcel 4	683'5"	111'1"	3.97 acres	RA-1

2. **Site configuration and access.** The site is currently accessed from Oak Crest Dr, but the consent judgement requires this configuration to change upon completion of the lot split. Future access will be provided from Rockridge Lane.

3. **Dimensional standards.**

Standard	Required (RA-1)	Proposed Lots			
		Parcel 1	Parcel 2	Parcel 3	Parcel 4
Minimum Area (SF)	18,000	130,680	131,551	110,206.8	172,933
Minimum Width ¹	100 Ft	53'3"	67'7"	95'7"	111'1"
Front Yard Setback	40 Ft	40'	40'	40'	40'
Rear Yard Setback	35 Ft	35'	35'	35'	35'
Side Yard Setback ²	10 ft/ 25 ft total of two	10/14.7'	15'/15'	10'/15.4'	10.8'/63.9'

Maximum Depth-to-width ratio ³	3:1	11.7:1	8.4:1	4.3:1	6.1:1
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¹ *Proposed Parcels 1, 2, and 3 do not appear to meet the lot width requirements. A precise measuring line of the lot width shall be added to the plans*

² *Parcel 1 has labeled setbacks that do not meet the requirements for side yard setbacks. The building envelope for Parcel 1 shall be updated.*

³ *Section 27-59 of the General Code requires a 3:1 depth-to-width ratio for subdivision lots unless there are extenuating circumstances. All of the proposed lots exceed a 3:1 depth-to-width ratio.*

The applicant may apply for a variance for relief from the zoning ordinance and land division requirements. Relief from the required lot widths and setbacks may only be granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Planning Commission or City Council may provide relief from the required depth-to-width ratio.

Variances may only be granted upon the determination that there are special circumstances impacting the property in a manner that strict application of the ordinance would deprive the applicant of reasonable use of the land, and when the variance would not impact public health, safety, or welfare of the surrounding uses and the community as a whole.

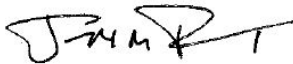
4. **Subdivision of Land Ordinance §27-110(2)(e), Compatibility with Existing Parcels.** To assure that the public health, safety, and welfare will be served by the permission of any partition or division of land the planning commission's review shall be in accordance with the following standards:
 - a. If any parcel does not meet zoning ordinance requirements, the request shall be denied by the planning commission. *As noted above, the parcels do not meet the lot width requirements. A variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals must be granted to comply.*
 - b. Any partition or division shall be of such location, size and character that, in general, it will be compatible with the existing development in the area in which it is situated. *The parcels are wedge-shaped lots at the end of a cul-de-sac. Although shaped differently from surrounding lots, this is typical of lots at the end of a cul-de-sac. The lots range from 2.53 to 3.97 acres; this is generally consistent with surrounding lots on the cul-de-sac, which are larger lots ranging from 2.65 to 11 acres.*
 - c. The planning commission shall give consideration to the following:
 1. The conformity of the resultant parcels with zoning ordinance standards and the creation of parcels compatible with surrounding lands as to area, width, and width-to-depth ratio. *Setbacks on Parcel 1 are shown to be noncompliant and must be revised. In addition, the proposed parcels do not meet the lot width requirements, a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals must be granted to comply. All of the parcels exceed a 3:1 depth to width ratio and may only be permitted if additional relief is granted from this requirement by the Planning Commission.*
 2. The orientation of the yards of proposed parcels in relationship to the yards of surrounding parcels in order to avoid incompatible relationships, such as but not limited to, front yards to rear yards. *There are no incompatible relationships, including front to rear yard relationships, created by this lot split.*
 3. The impact of any existing flood plains, wetlands, topography, or other natural features and physical conditions on the resulting parcels so that such parcels are compatible with other surrounding lands in terms of buildable area. *Although these properties contain woodlands, the consent judgement includes a condition stating that, "All of the existing*

trees within the areas depicted on Lot #4 of Exhibit 5 as “woodlands” will remain and will not be disturbed or removed.” (Exhibit 5 was not provided and will have to be updated based on the findings of the lot split review). Woodlands are also depicted on lots 1 and 2, but there is not a condition for them to be preserved. The site does not appear to be impacted by wetlands.

4. The relationship of the front, side, and rear yards to the yards and orientation of buildings on other existing and potential parcels. This shall include the probable orientation of buildings on the parcels resulting from the proposed division or partition. *The split would create four lots which would be oriented towards Rockridge Lane. The Planning Commission may wish to review and consider the potential for vehicular conflicts from the placement of driveways. However, since the properties will be used for single-family residential, traffic from these properties will be minimal.*

We are available to answer questions.

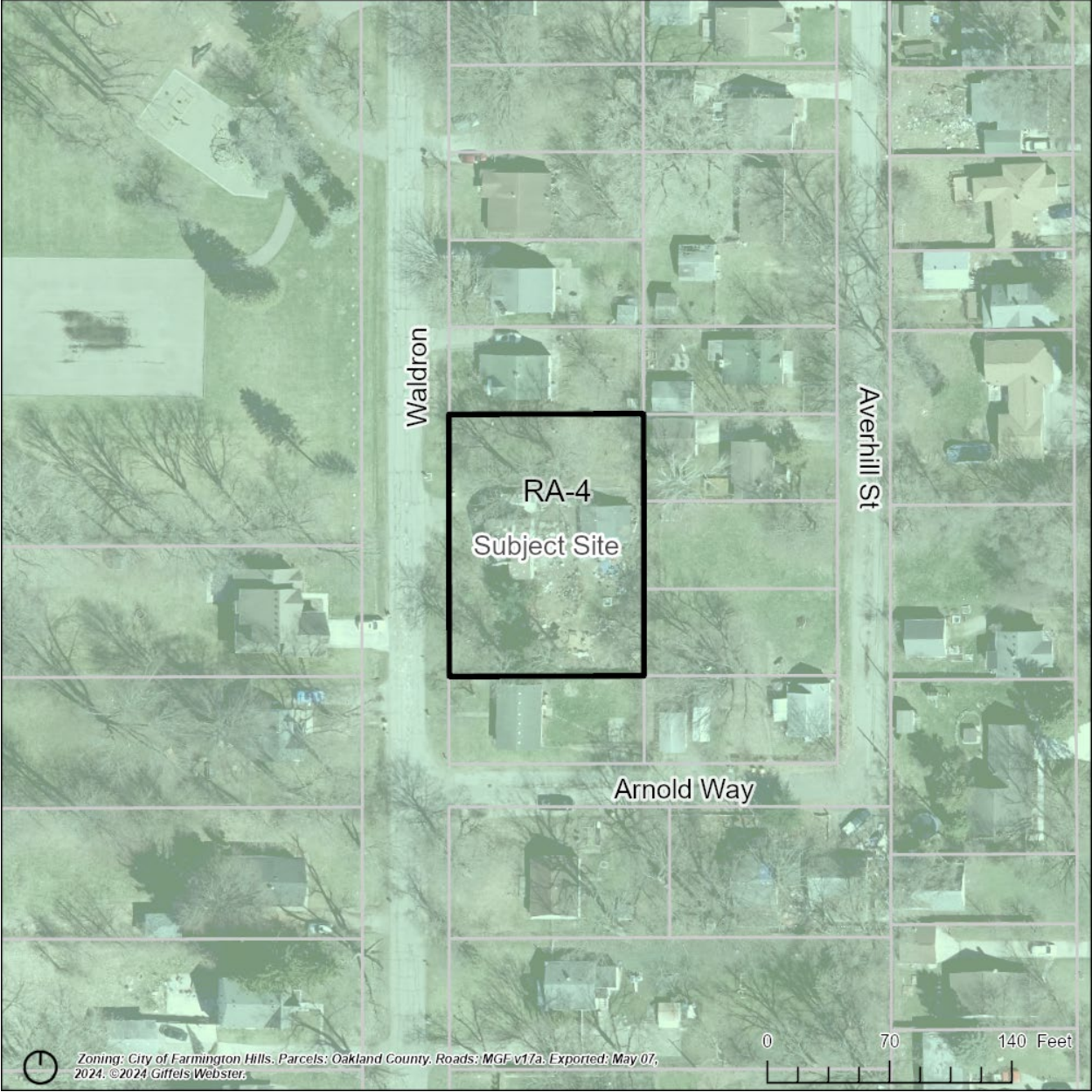
Respectfully,
Giffels Webster



Joe Tangari, AICP
Principal Planner



Julia Upfal, AICP
Senior Planner



Zoning



INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

Date: August 28, 2025
To: Planning Commission
From: Jason Baloga, Fire Marshal
Subject: Lot Split 3-2025 (28500 Oakcrest)

The Fire Department has no objection to approval of this Lot Split.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jason Baloga'.

Jason Baloga, Fire Marshal

JB/al



INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

Date: August 28, 2025
To: Planning Commission
From: Jason Baloga, Fire Marshal
Subject: Lot Split 4-2025 (Franklin Oaks Subdivision)

The Fire Department has no objection to approval of this Lot Split.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jason Baloga'.

Jason Baloga, Fire Marshal

JB/al



CIVIL ENGINEERS
LAND SURVEYORS
LAND PLANNERS

NOWAK & FRAUS ENGINEERS
46777 WOODWARD AVE.
PONTIAC, MI 48342-5032
TEL. (248) 332-7931
FAX. (248) 332-8257

PROJECT LOCATION
Part of the North 1/2
of Section 1
T.1N., R.9E.
City of Farmington Hills,
Oakland County, Michigan

SHEET
Proposed Parcel Split

REVISIONS

DRAWN BY:
O. Tamimi

APPROVED BY:
K. Navaroli

DATE:
October 24, 2024

SCALE: 1" = 50'

NFE JOB NO. S

H983

[illegible]

Lot 12 of Franklin Oaks, a subdivision of part of the North 1/2 of section 1, Town 1 North, Range 9 East, Farmington Township (now City of Farmington Hills), Oakland County, Michigan as recorded in Liber 55, Page 60 of Plats, Oakland County Records.

Lot 11 of Franklin Oaks, a subdivision of part of the North 1/2 of section 1, Town 1 North, Range 9 East, Farmington Township (now City of Farmington Hills), Oakland County, Michigan as recorded in 2005, Page 1 of Plats, Oakland County Records, except beginning of the Southeast corner of said lot 11. Thence South 89 degrees 18 minutes 00 seconds East, 342.89 feet; thence South 12 degrees 00 minutes 00 seconds West, 271.87 feet to the point of beginning.

NOTE

THIS DRAWING REFLECTS THE EXISTING CONDITIONS OF A
FIELD SURVEY LAST PERFORMED ON JULY 25, 2023

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY

WE HEREBY CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE SURVEYED THE PROPERTY
HEREIN DESCRIBED AND THAT WE HAVE PLACED MARKER IRONS AT
THE CORNERS OF THE PARCEL OR AS INDICATED ON THE DRAWING

444

KEVIN NAVAROU, PLS DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2024
NO. 83605

NO. 33503

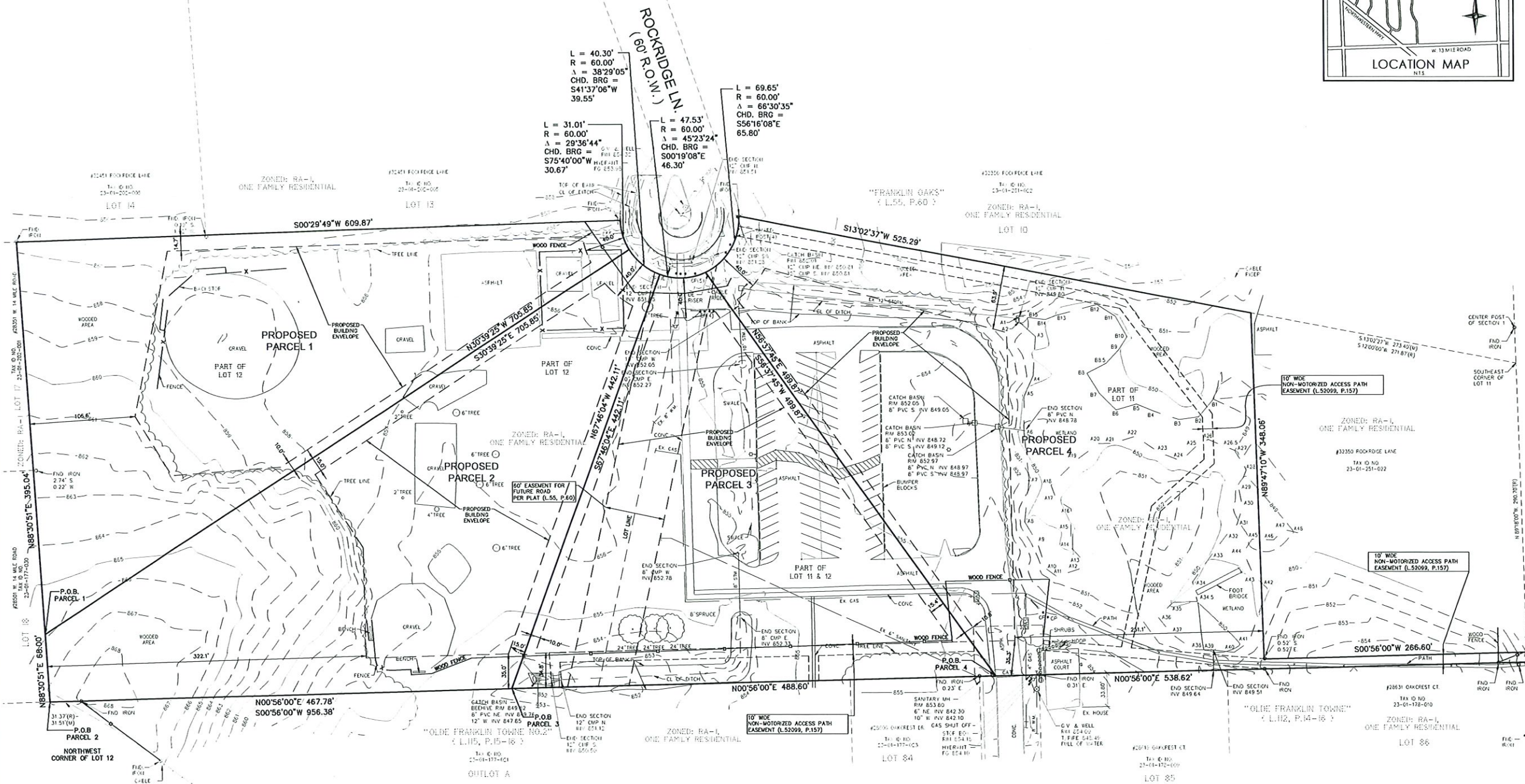




NF ENGINEERS

CIVIL ENGINEERS
LAND SURVEYORS
LAND PLANNERS

NOWAK & FRAUS ENGINEERS
4677 WOODWARD AVE.
PONTIAC, MI 48342-5032
TEL. (248) 332-7931
FAX. (248) 332-8257



LEGAL DESCRIPTION - PROPOSED PARCEL 1

Land in the City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan is described as:

Part of Lot 12, Franklin Oaks, as recorded in Liber 55 of Plats, Page 60, Oakland County Records, being more particularly described as: Beginning at the Northwest corner of said Lot 12, thence North 88 degrees 30 minutes 51 seconds East, along the North line of said Lot 12, 68.00 feet to the point of beginning; thence continuing along said line of Lot 12, North 88 degrees 30 minutes 51 seconds East, 395.04 feet to a point on the Eastern line of said Lot 12, thence South 00 degrees 29 minutes 49 seconds West, 609.87 feet to a point on the Western line of Rockbridge Lane, thence along said line of Rockbridge Lane 31.01 feet along the arc of a curve to the left, radius of 60.00 feet, central angle of 29 degrees 36 minutes 44 seconds, chord bearing South 75 degrees 40 minutes 00 seconds West, 30.67 feet; thence North 30 degrees 39 minutes 25 seconds West 705.85 feet to the point of beginning.

Gross Land Area: 130,736 square feet or 3.00 acres of land.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION - PROPOSED PARCEL 2

Land in the City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan is described as:

Part of Lot 12, Franklin Oaks, as recorded in Liber 55 of Plats, Page 60, Oakland County Records, being more particularly described as: Beginning at the Northwest corner of said Lot 12, thence North 88 degrees 30 minutes 51 seconds East, along the North line of said Lot 12, 68.00 feet; thence South 00 degrees 29 minutes 49 seconds West, 609.87 feet to a point on the Western line of Rockbridge Lane, thence along said line of Rockbridge Lane 31.01 feet along the arc of a curve to the left, radius of 60.00 feet, central angle of 29 degrees 36 minutes 44 seconds, chord bearing South 75 degrees 40 minutes 00 seconds West, 30.67 feet; thence North 30 degrees 39 minutes 25 seconds West 705.85 feet to the point of beginning.

Gross Land Area: 131,485 square feet or 3.02 acres of land.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION - PROPOSED PARCEL 3

Land in the City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan is described as:

Part of Lots 11 & 12, Franklin Oaks, as recorded in Liber 55 of Plats, Page 60, Oakland County Records, being more particularly described as: Commencing at the Northwest corner of said Lot 12, thence South 00 degrees 29 minutes 49 seconds West, 609.87 feet along the Southern line of said Lot 12 to the point of beginning; thence South 67 degrees 46 minutes 04 seconds East, 442.11 feet to a point on the Western line of Rockbridge Lane, thence along said line of Rockbridge Lane, 47.53 feet along the arc of a curve to the left, radius of 60.00 feet, central angle of 45 degrees 23 minutes 24 seconds, chord bearing South 00 degrees 19 minutes 08 seconds East, 46.30 feet; thence South 56 degrees 37 minutes 45 seconds West, 499.87 feet to a point on the Western line of said Lot 11; thence North 00 degrees 56 minutes 00 seconds East, 468.60 feet along the Western line of said Lot 11 and 12 to the point of beginning.

Gross Land Area: 110,184 square feet or 2.53 acres of land.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION - PROPOSED PARCEL 4

Land in the City of Farmington Hills, Oakland County, Michigan is described as:

Part of Lot 11, Franklin Oaks, as recorded in Liber 55 of Plats, Page 60, Oakland County Records, being more particularly described as: Commencing at the Northwest corner of said Lot 12, thence South 00 degrees 29 minutes 49 seconds West, 609.87 feet along the Southern line of said Lot 12 to the point of beginning; thence South 67 degrees 46 minutes 04 seconds East, 442.11 feet to a point on the Western line of Rockbridge Lane, thence along said line of Rockbridge Lane, 47.53 feet along the arc of a curve to the left, radius of 60.00 feet, central angle of 45 degrees 23 minutes 24 seconds, chord bearing South 00 degrees 19 minutes 08 seconds East, 46.30 feet; thence South 56 degrees 37 minutes 45 seconds West, 499.87 feet to a point on the Western line of said Lot 11; thence North 00 degrees 56 minutes 00 seconds East, 468.60 feet along the Western line of said Lot 11 to the point of beginning.

Gross Land Area: 172,758 square feet or 3.97 acres of land.

NOTE

THIS DRAWING REFLECTS THE EXISTING CONDITIONS OF A FIELD SURVEY LAST PERFORMED ON JULY 25, 2023.

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY

WE HEREBY CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE SURVEYED THE PROPERTY HEREIN DESCRIBED AND THAT WE HAVE PLACED MARKERS IN THE CORNERS OF THE PARCEL OR AS INDICATED ON THE DRAWING.

KEVIN NAVAROLI
NO. 53505
DATE: OCTOBER 24, 2024



PROJECT LOCATION
Part of the North 1/2
of Section 1
T.1N., R.9E.
City of Farmington Hills,
Oakland County, Michigan

SHEET
Proposed Parcel Split

REVISIONS

DRAWN BY:
O. Tamimi
DESIGNED BY:

APPROVED BY:
K. Navaroli
DATE:
October 24, 2024

SCALE: 1" = 50'
NFE JOB NO. SHEET NO.
H983 2 of 2



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

October 30, 2025

Jason Curis
Property Owner
24500 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 100
Southfield, MI 48075

Re: LS 3 & 4, 2025
Lot Split (Final)
Parcel Nos. 22-23-01-177-025 & 027

Mr. Curis

The City of Farmington Hills Planning Commission reviewed the two (2) lot split noted in the subject line of this letter at their October 16, 2025, meeting. At that time, the Commission DENIED the request with the finding that:

Lot Split 3 and 4, 2025 (Final) dated October 24, 2024, submitted by Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis be denied because it appears that the applicable provisions of Chapter 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance are not met. Proposed parcels 1, 2, and 3 do not meet the lot width requirements.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (248) 871-2540.

Respectfully,

Diane Mulville-Friel
City Planner

Note: The minutes of the meeting have not been approved and may be subject to change.

Administration
248.871.2550
248.871.2521 Fax

Building Division
248.871.2450
248.871.2451 Fax

Community Development
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248.871.2521 Fax

Planning Office
248.871.2540
248.871.2521 Fax

Zoning and Code Enforcement
248.871.2520
248.871.2521 Fax



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

December 10, 2025

Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis
32451 Rockridge Ln.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Dear Jason M. and Lauryn M. Curis:

Please be advised that the following action took place at the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on December 9, 2025:

NEW BUSINESS:

B. ZBA CASE: 12-25-5771

LOCATION: Part of lots 11 and 12 of Franklin Oaks Subdivision

PARCEL I.D.: 23-01-177-025 & 23-01-177-027

ZONE: RA-1, One Family Residential District

REQUESTS:

- a. For proposed Parcel 1, A 46.75-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning ordinance to permit creation of a lot 53.25 feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.
- b. For proposed Parcel 2, A 32.42-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit creation of a lot 67.58-feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.
- c. For proposed Parcel 3, A 4.42-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit creation of a lot 95.58-feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.

CODE SECTION: 34-3.1.4.E

OWNER/APPLICANT: Jason and Lauryn Curis

MOTION by Rich, support by Jamil, in the matter of ZBA Case 12-25-5771, that the petitioner's request for the following variances be **GRANTED**:

- a. For proposed Parcel 1, A 46.75-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning ordinance to permit creation of a lot 53.25 feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.
- b. For proposed Parcel 2, A 32.42-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit creation of a lot 67.58-feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.
- c. For proposed Parcel 3, A 4.42-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit creation of a lot 95.58-feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.

Because the petitioner did demonstrate practical difficulties exist in this case in that he set forth acts which show that:

Administration
248.871.2550
248.871.2521 Fax

Building Division
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248.871.2451 Fax

Community Development
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248.871.2521 Fax

Planning Office
248.871.2540
248.871.2521 Fax

Zoning and Code Enforcement
248.871.2520
248.871.2521 Fax

1. Compliance with the strict letter of the ordinance would unreasonably prevent the petitioner from using the property for a permitted purpose, which is single family residential in an RA-1 Zone, or would render conformity with the ordinance unnecessarily burdensome.
2. That granting the variance requested would do substantial justice to the petitioner as well as to other property owners in the district or that a lesser relaxation than that relief applied for would give substantial relief to the owner of the property involved and be more consistent with justice to other property owners.

The alternative, theoretically, is to put in a new street in order to make sure there is frontage on the street, which would not address any of the other concerns that the residents who are neighbors have. Therefore, granting the variance requested does do substantial justice to the petitioner as well as to the other property owners in the district. The issue is that this huge property is on a cul-de-sac. There is nothing that has been demonstrated that granting this variance would have any negative impact with respect to property values. In fact, having substantial and expensive homes might increase the value of the property.

3. That the petitioner's plight is due to the unique circumstances of the property. specifically because any properties on a cul-de-sac will necessarily be pie-shaped unless they totally encircle it.
4. That the problem is not self-created, because this property was originally platted the way that it was, and this particular property owner simply bought the property with the existing conditions, whatever they may be, on it.

With the following finding:

- The city has indicated that whatever easements had existed still exist. Anything else dealing with easements or homeowner's association rules or deed restrictions or any of those sorts of things are not something that the ZBA addresses, and as specifically stated by the City Attorney, the only question for the ZBA is, and the only authority that the ZBA has, is to determine whether or not there is a practical difficulty in developing this property when deciding whether to approve this variance.

With the following condition:

- The lot splits for requests a, b, and c be as specifically requested and as illustrated on the site plan.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

NOTE: This variance is valid for one year only unless a building permit is obtained within one year and progress is made toward completion.

The minutes of this meeting have not been approved and may be subject to change.

Sincerely,

Brian Rich
Secretary

Cc: Donald Alan Rump, Dramar Law

BR/lr



2025 Planning Commission Annual Report

FARMINGTON HILLS



Prepared with assistance from

January, 2026



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Introduction

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (P.A. 33 of 2008, as amended) requires the Planning Commission to prepare, file, and present an annual written report to the City Council. This document is intended to meet the state requirement as well as provide an overview of 2025 accomplishments.

The Farmington Hills Planning Commission is comprised of nine members, some of whom have been on the Planning Commission for many years. These members come from a variety of professional backgrounds. The varied perspectives and knowledge of the members make for a well-rounded Commission that conducts fair and thoughtful deliberations.

The Planning Commission held a total of 12 regular meetings and 7 special study sessions, one of which was a joint meeting with City Council, in 2025. Public hearings are held on the third Thursday of the month, and study sessions in 2025 were primarily held prior to the start of regular meetings.

Mission Statement

To promote public health, safety, and general welfare, to encourage the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability; to avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings or people, to lessen congestion on roads and streets, to facilitate provision for a system of transportation, sewage disposal, safe and water supply recreation, and other public improvements. The Planning Commission is responsible for making and adopting a basic plan as a guide for development, including a determination of the extent of probable future needs.



2025 Planning Commission Members

Table 1. 2025 Planning Commission Members

Name	Role	Assumed Office	Last Appointment	Term Expiration
John Trafelet	Chair	07/22/2019	01/25/2024	02/01/2027
Marissa Varga	Vice Chair (left)	03/08/2021	01/23/2023	10/01/2025
Kristen Aspinall	Secretary	03/28/2022	01/23/2023	02/01/2026
Barry Brickner		07/25/2016	01/25/2024	02/01/2027
Dale Countegan		02/13/2017	01/23/2023	02/01/2026
Danielle Ware		04/25/2022	02/01/2025	02/01/2028
Erik Lindquist		10/14/2025	10/14/2025	02/01/2029
Joseph Mantey		03/15/2004	02/01/2025	02/01/2028
Steven Stimson		04/08/2013	01/25/2024	02/01/2027
Taranji Grant		03/21/2022	02/01/2025	02/01/2029

2025 City Staff

Table 2. 2025 Planning & Community Development Department Staff

Name	Title
Charmaine Kettler-Schmult	Director
Diane Mulville-Friel	City Planner
Jeri LaBelle	Planning Secretary
Nora Brock	Part Time Clerk

In 2025 Giffels Webster continued its relationship working with Farmington Hills to provide planning and zoning services. The team of consultants has been available to answer technical planning and zoning related calls and emails, advise on ordinance amendments, review site plans, and assist with special projects as needed. Giffels Webster prepared memoranda and reports for the Planning Commission and City Council, as needed. Consultants from Giffels Webster attended all Planning Commission meetings and were available to attend other City meetings as requested. The team is directed by Jill Bahm, AICP, a partner at Giffels Webster, who is supported by Joe Tangari, AICP, Principal Planner and Julia Upfal, AICP, Senior Planner and the GIS team, led by Ariana Toth.



2025 Major Initiatives

Implementing the New Master Plan

The Planning Commission continued work on zoning ordinance amendments to begin implementation of the Master Plan that was adopted in July, 2024. The amendments developed by the Planning Commission in 2025 fell into several categories: reductions to parking requirements, design standards, and the transformation of the OS-4 Office district into a mixed-use district.

Parking amendments focused on reducing overall requirements for many uses while also providing additional mechanisms for reducing or waiving requirements as part of the plan approval process. Bike parking standards were also developed, including provisions to permit artistic designs.

The Planning Commission also developed the city's first-ever set of design standards for non-residential buildings. The new standards included regulations for building materials, architectural scaling, roofs, window coverage, and building entrances.

Finally, the Planning Commission modified the OS-4 district from an office-only district to permit a much wider variety of uses, including multi-family residential uses, as stand-alone uses, or in mixed-use structures with commercial and office uses. Flexibility and simplicity were prioritized in order to promote traction on redevelopment.



2024/2025 – 2029/2030 Capital Improvements Plan

Act 33 of the Public Acts of 2008, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, provides that the Planning Commission annually prepare a Capital Improvements Plan. Further, Sections 3.07 and 6.08 of the City Charter require the submission of a Capital Improvements Plan to City Council. The Planning Commission held a regular CIP meeting on January 23, 2025, to prepare the document for public review and adopted the plan after holding a public hearing at their March 20th, 2025 meeting.

Zoning Text Amendments

ZTA 1, 2025

An ordinance to amend the Farmington Hills Code of Ordinances, Chapter 34, "Zoning," Article 5.0, "Site Standards," to add Section 5.20, "Public Art Requirement" to include new requirements for public art in Special Planning Areas for projects that exceed a certain threshold. This also included giving the Arts Commission responsibility for reviewing and approving public art under this section. Approved by PC 9-18-2025. Approved by CC 10-27-2025.

ZTA 2, 2025

An ordinance to amend the Farmington Hills Code of Ordinances, Chapter 34, "Zoning," Section 3.1.25, "B-3 General Business District" and Section 3.1.29, "LI-1 Light Industrial". This ordinance also amends Section 4.28 - "Gasoline Service Stations", Section 4.31 - "Retail Business and Fabrication, Repair, and Processing of Goods", Section 4.35 - "Drive-In Restaurants", Section 4.36 - "Outdoor Space for Sale or Rental of New or Used Motor Vehicles, Trailers, Mobile Homes, Boats, Recreational Vehicles and Other Similar Products," and Section 4.40 - "Vehicle Wash" to change where and how automobile-oriented uses are permitted in the city.

ZTA 3, 2025

An ordinance to amend the Farmington Hills Code of Ordinances, Chapter 34, "Zoning," Section 3.1.22, "OS-Office Research District" to include artisan manufacturing and live/work unit standards.

ZTA 4, 2025

An ordinance to amend the Farmington Hills Code of Ordinances, Chapter 34, "Zoning," Section 2.2, "Definitions" added definitions for a "restaurant, drive-in" and "commercial outdoor recreation space".

ZTA 5, 2025

An ordinance to amend the Farmington Hills Code of Ordinances, Chapter 34, "Zoning," Article 5.0, "Site Standards," to add Section 5.20, "Design Standards" to promote the harmonious use of design elements.





2025 Planning Commission Activity

Planning Commission Meetings

Table 3. Planning Commission Meetings, 2018 to 2025

Year	Number of Meetings
2018	14
2019	15
2020	13
2021	19
2022	17
2023	22
2024	20
2025	18

Figure 1. Planning Commission Meetings, 2018-2025

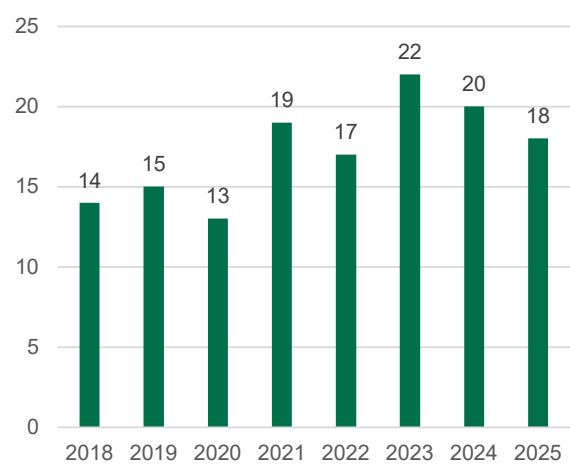
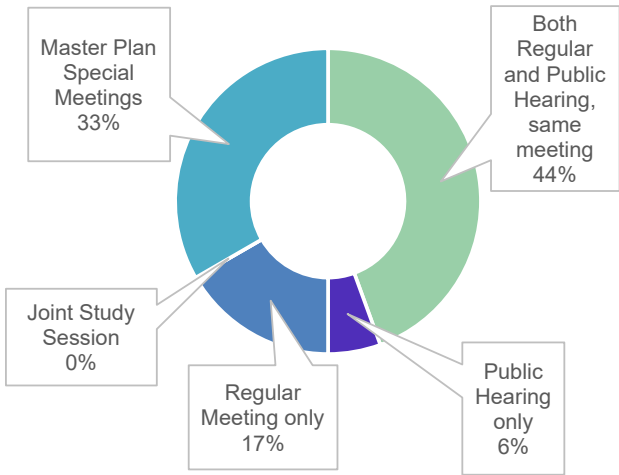


Table 4. Planning Commission Meetings by Type, 2025

Type of Meeting	Number of Meetings
Both Regular and Public Hearing, same meeting	8
Public Hearing only	1
Regular Meeting only	3
Joint Study Session	1
Special Meetings	6
Total	18

Figure 2. Planning Commission Meetings by Type, 2025



Site and Special Approval Plans

Table 5. Site and Special Approval Plans, 2025

Item	Parcel ID	Description	Zoning	Approved / Denied	Proponent
SA 50-1-2025	35-226-003	29615 W. Nine Mile, new commercial building drive through restaurant	B-3	PC Approved 5-15-2025	Pinnacle Car Wash, Sheela Selvaraj
SA 51-2-2025	10-101-002	29150 Farmington, staging area for City watermain replacement	RA-2	PC Approved 3-20-2025	Bidigare Contracting
SP 52-3-2025	10-227-019	31539 W. 13 Mile, cooler addition to existing restaurant	B-3	PC Approved 4-17-2025	Jim Jewett
SP 53-3-2025	36-301-002	29372 Grand River Ave. renovate existing gas station	B-3	Incomplete	Hatem Hannawa
SP 65-12-2024 (PUD 4, 2021)	02-102-014	32905 Northwestern, Emerson, South side of Northwestern Hwy, between Greening and Highview One 4-story, 250-unit apartment building and one 3-story 66-unit walk-up multiple family building	B-3/ RA-4/ OS-1/P-1	PC Approved 10-16-2025	Atwell Alden Development, Tom Herbst
Cluster Site Plan 54-4-2025	34-252-019	South side of Folsom, btw Parker Ave & Lundy, 18 parcels for construction of 33 one-family homes	RA-3	PC Approved 9-18-2025	Forest at Riverwalk
SA 55-4-2025	21-351-032	24300 Drake, staging area for Consumers Energy	B-3	PC Approved 9-18-2025	Consumers Energy
SA 56-4-2025	21-351-031	35200 / 35080 Grand River, auto dealer	B-3	Incomplete	Khahil (Charlie) Saad
SP 62-12-2024	26-486-014	29450 W. 9 Mile Rd, renovate existing gas station	B-3	PC Approved 10-16-2025	Riham Sarout
SP 63-12-2024	33-376-040	34680 Eight Mile Rd, renovate existing car wash	B-3	PC Approved 10-16-2025	Krieger Klatt
Cluster Site Plan 57-4-2025	25-401-001	52 units, Lutheran residential project, Wellspring	RA-1	PC Approved 10-16-2025	Eureka Dev Group
SA 57-5-2025	35-101-005	31015 Grand River, auto dealer, new or used	B-3	PC Approved 8-21-2025	Designhaus Architecture
SP 58-9-2025	02-351-005	29510 Orchard Lake Rd, redevelop gasoline service station	B-3	PC Approved 5-15-2025	Fadi Naserdean
SP 59-7-2025	33-477-022	33474 Eight Mile Rd, new commercial building, dental office	B-3	PC Approved 8-21-2025	Iden Kalabat
SP 60-7-2025 (PUD 12, 2014)	10-476-067	Vacant lot on North side of 12 Mile, just west of Orchard Lake Rd, new quick service restaurant	B-4	PC Approved 11-20-2025	Ronald J. Sesi
Revised SP 60-10-2024	17-201-013	South side of 12 Mile, east of Investment Dr., childcare facility	OS-4	PC Approved 11-20-2025	Farmington Hills VI Corp Inv., LLC
SP 61-8-2025 (PUD 4, 2000)	02-176-068	12 Mile, W. of Orchard Lake Rd., new fast-food restaurant with drive through on a vacant out lot	B-4	PC Approved 11-20-2025	Ronald Sesji
SP 62-8-2025	26-482-001	29820 Nine Mile Rd, proposed warehouse	LI-1	PC Approved 10-16-2025	Joseph Novitsky
SP 65-10-2025 (PUD 1-2025)	12-376-035	29150 Twelve Mile Rd, Towns of Woodcreek	RA-1A	PC Approved 11-20-2025	Schafer Development

Item	Parcel ID	Description	Zoning	Approved / Denied	Proponent
SA 66-10-2025	32-326-057	36336 W 8 Mile Rd, utility building and pump station	RA-1	PC Approved 12-18-2025	Great Lakes Water Authority
SA 67-10-2025	11-351-013	27900 Orchard Lake Rd, fast food restaurant	B-3	PC Denied 12-18-2025	Brewtopia Michigan, LLC (John Iski)
SP 68-11-2025	19-426-035	24535 Hallwood Rd, addition to an existing granite and cabinet shop	LI-1	PC Approved 12-18-2025	A R Samona Construction
SP 69-11-2025	21-351-031	35200 Grand River Ave., auto dealer in existing buildings. Carvana	B-3	Incomplete	Carvana LLC, Brendan Weak

Table 6. Site Plan and Special Approval Plans, 2020 to 2025

Year	Number of Site and Special Approval Plans
2020	14
2021	19
2022	13
2023	10
2024	14
2025	24

Table 7. Site Plans by Decision Type, 2025

Decision	Number
Approved by PC	7
Recommended to City Council	7
Denied by PC	0
Withdrawn prior to PC or incomplete	3
Total	17

Table 8. Special Approval Plans by Decision Type, 2025

Decision	Number
Approved by PC	4
Denied by PC	0
Withdrawn prior to PC or incomplete	3
Total	7

Figure 3. Site and Special Approval Plans by Decision Type, 2025

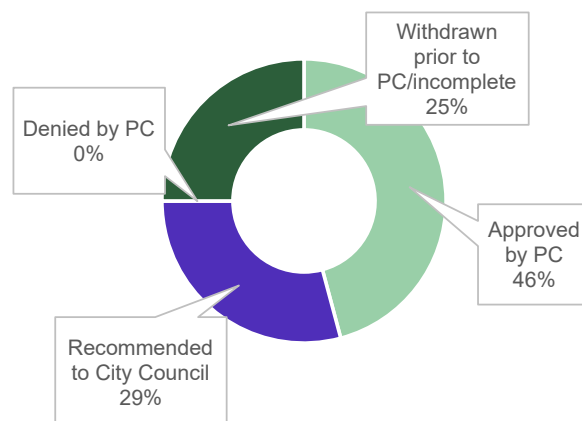
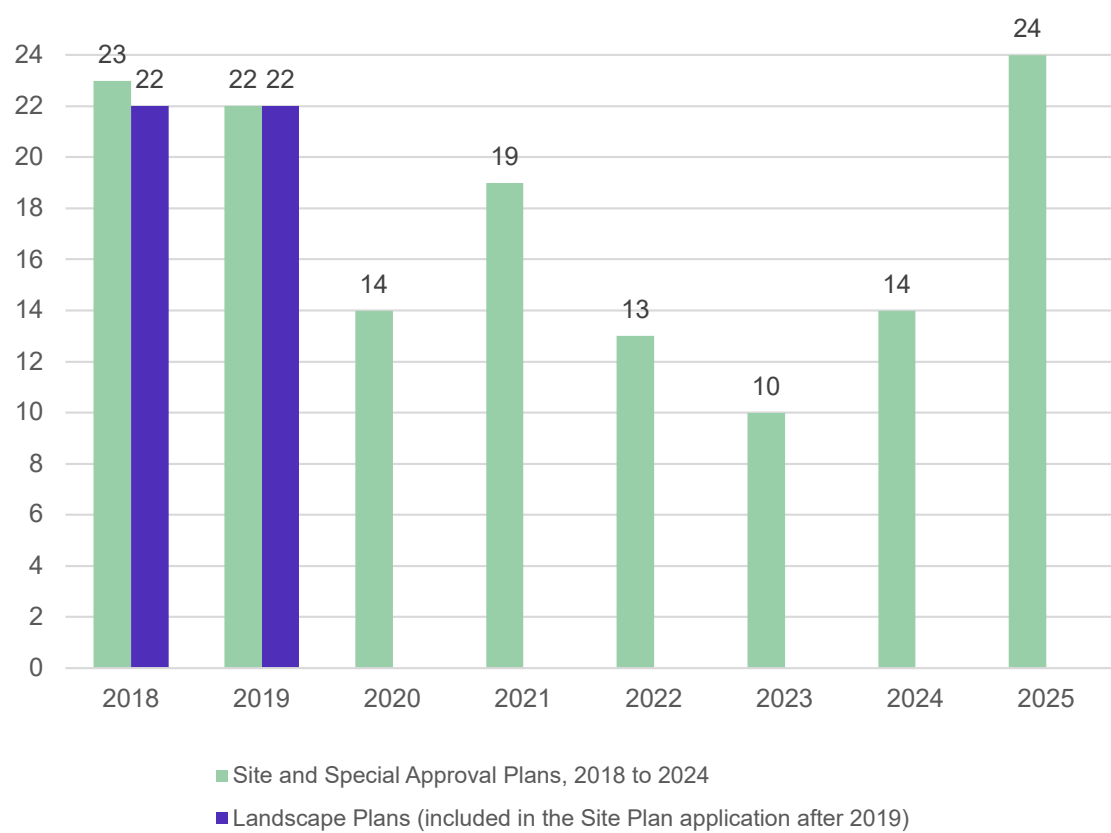


Figure 4. Site and Special Approval Plans, 2018 to 2025



Lot Splits, Land Transfers, Rezoning, and Zoning Text Amendments

Table 9. Lot Splits, 2025

Lot Split #	Parcel ID	Description	Petitioner	PC Approval Date	Assessing Approval
Lot Split 1, 2025	35-105-027	Split one parcel into 2. 30749 Grand River, Fun Way	Ali Sobh	PC Approved 5-15-2025	
Lot Split 2, 2025 (Final) (PUD 6, 1993)	13-101-003	Split one lot into two, OS-1,Merchants Marketplace	Jabcob Khotoveli	PC Approved 5-15-2025	
Lot Split 3, 2025	01-177-025	28500 Oakcrest, split into two	Jason Curis	PC Approved 10-16-2025	
Lot Split 4, 2025	01-177-027	Vacant Lot, split into 2	Jason Curis	PC Approved 10-16-2025	

Table 10. Land Transfers, 2025

Land Transfer #	Parcel ID	Description	Approved/Denied	Proponent
Land Transfer 1, 2025	26-153-015	Transfer a portion of 26-153-015 to 26-153-014		Scott Bohlen

Table 11. Zoning Text Amendments, 2025

Zoning Text Amendment #	Results	Proposed Amendment
ZTA 1, 2025	PC approved 9-18-2025	Public Art requirement and standards and adding review responsibility to Arts Commission.
ZTA 2, 2025	PC approved 9-18-2025	Amended gasoline service stations, retail business and fabrication, repair, and processing of goods, drive-in restaurants, outdoor space for sale or rental of new or used motor vehicles, trailers, mobile homes, boats, recreational vehicles and other similar products, and vehicle wash.
ZTA 3, 2025	PC approved 9-18-2025	Added standards for artisan manufacturing and live/work units.
ZTA 4, 2025	PC approved 9-18-2025	Added standards for restaurant, drive-ins and commercial outdoor recreation spaces.
ZTA 5, 2025	PC approved 9-18-2025	Added design standards to promote the harmonious use of design elements.
CC 2, 2025	CC Approved 6-9-2025	Updated regulations to allow consumption of alcoholic beverages in smoking lounges.

Table 12. Lot Splits, Rezoning, and Zoning Text Amendments, 2018 to 2025

Year	Lot Splits	Zoning Text Amendments	Rezoning
2018	4	0	3
2019	2	3	1
2020	3	0	3
2021	7	2	2
2022	5	1	0
2023	2	3	2
2024	5	4	3
2025	4	5	0

Table 13. Lot Splits by Decision Type, 2025

Decision	Number
Approved by PC	4
Denied by PC	0
Total	4

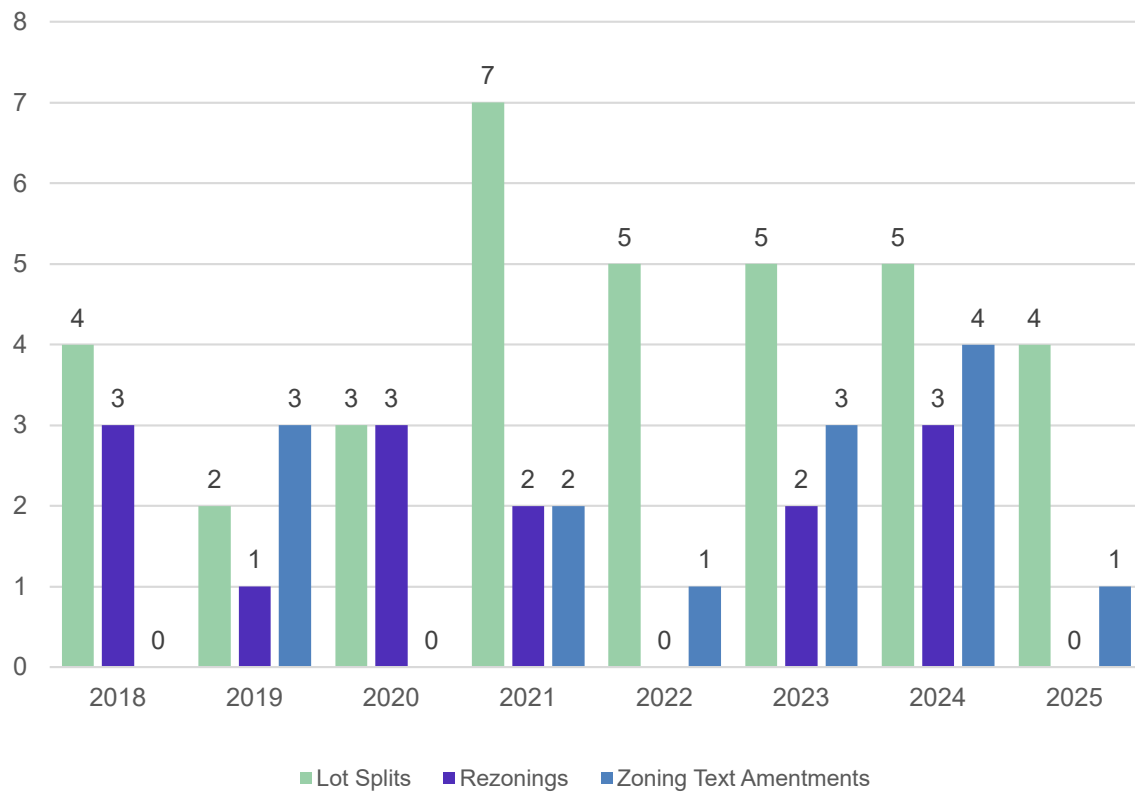
Table 14. Rezoning Requests by Decision Type, 2025

Decision	Number
Approved by PC	0
Denied by PC	0
Withdrawn prior to PC	0
Total	0

Table 15. Zoning Text Amendments by Decision Type, 2025

Decision	Number
Approved by PC/CC	5
Denied by PC/CC	0
Total	5

Figure 5. Lot Splits, Rezoning, and Zoning Text Amendments, 2017 to 2025



Planned Unit Development (PUD) Plans and Qualifications

Table 16. Planned Unit Development Plans, 2025

PUD Plan #	Section	Description	Zoning	Approved / Denied	Proponent
PUD 1, 2025	12-376-035	29150 Twelve Mile Rd, north side of 12 Mile, east of Middlebelt. For sale Townhomes.	RA-1A	PC Approved 5-15-2025	Schafer Development
Amend PUD 2, 2021, inc. SP 59-5-2022	12-476-008	27400 Twelve Mile Rd, construct site-built one-family detached dwelling units.	RA-1B	PC Approved 5-15-2025	Robertson Brothers Homes
Amend PUD 2, 2023, inc SP 67-9-2023	03-226-027, 028	30825 and 31361 Orchard Lake Rd, redevelop Hunter's Square shopping center	B-2	PC Approved 9-18-2025	Frank Jarbou
Amend PUD 4, 2000	02-176-068	32555 Northwestern Highway, existing building as catering kitchen, storage, and private event space with new addition.	B-3, RA-4	PC Approved 9-18-2025	Zack Sklar
Amend PUD 12, 2014, inc SP 60-7-2025	10-476-067	12 Mile, W. of Orchard Lake Rd, construct new fast-food restaurant with drive through on a vacant out lot	B-4	PC Approved 11-20-2025	Ronald J. Sesi

Table 17. Planned Unit Development Options or Qualifications, 2025

PUD Plan #	Section	Description	Zoning	Approved / Denied	Proponent
PUD Option 1, 2025	11-126-026, 027	30275 Thirteen Mile Rd., construct six new ranch-style, attached dwellings units in OS-1	OS-1	PC Approved 8-21-2025	Schafer Dev

Table 18. Planned Unit Development Plans and Qualifications, 2017 to 2025

Year	PUD Plans	PUD Qualifications
2018	5	2
2019	1	0
2020	1	4
2021	7	2
2022	4	0
2023	4	2
2024	5	3
2025	5	1

Figure 6. Planned Unit Development Plans and Qualifications Presented to the Planning Commission, 2017 to 2025

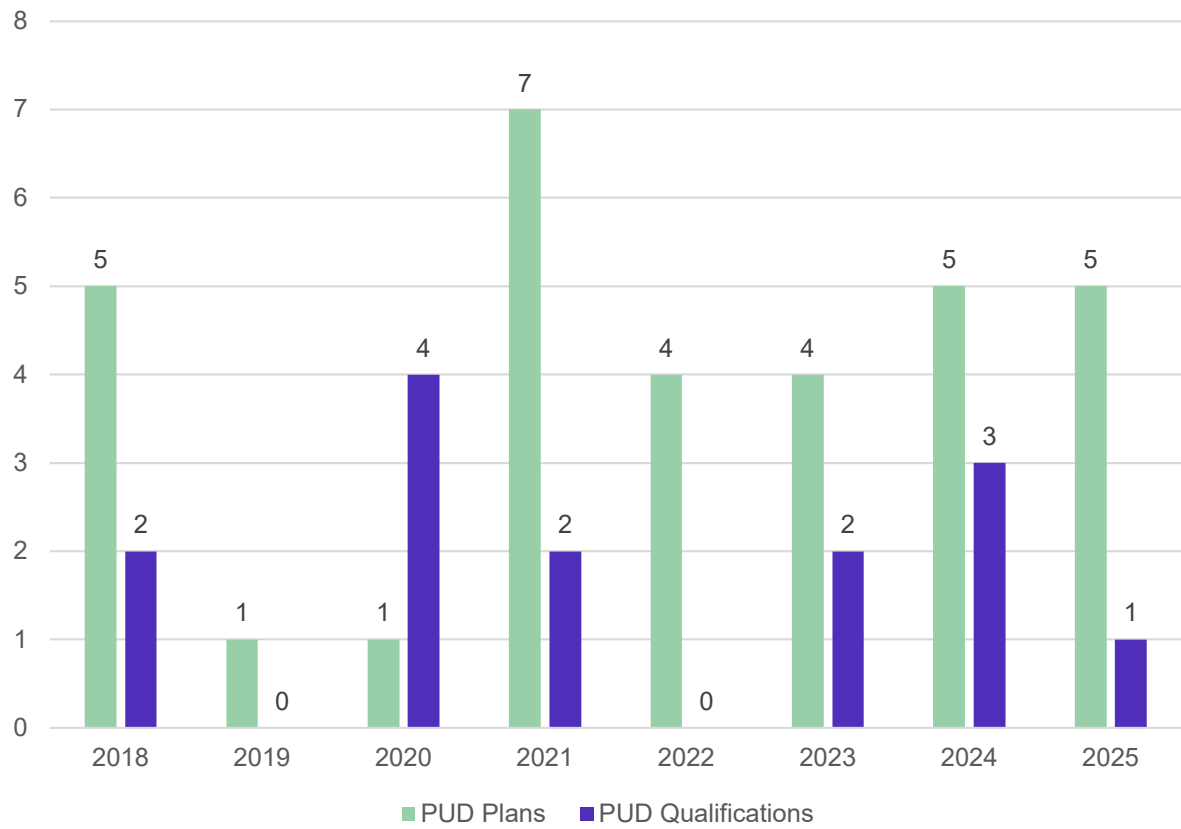
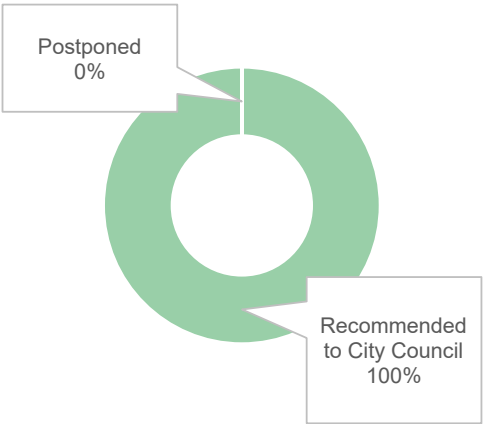


Table 19. Planned Unit Development Plans, 2025

Decision	Number
Recommended to City Council	5
Postponed	0
Total	5

Figure 7. Planned Unit Development Plans, 2025



**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY ALL
31555 W. ELEVEN MILE ROAD
DECEMBER 9, 2025**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Irvin called the meeting to order at 7:30pm and made standard introductory remarks to explain the role of the ZBA and the formal procedures of the meeting.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Banks, Irvin, Jamil, Khan, O'Connell, Rich, Vergun

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult, City Attorney Kolb, Recording Secretary McGuire

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Rich, support by O'Connell, to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

A. ZBA CASE: 10-25-5766

LOCATION: 29919 Stanhurst Rd.

PARCEL I.D.: 23-05-477-010

ZONE: RA-1, One Family Residential District

REQUEST: In order to construct an addition measuring approximately 12.2' x 13.6' the following variance is required. 1. A 2.8-foot variance to the required 10-foot (east) side yard setback. This will permit the addition to have a 7.17-foot side yard setback.

CODE SECTION: 34-3.1.4.E

APPLICANT/OWNER: Rohini Devi Potla

The applicant had submitted a written request to postpone this item.

MOTION by Jamil, support by Khan, to approve the applicant's request to postpone ZBA Case 10-25-5766 to the January ZBA meeting.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

This case will be re-noticed for the January meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. ZBA CASE: 12-25-5770

LOCATION: 29450 W. 9 Mile Rd.

PARCEL I.D.: 23-26-486-014

ZONE: B-3, General Business District

REQUEST: A 25-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.25.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit the southernmost (a.k.a west) gas station pump canopy to be 0-feet from the front (south) lot line where 25-feet is the minimum front yard setback required.

CODE SECTION: 34-3.1.25.E

APPLICANT: Riham Alsarout

OWNER: Smart Petrol 1 LLC

Background

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult gave the background for this variance request:

- The property is a long-standing gas station site that has existed for decades. The applicant is seeking to construct a 1,077 square foot addition to the existing gas station convenience store building, for a total of 2,324 square feet.
- The existing gas station has four fueling positions under the east canopy, as shown on the aerial, and two under the southernmost canopy. Both existing canopies are nonconforming, in that they are directly on the property line and therefore do not meet the front yard setbacks that are required within the B-3 district.
- The applicant seeks to expand the size of the southernmost pump canopy from two to six fueling stations. The number of pumps and the size of the east canopy will remain the same. The new and expanded southernmost canopy will be directly on the property boundary, and a variance is required because of the expansion of an existing nonconformity.
- The Planning Commission has approved the site plan with conditions, one of which relates to the request before the ZBA this evening. If the variance is not approved, the applicant would need to modify their site plan in order to move forward.

Applicant presentation

Oliver Nasralah, Ornamics Group, Dearborn, was present on behalf of this variance request. Mr. Nasralah highlighted the following:

- The request applies only to the southernmost canopy expansion.
- As already stated, if the request is denied, the site plan will need to be revised.
- One driveway approach would be closed per Planning Commission recommendations.
- Traffic circulation would rely on an existing easement with the adjacent property.

Board Questions and Clarifications

Board members clarified that only the canopy overhang requires a variance. Canopy supports and pumps meet setback requirements.

Public comment

Member Rich reported that there was an affidavit of mailing, with three undeliverable notices.

Chair Irvin opened the meeting to public comment. As no public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Irvin closed public comment and brought the matter back to the Board for further discussion and/or a motion.

MOTION by Jamil, support by Vergun, in the matter of ZBA Case 12-25-5770, that the petitioner's request for a 25-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.25.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit the southernmost (a.k.a west) gas station pump canopy to be 0-feet from the front (south) lot line where 25-feet is the minimum front yard setback required, be GRANTED because the petitioner did demonstrate practical difficulties exist in this case in that he set forth facts which show that:

- 1. Compliance with the strict letter of the ordinance would unreasonably prevent the petitioner from using the property for a permitted purpose or would render conformity with the ordinance unnecessarily burdensome.**
- 2. That granting the variance requested would do substantial justice to the petitioner as well as to other property owners in the district or that a lesser relaxation than that relief applied for would give substantial relief to the owner of the property involved and be more consistent with justice to other property owners.**
- 3. That the petitioner's plight is due to the unique circumstances of the property.**
- 4. That the problem is not self-created.**

With the following condition:

- The gas station canopy will be constructed as shown on the submitted plans.**

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

B. ZBA CASE: 12-25-5771

LOCATION: Part of lots 11 and 12 of Franklin Oaks Subdivision

PARCEL I.D.: 23-01-177-025 & 23-01-177-027

ZONE: RA-1, One Family Residential District

REQUESTS:

- a. For proposed Parcel 1, A 46.75-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning ordinance to permit creation of a lot 53.25 feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.**
- b. For proposed Parcel 2, A 32.42-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit creation of a lot 67.58-feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.**
- c. For proposed Parcel 3, A 4.42-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit creation of a lot 95.58-feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.**

CODE SECTION: 34-3.1.4.E

OWNER/APPLICANT: Jason and Lauryn Curis

Background

Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult gave the background for this variance request:

- The application is for dimensional variances for three of four proposed land divisions. The three parcels do not meet the minimum lot frontage requirement of 100 feet in the RA-1 One Family Residential District. The plan as submitted is part of a court settlement between the property owner and their neighbors.
- Written public comments were included in the Board packets.

- The existing easement through the property is not proposed to be modified.

Applicant Presentation:

Donald Rump, attorney for the applicant, 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy, Michigan, made the following points:

- The proposal consists of very large lots that are consistent with the RA-1 district in the City of Farmington Hills.
- The hardship was created when the subdivision was originally platted, resulting in a nearly 12-acre parcel abutting a cul-de-sac.
- The property was involved in litigation and the proposed lot divisions were part of a consent judgment. The majority of subdivision owners who participated in the litigation agreed that the proposed divisions were fair and consistent with other development in the subdivision.
- While variances are requested from the minimum frontage requirement, the actual lot sizes have average widths ranging from approximately 167 feet to 287 feet. The smallest proposed lot is approximately six times larger than the minimum lot area required in the RA-1 district. The lots are very large and are consistent with the character of the neighborhood and this consistency was the basis for the settlement of the lawsuit.

Board questions and clarifications

In response to questions, Mr. Rump gave the following information:

- The consent judgment was entered in summer 2025, following an appeal to the Michigan Court of Appeals that resulted in a ruling in favor of the petitioner. The case is now recorded.
- The applicant measured the width at the cul-de-sac property line and also at the 40-foot building setback. Due to the cul-de-sac configuration, the parcels widen significantly beyond the frontage. Three of the parcels are over three acres in size and the fourth is just under three acres.
- When asked about dividing the property into three conforming lots, Mr. Rump responded that he did not believe the lots would conform, noting the lack of sufficient frontage on the cul-de-sac, and explaining that revising the plan would require returning to court, which would be a significant burden given the consent judgment already approved through the court system.

Public comment

Chair Irvin opened the meeting to public comment.

Eugene Greenstein, Olde Franklin Drive, offered extensive comments regarding this variance request. He stated that for years residents have enjoyed walking and biking through four adjoining subdivisions without having to access main roads. This connectivity is no longer possible due to fencing installed by the applicants, and he asked the ZBA to address neighborhood connectivity as part of any decision on the requested variances. Two easements are impacted by the request, including the partially walkable and bikeable easement between Oak Crest Court and Franklin Fairway and a proposed walkable and bikeable easement between Oak Crest Court and the Rock Ridge Lane cul-de-sac. The existing walkable easement between Olde Franklin Towne and Stonewood Court is also impacted by the request. The former nature preserve area located in the wooded portion of proposed Parcel 4 should remain accessible to

the community. The proposed easement through the wooded area is not currently passable and would require routing around or removing mature trees. He requested that the Board not grant the requested variances without addressing neighborhood connectivity issues.

Robert Kaplan, Olde Franklin Drive, reiterated concerns regarding loss of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between neighborhoods. Fencing installed by the applicants blocked the pathway that residents believe is on a city-granted easement. Restoring said pathway should not impose a cost on the City and the applicant should be required to include the pathway in the development plan.

Satya Vadlamuri, Rockridge Lane, said that he lives across from the subject property. The surrounding neighborhood consists of approximately 11 to 15 households with lot sizes ranging from three to 11 acres, all conforming to the 100-foot minimum frontage requirement with one home per lot. Granting the requested variances would disrupt the character of the community and could encourage other property owners to seek similar variances and subdivide their lots. The scenic walking route connecting Rock Ridge Lane through the school district and into the Olde Franklin neighborhood has been disrupted. He expressed concern for pedestrian safety, as residents are now forced to use main roads. He strongly opposed granting any of the requested variances.

Steven Reifman, Olde Franklin Drive, said that he is a board member of Olde Franklin Towne Homeowners Association, consisting of 183 homes, but was speaking on his own behalf. The consent judgment referenced by the applicant's attorney applies only to subdivision residents and does not address impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, including Olde Franklin Towne, Stonewood, and Franklin Fairway. Residents have repeatedly lost pedestrian access due to actions by the applicants, including installation of fencing, cameras, and police involvement. Mr. Reifman stated that the easement is the central issue before the Board and asserted that the applicants should not be granted any leniency unless the easement is cleared and made usable. The pathway was part of a trail system developed by the Boy Scouts when the property was associated with the former Fairview School and Fairview Nature Center. He opposed granting the variance request.

Jane Mendelsohn, Olde Franklin Drive, supported her neighbors and requested the restoration of pedestrian pathways so residents can continue walking between adjoining developments without using public roadways.

Maria Mindroiu, Oak Crest Drive, said that her property is the closest residence to the subject property. The natural walking trails previously enhanced property values and quality of life in the neighborhood, but the installation of fencing eliminated those benefits. Additionally she was concerned that constructing multiple homes on the subject property would reduce surrounding property values. Ms. Mindroiu opposed the requested variances.

Kristi Kelly, , West Stonewood Court, and President of the Franklin Fairway & Forest Neighborhood Association, referenced her written letter, and said that her review of legacy documents indicated the land had been offered by the school system for potential public use. According to documents she reviewed, the Curis family petitioned the city to acquire the land to protect public access to baseball diamonds and parkland and to prevent overdevelopment

adjacent to their residences. However, community members have experienced intrusion and interruption of the quiet enjoyment of the land. The subject parcel serves as a central connection between multiple neighborhoods. Ms. Kelly referenced the City's 2024 Master Plan, which identifies the parcel as desirable for school use due to its connectivity and walkability. She requested that the Board consider the historical purpose of the land and community testimony regarding loss of pedestrian connectivity. She pointed out that the consent judgment allows for development of up to four parcels, which means that fewer parcels could also be developed.

Marci Rosenberg Bishop, Olde Franklin Drive, stated that her home faces the subject parcel. Residents previously enjoyed walking the trails and experiencing the natural area. Construction of multiple homes would detract from surrounding properties. She opposed granting the requested variances.

Steve Hassell, Olde Franklin Drive, agreed with the previous speakers. Loss of pedestrian access has negatively impacted his children and the neighborhood. He opposed the variance unless the pedestrian easement is reestablished.

As no other public indicated they wished to speak, Chair Irvin closed public comment and invited the applicant to address public comments.

Applicant rebuttal

Mr. Rump offered the following response to public comments:

- Opposition to having any development was not realistic. The property was no longer a school and was privately owned, and the development of the property was a decision made by the City of Farmington Hills.
- The proposed lots are substantial in size and consistent with RA-1 zoning standards. Constructing four large homes consistent with zoning requirements should not devalue surrounding properties.
- The pedestrian walkway referenced by speakers was modified by the City of Farmington Hills and that connectivity remains, though via a longer route. Some speakers had suggested walking through the middle of the property, which would result in pedestrians walking through private yards. The current pathway runs through the wooded area around the property. The fence was constructed with a City permit and inspected by the City, and no ordinances were violated.

Correspondence

Member Rich reported that the file contains an affidavit of mailing, with three undeliverables, and correspondence from Jane Mendelsohn, Marvin Fishman, Eugene Greenstein, and Kristi Kelly. All correspondence was opposed to the request, although Mr. Greenstein did not object to the road frontage itself and primarily requested conditions related to pedestrian connectivity.

Member Rich clarified that road frontage is the only matter under the Board's jurisdiction and requested action this evening.

Chair Irvin closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Board for further discussion and/or a motion.

Board discussion

Member O'Connell asked the applicant whether the consent judgment allows development of up to four lots. Mr. Rump responded that the four-lot design presented is the same plan attached to the consent judgment and that no changes have been made.

Member O'Connell asked whether the consent judgment references easements or pathways. Mr. Rump responded that it does not reference either. The easements already exist and are shown on the submitted survey. The pathway runs around the last lot along the wooded area and preservation of the woods was part of the consent judgment. The applicant has relinquished any right to develop that portion of the property.

Member O'Connell asked for clarification regarding the pedestrian pathways discussed by the public. Mr. Rump said that residents had previously crossed the property at will; such use constituted trespassing. Conflicts arose following demolition of the school, including alcohol use and littering on the property, which prompted the property owner's concern regarding unauthorized use and the installation of a fence.

In response to questions from Member Rich, Director Kettler-Schmult said that she was not directly involved in the original negotiations, but she understood that the City attempted to mediate conflicts between neighbors and the property owner, resulting in the currently recorded easement.

Member Rich asked whether the existing easements benefit neighboring residents or remain under City control. City Attorney Kolb explained that the recorded easement language provides that the school district granted the City a permanent, non-exclusive easement for a public, non-motorized access path, meaning it is open to public use and not limited to City use only.

Member Rich asked whether installation of a fence blocking the easement would be permitted under the terms of the easement. City Attorney Kolb responded that it would not be permitted and that the City has authority to enforce the easement and require removal of any obstruction.

Member O'Connell asked whether the easement in question was the one that runs through the wooded area. City Attorney Kolb confirmed that it was.

Member O'Connell discussed with staff and the City Attorney whether the fence was currently blocking the easement. City Attorney Kolb and Director Kettler-Schmult stated that, based on the information provided, the recorded easement does not appear to be blocked.

Through the Chair, Member Vergun requested that the applicant address the claim that the fence blocks access beyond private property. Mr. Rump stated that the fence was intended to follow the private property line and was installed pursuant to a City permit. If the fence were found to block an easement, it could be relocated; a portion of the fence had previously been moved to ensure compliance.

Member Vergun asked whether there is a break in the fence allowing pedestrians to pass through. Mr. Rump stated that pedestrians walk around the fence along the easement and that the fence follows the property line and protects private property where public access is not

permitted. He reiterated that the fence is located inside the walking path. If any resident had an issue with the fence location, the issue could be resolved by contacting the City, who could enforce access to the easement.

In response to questions, Director Kettler-Schmult stated that a survey was completed by city in-house survey staff to verify correct fence placement.

Chair Irvin asked whether a blocked easement could be remedied by a call from residents or a homeowners association to the City. Director Kettler-Schmult said that such a call would trigger a follow-up investigation. If an easement has been blocked, the City would take appropriate action.

Chair Irvin restated the issue, noting that neighbors previously used school property pathways, but those areas are now private property and fenced, while access remains available through the City easement.

City Attorney Kolb explained that the recorded 2018 easement runs with the land and would not be terminated by sale of the property. Actual termination of the easement would require a separate recorded document executed by the City and the underlying landowner. Existing easements cannot be built upon, and the proposed development does not encroach upon the easement, which runs around the exterior of the property.

City Attorney Kolb advised that the question before the Board was whether to grant a variance from the required 100-foot lot width at the road. The Board is required to apply the statutory variance standards and the existence or location of easements is not a factor for consideration in granting a variance. Additionally, enforcement of easement issues is not within the jurisdiction of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

MOTION by Rich, support by Jamil, in the matter of ZBA Case 12-25-5771, that the petitioner's request for the following variances be GRANTED:

- a. **For proposed Parcel 1, A 46.75-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning ordinance to permit creation of a lot 53.25 feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.**
- b. **For proposed Parcel 2, A 32.42-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit creation of a lot 67.58-feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.**
- c. **For proposed Parcel 3, A 4.42-foot variance from Section 34-3.1.4.E of the Zoning Ordinance to permit creation of a lot 95.58-feet in width where a minimum 100-foot width is required.**

Because the petitioner did demonstrate practical difficulties exist in this case in that he set forth acts which show that:

1. **Compliance with the strict letter of the ordinance would unreasonably prevent the petitioner from using the property for a permitted purpose, which is single family residential in an RA-1 Zone, or would render conformity with the ordinance unnecessarily burdensome.**

2. That granting the variance requested would do substantial justice to the petitioner as well as to other property owners in the district or that a lesser relaxation than that relief applied for would give substantial relief to the owner of the property involved and be more consistent with justice to other property owners.

The alternative, theoretically, is to put in a new street in order to make sure there is frontage on the street, which would not address any of the other concerns that the residents who are neighbors have. Therefore, granting the variance requested does do substantial justice to the petitioner as well as to the other property owners in the district. The issue is that this huge property is on a cul-de-sac. There is nothing that has been demonstrated that granting this variance would have any negative impact with respect to property values. In fact, having substantial and expensive homes might increase the value of the property.

3. That the petitioner's plight is due to the unique circumstances of the property, specifically because any properties on a cul-de-sac will necessarily be pie-shaped unless they totally encircle it.
4. That the problem is not self-created, because this property was originally platted the way that it was, and this particular property owner simply bought the property with the existing conditions, whatever they may be, on it.

With the following finding:

- The city has indicated that whatever easements had existed still exist. Anything else dealing with easements or homeowner's association rules or deed restrictions or any of those sorts of things are not something that the ZBA addresses, and as specifically stated by the City Attorney, the only question for the ZBA is, and the only authority that the ZBA has, is to determine whether or not there is a practical difficulty in developing this property when deciding whether to approve this variance.

With the following condition:

- The lot splits for requests a, b, and c be as specifically requested and as illustrated on the site plan.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

None

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: November 11, 2025

MOTION by Rich, support by Banks, to amend and approve the November 11, 2025 meeting minutes as follows:

- P. 2, 2nd paragraph, 2nd line should read: "The contribution totaled less than ~~.05%~~ .5% of total contributions . . ."

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Rich, support by O'Connell, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56pm.

**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
DECEMBER 18, 2025, 7:30 P.M.**

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The Planning Commission Regular Meeting was called to order by Chair Trafelet at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Lindquist, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet

Commissioners Absent: Ware

Others Present: Staff Planner Mulville-Friel, Planning Consultants Tangari and Upfal (Giffels Webster), Staff Engineer Emerson, City Attorney Schultz

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION by Brickner, support by Stimson, to approve the agenda as published.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC HEARING

A. SPECIAL APPROVAL 66-10-2025

LOCATION: 36336 Eight Mile Rd
PARCEL I.D.: 22-23-32-326-057
PROPOSAL: Construct new utility building and pump station within the RA-1:
 One Family Residential District
ACTION REQUESTED: Special Approval Use
APPLICANT: Brown and Caldwell
OWNER: Great Lakes Water Authority

Applicant presentation

Clayton Johnson, Brown and Caldwell, was present on behalf of this request for site plan and special use approval to construct a new GLWA utility building and pump station within the RA-1 zoning district. George Nicholas, Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), was also present.

The applicant made the following points:

- GLWA was proposing to construct a 52 million gallons per day capacity booster pumping station that includes yard piping, a standby generator, and a switch yard to replace an existing Newburgh Pump Station located across Eight Mile Road. The new facility would be located on the northwest corner of Metroview Road and Eight Mile Road.
- GLWA performed a condition assessment on the existing pump station, which is over 50 years old. Based on the age, condition, limited capacity, and outdated equipment, rehabilitation was determined to be less cost-effective than constructing a new facility.
- A new pump station could not be built in the existing location because the new pump station has to be operational before the existing pump station can be taken out of service.

- Design was nearly 100% complete. Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in the fall of 2026. The schedule included bidding for an award early in 2026, and a two and a half to three year construction period.

In response to questions, the applicant provided the following information:

- The fence around the building would be eight feet tall.
- A photometric plan will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with ordinance requirements. There would be security cameras along the building. Lighting will be minimal and limited to door-mounted fixtures, with no site or parking lot lighting.
- GLWA will be seeking variances associated with the project.

Planning consultant review

Referencing the November 19, 2025 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari highlighted the following points:

- A portion of the proposed building will exceed the RA-1 30 feet height limit, with a proposed height of approximately 34.5 feet.
- A dumpster was shown in the interior side yard without the required enclosure.
- All ground-mounted equipment outside of the proposed building was contained within obscuring walls, as required.
- Fourteen parking spaces are proposed for an unmanned facility; the rationale and parking space dimensions were not provided.
- The landscape plan showed the location of existing trees, but did not include a tree replacement plan or tree inventory. All trees on the site would be removed.
- The tree requirements for the parking lot could not be calculated without parking lot dimensions.
- There was significant landscaping on berms in the front and west side yards that met requirements. However, no screening was proposed along the north property line where the site abuts a residential property. A wall was typically required in that circumstance, but a greenbelt could be approved by the Planning Commission.
- There was a detention basin in the east yard, with no landscaping proposed.
- The fence on the east side of the property encroached into the 40 foot required street setback.
- A photometric plan was not included during the original review. The photometric plan would need to be reviewed for ordinance compliance.

In response to a question from Commissioner Countegan, City Attorney Schultz explained that the proposed station was a public building sponsored by GLWA. All zoning standards apply.

Public hearing.

Chair Trafelet opened the public hearing.

William Ferguson, 20841 Metroview Road, was the owner of the property along the north property line. He asked that as many trees as possible be left on the subject site, particularly along the north property line, and noted that trees on his property could not be removed. The site plan was not clear about whether a fence or a greenbelt would be located on the property line, but in any event, it was important to screen his property from views of this commercial building. He asked that lighting be directed toward the building and not onto his property

No other public indicated they wished to speak, and Chair Trafelet closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Commission.

Commissioner questions:

In response to questions, the applicant provided the following information:

- All of the trees on the site would be removed in order to construct the proposed building and parking lot. Replacement trees would be provided via monies placed in the tree replacement fund.
- The 14 parking spaces would be used for operations, maintenance, or construction activities on a very infrequent basis. The pump station would be operated remotely.
- The pump station itself would not generate significant noise. An emergency generator would be in a soundproof, attenuated enclosure. There would also be sound attenuation panels inside the building. The operation would not exceed sound ordinance limits.
- The applicants had been unaware of the 40 foot setback requirement in the east yard. They agreed to evaluate relocating the fence between the building and the stormwater basin
- No vehicles would be stored on the site. The parking lot would only be used by staff visiting the site for operations and maintenance purposes, and their vehicles would primarily consist of personal or light commercial vehicles.
- Reducing parking or pavement would be difficult due to required truck turning radii and fire department access requirements. The site was designed to accommodate a 72 foot truck used for pump removal, should that ever be necessary. Tree removal was based on the required truck turnaround room.
- The increased height – requiring a variance – is required to accommodate an overhead bridge crane within the pump room, which is necessary for pump maintenance and removal.
- The site would be gated. Access would be controlled by badge entry, with an automated gate on Eight Mile Road and a manual gate on Metroview Road.
- The applicant acknowledged comments about fire department access. Chair Trafelet suggested coordination with the Fire Marshal regarding emergency gate access.
- The applicants were considering options for screening on the north property line including shrubs and shorter trees, necessary because of the overhead wires and communication wires located there. They would consider moving the proposed fence to make more room for screening.
- The station provides water to the West Service Center which is east of the subject site. The station boosts the pressures and flows to the surrounding areas including Farmington Hills, Livonia, and other areas. The station is necessary to maintain pressures within the distribution system and to maintain pressure for required fire flows.
- Eight Mile Road will be open cut to complete the connection with the transmission main lines on the south side of the road.
- Calculations demonstrating compliance with 100-year storm event requirements will be submitted as supplemental information.

Commission deliberation and motion

Chair Trafelet clarified that public utility uses are permitted within residential districts under applicable ordinance provisions. The Planning Commission is deliberating on a request for a special approval, which includes review of the site plan.

Commissioner Mantey commented that a commercial building this large in a residential neighborhood must be effectively screened from abutting residential properties.

In response to questions, Planning Consultant Tangari confirmed that a wall is an acceptable screening option under the ordinance. The code requires either a wall or a greenbelt. The fence by itself does not meet the opacity or screening standards. City Planner Mulville-Friel pointed out that the applicant could construct a wall instead of a fence if greenbelt plantings are not possible on the site.

Commissioner Countegan acknowledged the necessity of the proposed facility and its role in serving Livonia, Farmington Hills, and surrounding communities. Potential compatibility issues with the adjacent residential property to the north could be addressed through site design and operational measures. Concerns related to lighting, screening, and noise impacts could be mitigated through appropriate site improvements. The facility is not expected to be high impact except during periodic maintenance activities, for which on-site parking is necessary to avoid overflow parking along Eight Mile Road.

MOTION by Countegan, support by Brickner, that the application for Special Approval Site Plan 66-10-2025, dated September 20, 2025, as revised, submitted by Brown and Caldwell, BE APPROVED, because it meets the standards for Special Approval Uses set forth in Section 34-6.3. The APPROVAL is SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS and DETERMINATIONS:

CONDITONS AND DETERMINATIONS:

1. All outstanding issues identified in Giffels Webster's November 19, 2025, review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner;
2. All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's November 6, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer; and
3. All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's October 30, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.
4. The 8-foot-high fence proposed in the front yard requires a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
5. A greenbelt is required along the north property line where the property abuts the residential district. The location and composition of the greenbelt shall be subject to administrative approval.
6. Proposed building height over 30 feet requires a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.
7. A dumpster enclosure that meets Section 34-5.1.2.D is required to be constructed, unless there is a variance to that requirement.
8. A total of fourteen (14) parking spaces provided is adequate for the use proposed.
9. A tree replacement plan is required.
10. A photometric plan is required and must comply with standards contained in Section 34-5.16.
11. The building materials proposed are generally consistent with architectural objectives of design standards in Section 34-5.20 and relief from commercial design standards related to ground floor window coverage is granted.

Motion discussion:

Regarding #5:

- Commissioner Countegan confirmed with Mr. Ferguson that a landscaped greenbelt was preferred over a wall. Mr. Ferguson reiterated that there was a narrow line of trees along the northern boundary and he requested that these trees be preserved.
- Mr. Johnson said that they would explore providing shrubs, planters, or similar landscaping elements to serve as the required greenbelt.
- Commissioner Countegan clarified that the intent of the motion was to address the screening needs of the northern neighbor to the extent possible.

Regarding #11, Commissioner Countegan noted that the operational necessity of the pumping station warranted a waiver from commercial design standards related to ground floor window coverage.

Roll call vote:

Stimson	yes
Countegan	yes
Aspinall	yes
Lindquist	yes
Grant	yes
Brickner	yes
Mantey	yes
Trafelet	yes

Motion passed 8-0.

B. SPECIAL APPROVAL 67-10-2025

LOCATION:	27900 Orchard Lake Rd
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-11-351-013
PROPOSAL:	Construct new fast food restaurant with drive-through within the B-3: General Business District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Special Approval Use
APPLICANT:	Brewtopia Michigan, LLC
OWNER:	Farmington Hills Beef Company

Applicant presentation

Reid Cooksey, Stonefield Engineering Design, was present on behalf of this request for site plan and special use approval to construct a new fast food restaurant with drive-through within the B-3 General Business District.

Mr. Cooksey explained that Brewtopia proposed to redevelop a former Arby's restaurant site on Orchard Lake Road. The proposed use is a 7 Brew coffee kiosk, a national drive-through focused coffee concept with over 500 locations. The business model provides only coffee and related type drinks, with simplified operations designed to reduce service times and improve traffic predictability. By simplifying processes, 7 Brew had throughput times from order to delivery of under 2 ½ minutes, which creates a very predictable traffic flow.

Mr. Cooksey made the following points:

- The proposed building would be 510 square feet with a 200 square-foot external cooler.
- Customers would place orders either via QR code or through employees using handheld tablets; there would be no menu board or pickup window.
- Employees deliver drinks directly to vehicles, allowing customers to exit the site from either drive-through lane when orders are complete.
- Six parking spaces are provided for employees only; no on-site seating or customer parking is proposed.
- The site features one-way circulation intended to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.
- The external cooler stores frozen items, with a canopy connecting it to the main building.

In response to questions, Mr. Cooksey added the following:

- During the peak business time of 7:30am-8:30am, the restaurant could serve an estimated 60-80 vehicles per hour, with average service times of 2.5 to 3 minutes.
- Vehicles in the interior lane cannot access the bypass lane once queued but rapid service minimizes delays.
- The applicant would work with City engineers to ensure that there was adequate space beyond the exterior two lane stop to accommodate traffic in both lanes and traffic entering from Orchard Lake Road.
- This location would not have walk-up service, due to limited pedestrian activity in the area, as well as due to Michigan's cold winter climate.
- The prefabricated buildings (kiosk and cooler) would arrive as modular units.
- They will modify the site plan to show the outside cooler 10 feet behind the restaurant building.
- The proposed site allows the stacking of 30+ cars, exceeds MDOT stacking standards, and provides more than 400 feet from the pickup point to the right-of-way.
- The counterclockwise, one-way circulation pattern minimizes conflicts by preventing vehicles exiting the drive-through from crossing incoming traffic.
- The existing entrance and current turn patterns would be maintained.
- A traffic study had not been completed.
- 7 Brew would serve coffees, teas, lemonades, energy fizzies, smoothies, etc.

Commissioner Mantey stated that, given the high traffic volumes at the Twelve Mile Road and Orchard Lake Road intersection, the proposed stacking plan appeared to be a feasible design.

Commissioner Stimson expressed concern that peak traffic would occur during the morning rush hour, unlike the former Arby's use, which primarily experienced midday peaks. Left turns from the site during morning peak hours could be very difficult due to southbound traffic volumes, and a right-turn only exit might be needed.

It came out in discussion that an alternative exit route via Twelve Mile Road could potentially reduce left-turn conflicts.

Mr. Cooksey stated that the business primarily serves repeat commuter customers who are familiar with local traffic patterns and would adjust their routes as needed.

In response to a question from Commissioner Lindquist, Mr. Cooksey said that customers exiting onto Twelve Mile Road would circle through the site and exit before reaching the stacking lanes. 7 Brew did not anticipate stacking where there was a single lane. Only 16 to 17 stacking spaces would be needed at the busiest times, and 21 stacks were available. He agreed that if traffic exceeded available stacking that the single lane could be blocked, but they did not anticipate that occurring.

Commissioner Grant noted that traffic could enter from Twelve Mile Road through the Shell station and try to get to the front of the line at the kiosk. Mr. Cooksey explained that if the stacking lanes were full, traffic entering through the Shell station would be able to take the bypass lane around the building or wait to queue into the line.

Chair Trafelet questioned whether a formal cross-access easement exists for continued use of the adjacent property to the east. City Attorney Schultz stated that the matter would be reviewed during engineering review and that any existing documentation would need to be confirmed. Mr. Cooksey affirmed that the applicant would review the title and existing agreements.

Commissioner Brickner noted that recent roadway improvements include a left-turn lane on Orchard Lake Road that allows access into the site. He believed left turns into the site are feasible, but left turns exiting the site may be more challenging.

In response to a question from Commissioner Brickner, Mr. Cooksey said that the proposed building would be closer to Orchard Lake Road than Arby's was, and noted that the building met required setbacks.

In response to a comment from Commissioner Grant, Mr. Cooksey said that the applicant would apply for waivers for both indoor and outdoor seating requirements.

Planning consultant review

Referencing the November 18, 2025 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Upfal highlighted the following points:

- The applicant proposed to demolish the existing building and construct a 510 square-foot coffee drive-through structure with a separate accessory cooler structure.
- The parking lot would be redesigned to accommodate two drive-through lanes and six parking spaces.
- The site is zoned B-3 and is surrounded by other B-3 or B-4 zoned properties, and is across the street from an OS-2 zoned property.
- Primary access was from Orchard Lake Road. Additional access was through the Shell station and from Twelve Mile Road.
- A drive-through restaurant was a special land use in the B-3 zoning district. The proposed application meets all dimensional standards of the B-3 district.
- The off-street loading requirement is calculated at 157 square feet based on building frontage; no loading space was shown, and the Commission may consider whether a minimum 200-square-foot space should be required.
- The indoor seating requirement for this drive-through restaurant was 20 seats, and the outdoor seating requirement was six seats. The outdoor seating requirement was eligible for a waiver from the Commission.

- The proposed dumpster location was compliant.
- The number of proposed parking spaces was compliant based on the number of employees. If any seating was added to the restaurant additional parking spaces would be required.
- Turning radii for the drive-through lanes must be demonstrated on the site plan.
- The applicant would need to pursue a variance to address sign compliance issues, or bring the signs into compliance.
- A required tree inventory was not provided. Landscaping includes three large deciduous trees and five existing evergreen trees counted toward parking lot landscaping; the Commission may consider whether evergreen trees are acceptable and whether tree distribution is adequate.
- Screening along the pedestrian pathway on the south side of the site may require further review.
- Lighting information was incomplete, including illumination levels, fixture heights, hours of operation, and photometric data.
- The accessory structure did not meet the required 10 feet separation distance for accessory structures and would need to be relocated or granted a variance.
- The structure also did not meet fenestration requirements. The Commission could waive those requirements.
- Pedestrian connections to Orchard Lake Road and within the site were found to be compliant.

In response to questions, Consultant Upfal provided the following additional information:

- The purpose of the ordinance requirement for indoor seating was to reduce auto-oriented uses.
- The purpose of the separation requirements between buildings was to address fire safety.

Commissioner Mantey pointed out that variances require a demonstration of a practical difficulty related to site conditions. Personal preference does not meet the criteria for granting a variance.

Commissioner Brickner asked about ownership and maintenance of the parking lot located behind the subject property and questioned whether easements may exist to allow shared access. Commissioner Lindquist noted that the rear parking area was formerly associated with the Ruby Tuesday site. It was noted that the rear parking area does not provide functional access for the proposed development.

Commissioner Countegan stated that, while many site plan issues could be addressed administratively, he had concerns related to the Special Approval Use standards, specifically with the standard requiring that the proposed use not create vehicular or pedestrian traffic hazards, particularly given traffic conditions along Orchard Lake Road. No traffic study had been provided, and he needed additional analysis regarding site access and circulation.

Commissioner Countegan also raised concerns regarding the lack of indoor seating and how a variance request regarding this ordinance requirement would be evaluated.

In response to a question from Commissioner Lindquist, Mr. Cooksey said that the applicant planned to move the exterior cooler to meet the separation requirement.

Public hearing.

Chair Trafelet opened the public hearing.

Staff Planner Mulville-Friel noted that a letter from an adjacent property owner was included in the meeting packet.

David Elkus, owner of the adjacent property to the south, referenced his correspondence to the Commission outlining his concern regarding a 7 Brew coffee kiosk at the proposed location, and also listing significant traffic issues experienced at other 7 Brew locations. Mr. Elkus was particularly concerned regarding traffic impacts at Orchard Lake Road and Twelve Mile Road, including left-turn movements into and out of the site. Mr. Elkus' property shares cross-access easements with the subject site and the adjacent gas station. Vehicles frequently cut through his parking lot to access the gas station despite prior assurances that a traffic barrier on Orchard Lake Road would prevent such movements. A high-volume drive-through use would exacerbate these issues and negatively impact his property.

No other public indicated they wished to speak, and Chair Trafelet closed the public hearing and brought the matter back to the Commission.

Commission deliberation and motion

City Attorney Schultz discussed the Planning Commission's historical and current practice regarding applications requiring Zoning Board of Appeals variances. This proposal requires variances from the indoor seating requirement and minimum square footage requirement. Given the nature of those variances, the ZBA may need to determine whether a use variance is required. Attorney Schultz suggested that denial at this stage would be the most appropriate action.

Commissioner Countegan stated that while the site design and stacking appeared well designed, he remained concerned about compliance with the Special Approval Use standard requiring that the proposed use not create hazardous traffic conditions. He cited the absence of a traffic study and requested additional analysis of ingress and egress along Orchard Lake Road. He also expressed concern regarding the lack of indoor seating and how a variance request to allow this would be evaluated. Commissioner Countegan supported denial of the request, which would allow the applicant to continue the process, appear before the ZBA, and if variances were granted, gather more information before returning to the Commission.

Commissioner Mantey said that the proposal was well designed with good stacking. However, the drive-through ordinance requires indoor seating. He further noted that the criteria for special approval require a finding that the use would not make vehicular traffic more hazardous; this had not been demonstrated. He echoed concerns with left turns to and from Orchard Lake Road. He did not support approving the request.

MOTION by Aspinall, support by Stimson, that the application for Special Approval Site Plan 67-10-2025, dated October 10, 2025, submitted by Brewtopia Michigan, LLC, BE DENIED, because it DOES NOT appear to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter and the standards for Special Approval Uses set forth in Section 34-6.3. The Denial is based on the following determinations:

- **A ZBA variance is required from the requirement for a minimum 1,100 square-foot building, with indoor seating for at least twenty (20) people.**

- **Additional information is required to demonstrate the second special approval use standard: that the proposed use will not make vehicular and pedestrian traffic more hazardous than is normal for the district.**

Motion discussion:

Commissioner Brickner expressed openness to the applicant's plan, and said denial was an opportunity for the applicant to bring new plans to the Commission after obtaining a variance.

In response to a request from Commissioner Lindquist, City Attorney Schultz explained that a use variance had an unnecessary hardship standard, which was a higher standard than a dimensional (non-use) variance which had a practical difficulty standard. A use variance required a supermajority of votes to pass as opposed to a simple majority.

City Attorney Schultz emphasized that he was not making a determination either way – whether the request would be for a use variance or a dimensional (non-use) variance. This would be decided as the application moves forward through the City's processes.

Roll call vote:

Stimson	yes
Countegan	yes
Aspinall	yes
Lindquist	yes
Grant	yes
Brickner	yes
Mantey	yes
Trafelet	yes

Motion to deny passed 8-0.

REGULAR MEETING

A. SITE PLAN APPROVAL 68-11-2025

LOCATION:	24535 Hallwood Rd
PARCEL I.D.:	22-23-19-426-035
PROPOSAL:	Addition to an existing granite and cabinet shop within the LI-Light Industrial District
ACTION REQUESTED:	Site Plan approval
APPLICANT:	A R Samona Construction
OWNER:	Allow Investment, LLC

Planning consultant review

Referencing the December 5, 2025 Giffels Webster memorandum, Planning Consultant Tangari highlighted the following points:

- The site is located on Hallwood Court between Halstead Road and M-5, and is zoned LI-Light Industrial. The surrounding properties are also zoned LI-Light Industrial, with M-5 highway located to the west and south.
- The site is approximately 2.154 acres with an existing 25,939 square-foot building.

- The site would continue to be accessed from Hallwood Court.
- The applicant proposed adding 9,829 square-feet to expand an existing granite and cabinet shop. The proposed use was a permitted use in the zoning district and met the dimensional standards of the district.
- No outdoor storage was shown on the plans; any outdoor storage would be required to be located in the rear yard.
- Rooftop equipment screening was not identified, and an existing front-mounted mechanical unit is currently unscreened.
- A landscape plan was not submitted and will be required.
- A hedge would normally be required between the site and a public right-of-way, but a 20 foot storm sewer easement prevented trees from being planted there. There was, however, extensive vegetation between the site and M-5.
- Parking exceeds the minimum required; up to 20 percent additional parking may be approved. Employee counts were not provided, limiting the ability to verify whether parking calculations based on floor area or employee count would be controlling.
- Parking space dimensions must be added to the plans.
- Lighting plan information was incomplete; pole-mounted fixtures appear compliant, but wall-mounted fixtures do not meet cutoff requirements and must be revised.

Applicant presentation

Contractor Raad Samona, Samona Construction, W. Bloomfield, and Adnan Al-Saati, A&M Consultants, Dearborn, project engineer, were present on behalf of this request for site plan approval to construct an addition to an existing granite and cabinet shop within the LI-Light Industrial District.

Mr. Samona explained that the applicant planned to construct an addition for inventory storage including inventory that did not sell quickly and inventory that would be sold to other retailers. Inventory arrived every three months and the applicant needed more space to store enough inventory to last three months.

The applicants made the following points:

- The addition would be constructed of masonry and will maintain required fire department access.
- The existing detention basin will be maintained and placed under a regular maintenance contract. The applicant would work with City engineers to evaluate the drainage system and make sure that the existing sewer could accommodate the addition.
- The business closed at 5:00pm, and there would only be a light to illuminate the parking lot at night which would turn off automatically.
- Landscaping will be provided where feasible, including shrubs and trees within any landscaped islands.
- The addition is located in a previously vegetated area and does not eliminate parking.

Planning Commission deliberation and/or motion

MOTION by Brickner, support by Countegan, that Application for Site Plan Approval 68-11-2025, dated August 4, 2025, as revised October 27, 2025, submitted by A R Samona Construction, BE

**APPROVED, because it appears to meet all applicable requirements of the Zoning Chapter,
SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS and DETERMINATIONS:**

CONDITIONS AND DETERMINATIONS:

- All outstanding issues identified in Giffels Webster's December 5, 2025, review shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner;
- All outstanding issues identified in the City Engineer's December 2, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer, and;
- All outstanding issues identified in the Fire Marshal's November 20, 2025, interoffice correspondence shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.
- A photometric plan is required and must comply with standards contained in Section 34-5.16.
- A Landscape Plan is required and must comply with standards contained in Section 34-5.14.
- The twenty-two (22) parking spaces provided are adequate for the use proposed.
- Roof-top mechanical equipment must be screened as required.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES November 20, 2025, Regular Meeting

MOTION by Grant, support by Countegan, to approve the November 20, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS

- Staff Planner Mulville-Friel said that the capital improvement plan meeting was scheduled for January 22, 2026 at 6:00pm. The regular January meeting will be January 15.
- Commissioners shared holiday greetings.
- Commissioners briefly discussed aspects of the drive-through ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mantey, support by Brickner, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting ended at 9:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen Aspinall,
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem