AGENDA
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
JUNE 18, 2026 at 6:00 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. Special Meeting

A. ZONING AUDIT

B. SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

5. Approval of Minutes May 21, 2026

6. Public Comment
7. Commissioner/Staff Comments
8. Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Tanji Grant, 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.

DATE: June 18, 2026

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Diane Mulville-Friel, AICP, City Planner

CC: Charmaine Kettler-Schmult, Director of Planning and Community Development; Nora Brock, Secretary to the Director; Ben Carlisle, Carlisle Wortman Associates; Mike Auerbach, Carlisle Wortman Associates; Kirsten Mellem, Staff Planner II; Steven P. Joppich, City Attorney; Thomas R. Schultz, Assistant City Attorney; Karen Mondora, PE, Acting City Manager; Cristia Brockway, Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: **Zoning Audit and Site Plan Review Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA 1, 2026)**

BACKGROUND

The Master Plan, adopted in August 2024, identified modernization of the City's decades-old Zoning Ordinance as a priority and a necessary first step toward implementing future amendments supporting the vision for special districts and major corridors, including the 12 Mile/Orchard Lake Road and Grand River Avenue corridors.

At its annual goal-setting meeting on February 11, 2026, City Council was introduced to the need for a comprehensive zoning audit and improvements to the site plan review process. Staff has since been working with Carlisle Wortman Associates (CWA) to evaluate the Zoning Ordinance and identify opportunities to improve site plan review procedures and application requirements. The objective is to create a fair, predictable, and efficient review process that benefits applicants, staff, and the Planning Commission.

ZONING AUDIT

CWA's Zoning Ordinance Audit concluded that a comprehensive modernization effort is warranted. In its April 16, 2026 memorandum, CWA noted:

> *"While the Ordinance contains many of the necessary regulatory components, it has*

become overly complex, difficult to navigate, and inefficient to administer."

The audit identified redundancies, inconsistent organization, scattered standards, and formatting issues that hinder administration and future updates.

Under the "Implementation Options" section of the audit, CWA outlined three approaches to streamline the ordinance. Following a presentation by staff and CWA at the June 1, 2026 City Council study session, Council expressed general support for Option 2, the reorganization approach.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

In conjunction with the zoning ordinance reorganization, staff and CWA are reviewing the City's site plan review procedures and submission requirements to identify best practices and improve efficiency. The attached Site Plan Process Memo highlights several topics for consideration, including:

- Application requirements
- Administrative versus Planning Commission review authority
- Variance procedures
- Engineering review and permit timing
- Zoning administration responsibilities
- Site plan expiration timelines
- Development agreements
- Objective review standards

A streamlined and clearly defined site plan review process will reduce uncertainty, improve coordination among departments, shorten review timelines, and promote consistent decision-making. These improvements will benefit both applicants and the City.

Currently, site plan regulations are contained in two sections of the Code of Ordinances:

- Chapter 21, “Planning”, Article II, “Site Plan Regulations”
- Chapter 34, “Zoning”, Article 6.0, "Development Procedures", Section 34-6.1, "Site Plan Review"

Maintaining site plan regulations in two separate chapters creates redundancy and, in some cases, conflicting requirements. To address this issue, staff proposes consolidating all site plan review regulations within Chapter 34, Zoning, and repealing the site plan regulations currently found in Chapter 21, Planning.

The duplication appears to be a legacy of historical review procedures that were previously administered by the Engineering Division. Today, the Planning Office coordinates the site

plan review process. Following site plan approval, all required engineering approvals, permits, and outside agency approvals would continue to be obtained prior to construction.

Attached for Planning Commission review are a draft amendment to Section 34-6.1, Site Plan Review, and a proposed implementation timeline. Staff also proposes updating the City's Project Development and Site Plan Guide and all related application forms to align with the revised procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Carlisle Wortman Associates Zoning Audit Review Memo (April 16, 2026)
- Carlisle Wortman Associates Site Plan Process Memo (March 17, 2026)
- Chapter 21, Planning, Article II, Site Plan Regulations
- Chapter 34, Zoning, Article 6.0, Development Procedures, Section 34-6.1, Site Plan Review
- Draft ZTA 1, 2026 (Section 34-6.1, Site Plan Review)
- Timeline for Site Plan Review Text Amendments
- City of Farmington Hills Project Development and Site Plan Guide
- June 1, 2026 Minutes City Council Study Session

# # #

June 1, 2026 City Council Special Study Session
Minutes APPROVED 6/8/2026

subsequent annual increases could be held to a lower, more predictable rate making it easier for future Councils to approve incremental increases rather than facing perpetual high-single-digit or double-digit annual increases.

Councilmember Aldred expressed concern that Option A, as structured, imposed two simultaneous increases on higher-volume users in year one: (1) the structural shift from a minimum bill to volumetric pricing, which by design increases costs for above-average users; and (2) the additional jump start surcharge on top of that adjustment. He questioned whether both changes needed to be implemented simultaneously.

Councilmember Boleware noted that approximately 40% of Farmington Hills customers use 15 units or fewer per quarter and would see rate decreases, while approximately 60% use more than 15 units and would face increases. She expressed concern about the impact on larger families who use more water but whose incomes may not qualify them for assistance programs such as the WRAP program or the emergency relief fund.

Councilmember Knol proposed exploring whether the low-end rate relief and the high-end increase could each be phased over two years rather than fully implemented in year one, to smooth the impact on higher-volume customers. Consultant Camiller acknowledged this was mathematically possible but noted it would result in higher annual increases in subsequent years for all customers.

After discussion, Council directed the consulting team to model a revised version of Option A in which the year-one increase for the sample 25-unit customer is capped at approximately 16%, with the corresponding adjustments carried through to all other customer tiers.

Raphael Chirolla of Oakland County Water Resources also addressed Council, noting that Farmington Hills is one of the most proactive communities in the county in terms of infrastructure investment, which contributes to longer-term rate stability relative to communities that defer maintenance.

DISCUSSION ON ZONING AUDIT AND SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

Acting City Manager Mondora introduced the item, noting that zoning and permitting had been identified by Council as top priorities. She noted that the city's new planning consultant had completed a zoning ordinance audit and had developed site plan review process improvement recommendations. The goal of the effort was described as creating a fair, predictable, and efficient review process benefiting applicants, staff, and the Planning Commission.

Zoning Ordinance Audit

Ben Carlise, Planning Consultant of Carlisle Wartman, summarized the audit findings under seven evaluative principles: formatting, graphics, organization, readability, avoiding conflicting language, efficiency and reduction of redundancy, and alignment with current law and best practices.

Key findings included that the ordinance has not undergone a comprehensive rewrite in many years, resulting in regulations that are scattered, repetitive, and difficult to administer. For example, regulations related to swimming pools were found to appear in approximately 13 different locations within the ordinance. The ordinance also contains conflicting language, excessive hyperlinks that complicate digital navigation, and an unnecessarily large number of zoning districts (e.g., four separate office districts and four separate business districts).

Mr. Carlisle also identified several substantive gaps in the current ordinance, including: absence of conditional rezoning provisions; no regulation of short-term rentals; limited housing options (no provisions for duplexes, triplexes, or accessory dwelling units); outdated sign regulations that may not comply with current case law; lack of provisions for data centers; cumbersome Planned Unit Development regulations; and the need to incorporate recommendations from the recently completed master plan and pending state land division law changes.

Three options were presented for Council's consideration:

- **Option 1 – Comprehensive Rewrite:** A full reorganization and substantive revision of the entire ordinance, including community and stakeholder input; estimated timeline of 18–24 months.
- **Option 2 – Reorganization:** A structural reorganization to improve usability and reduce redundancy, without substantively changing specific regulations (except where required by law or best practices); estimated timeline of 6–12 months.
- **Option 3 – Status Quo:** Continue addressing regulations on a case-by-case basis as issues arise.

Council reached a general consensus in favor of **Option 2**, the reorganization approach.

Councilmember Bridges requested a separate follow-up meeting with Mr. Carlisle to discuss strategies for commercial revitalization along Orchard Lake Road, including the potential use of a Tax Increment Financing district. Mr. Carlisle noted that zoning tools such as addressing nonconformity issues, reducing excessive setback requirements, and streamlining access could help encourage private reinvestment along the corridor. He referenced the firm's long-term work in the City of Troy on the Big Beaver corridor, which resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in investment attributable in significant part to targeted zoning changes.

Mr. Carlisle also acknowledged a question from Councilmember Bridges regarding blight regulations, noting that blight is typically addressed through the general code as a nuisance matter rather than through the zoning ordinance, but that it could be considered as part of either body of code.

Site Plan Review Process Amendment

Mr. Carlisle presented proposed amendments to the site plan review process, noting that the current process lacks clear codification of submittal requirements, contains conflicting provisions between the zoning ordinance and engineering standards, and does not clearly define how applications move from staff through the Planning Commission to Council adoption.

These deficiencies have led to inconsistent application quality and unnecessary back-and-forth between applicants and staff.

The proposed amendment would establish two distinct review tracks: a full five-step site plan review process for projects requiring Planning Commission action, and a three-step administrative review track for smaller projects that can be handled at the staff level. The amendment would clearly define submittal requirements, approval timelines, and review standards for each track.

Director of Economic Development Cristia Brockway confirmed that the revised process would provide the predictability and streamlining necessary to support implementation of the Grand River Corridor, 12 Mile and Orchard Lake Road corridor plans. Mr. Carlisle noted that the site plan review amendments and the zoning ordinance reorganization could proceed concurrently, with separate adoption timelines. The site plan review amendments are currently anticipated to go before Council for adoption in October or November 2026, following Planning Commission review.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Adam Rebandt addressed Council, distributing materials regarding fatherlessness statistics at the state and national levels. He requested that Council consider issuing a proclamation declaring June as Responsible Fatherhood Month in the City of Farmington Hills, in recognition of the role of engaged fathers in child development and community stability.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Rich adjourned the meeting at 8:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk

A. ZONING AUDIT

Carlisle Wortman Associates Zoning Audit Review Memo (April 16, 2026)

Carlisle | Wortman
ASSOCIATES, INC.

117 NORTH FIRST STREET SUITE 70 ANN ARBOR, MI 48104 734.662.2200 734.662.1935 FAX

City of Farmington Hills
Zoning Ordinance Audit

Introduction

A zoning ordinance audit is a critical first step in determining whether an ordinance remains clear, current, legally defensible, and capable of effectively guiding development. Over time, ordinances are amended repeatedly, and those changes can create outdated provisions, conflicting language, duplication, poor organization, and standards that are difficult to interpret or administer. An audit helps identify those issues, evaluate whether the ordinance is aligned with current planning practice, case law, and state enabling legislation, and determine whether the regulations still support the community's goals and master plan. It also provides a roadmap for reorganization, modernization, and future amendments so the ordinance is easier for staff, applicants, decision-makers, and the public to use.

Guiding Principles

When we are asked to review a Zoning Ordinance, we recommend a set of guiding principles which will generally improve the Ordinance. The following is what we would recommend to the City of Farmington Hills, as well:

1. Formatting - The Ordinance should be designed for both hard copy and online use. Techniques such as improved searchability and the use of hyperlinks can make cross-references to sections, definitions, and related provisions easier to access by allowing users to click directly on key terms. While the current Ordinance does include hyperlinks and is intended for both digital and print use, its extensive formatting makes it difficult to amend. Because new uses and legislative changes regularly emerge, zoning ordinances must often be updated more frequently. For this reason, we recommend a simpler formatting approach. In addition, the overuse of links, notes, and tips makes the document appear busy and can make it more difficult to navigate

2. Use of Graphics – The use of graphics in a zoning ordinance can better illustrate certain requirements such as dimensional regulations, landscaping, signage, etc. The current ordinance makes use of graphics. For continuity we would recommend maintaining these or similar graphics if the ones in the current ordinance are proprietary.

Benjamin R. Carlisle, *President* Douglas J. Lewan, *Executive Vice President* John L. Enos, *Vice President*
David Scurto, *Principal* Sally M. Elmiger, *Principal* R. Donald Wortman, *Principal*
Paul Montagno, *Principal,* Megan Masson-Minock, *Principal,* Laura Kreps, *Senior Associate*
Richard K. Carlisle, *Past President/Senior Principal*

3. Improved Organization – The organization of the Ordinance is a key factor in how easy it is to use and understand. Information should be arranged in a logical and consistent manner to improve both functionality and clarity. As identified throughout this report, there are several areas where organizational improvements are warranted. For example, many commonly referenced provisions are located within subsections that are not easy to find. In some cases, related topics that should appear within the same article are instead separated. Additionally, regulations are dispersed throughout the Ordinance, often requiring users to navigate across multiple sections to interpret and apply its provisions.

4. Improve Readability – Without compromising legal precision, many sections of the Ordinance would benefit from editing for clarity and readability. To the greatest extent possible, the Ordinance should be written in a manner that is understandable to the average user.

5. Clarify Conflicting Language – Whenever an ordinance is amended it is important to review the entire document to ensure there are no conflicts. Language conflicting can often lead to misunderstandings. As we amend an ordinance, we scour the document to ensure any conflicting language is removed during the rewrite process.

6. Improve Efficiency and Avoid Repetition – There is unnecessary repetition in the Ordinance, particularly in the district regulations relative to permitted and special land uses. For example, the current ordinance appropriately includes a table of permitted and special uses, however, these are reiterated in the individual zoning district sections adding to the length of the document through redundancy and inefficiency.

7. Statutory Updates – Update the Zoning Ordinance for portions relevant to PA 110 of 2006 as well as case law including sign regulations and tree inventory. Additionally, all regulatory section should include a meaningful intent or purpose section to establish their legitimacy.

A detailed zoning audit report is included in Attachment I. A recommended organizational outline is included in Attachment II. An Implementation Option matrix is included in Attachment III.

Executive Summary

Our review of the City of Farmington Hills Zoning Ordinance indicates that a comprehensive modernization effort is warranted. While the Ordinance contains many of the necessary regulatory components, it has become overly complex, difficult to navigate, and inefficient to administer. Over time, repeated amendments have produced a document with redundant provisions, inconsistent organization, scattered standards, and formatting that makes future

revisions unnecessarily burdensome. As a result, the Ordinance no longer functions as clearly or as effectively as it should for staff, decision-makers, applicants, or the public.

In our professional opinion, the most significant issue is not the absence of regulation, but the way the existing regulations are arranged, expressed, and applied. Important standards are dispersed across multiple sections, similar topics are separated rather than consolidated, and users are often required to navigate extensive cross-references to determine what rules actually apply. This structure creates avoidable confusion, increases the likelihood of inconsistent interpretation, and makes the Ordinance more difficult to defend, administer, and amend. The City would be better served by a reorganized and rewritten ordinance that is clear, internally consistent, and built around current zoning best practices.

We also recommend substantive updates to ensure the Ordinance is aligned with current legal standards and modern planning practice. These include strengthening the Ordinance's purpose and authority language, updating provisions tied to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and relevant case law, reevaluating district structure and use classifications, and revising standards that are outdated, unclear, or unnecessarily complicated. Particular attention should be given to consolidating procedures, clarifying approval criteria, modernizing parking, lighting, landscaping, and environmental regulations, and establishing a more effective framework for specific land uses, nonconformities, appeals, and amendments.

For these reasons, we recommend that the City pursue a comprehensive rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance rather than a limited reorganization alone. Although a partial restructuring would improve usability in the short term, it would not fully resolve the underlying issues identified in this review. A comprehensive rewrite would allow the City to reorganize the document, eliminate redundancy, improve clarity, address legal vulnerabilities, modernize development standards, and ensure that the Ordinance is aligned with the City's planning goals and long-term development objectives. In our judgment, this approach offers the greatest long-term value and will result in a more defensible, functional, and user-friendly ordinance.

Key Findings

- The Ordinance contains many necessary regulatory components, but in its current form it is overly complex, repetitive, and difficult to use.
- The most significant issue is organizational: related regulations are dispersed throughout the document, making administration, interpretation, and amendment unnecessarily difficult.
- Permitted uses, dimensional standards, and related requirements should be consolidated into clearer, centralized tables and topic-specific articles to reduce redundancy and improve usability.
- Several provisions should be updated to improve legal defensibility, including foundational authority language, sign regulations, variance criteria, and certain use regulations implicating current state and federal law.

- A number of districts and overlay districts should be reevaluated for simplification, consolidation, or replacement with more effective regulatory tools where appropriate.
- Core development standards, including parking, access, landscaping, lighting, and environmental regulations, should be modernized and reorganized into dedicated articles.
- Procedural sections such as site plan review, special land uses, planned unit developments, nonconformities, appeals, and amendments should be restructured into clearer standalone articles with stronger standards and criteria.
- For these reasons, a comprehensive rewrite is the preferred course of action because it would address both the structural and substantive deficiencies identified in this review.

After reviewing the audit, we assume that staff will identify additional issues within the zoning ordinance that will need to be addressed.

We look forward to reviewing this report in detail.

Sincerely,

CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.

Benjamin R. Carlisle, AICP, LEED-AP

CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.

Mike Auerbach, AICP

Attachments:

I. Detailed Zoning Ordinance Audit Report
II. Organizational Outline
III. Implementation Option Matrix

ATTACHMENT I

DETAILED ZONING ORDINANCE AUDIT REPORT

Organization of Report

This report is organized in sections based on the existing ordinance's structure. However, we are recommending significant reorganization as well as the addition of multiple new articles. Following a brief overview of the purpose of each existing article are more specific comments about content, approach, effectiveness of each individual Article, along with our recommendations.

Table of contents

The Ordinance currently includes multiple tables of contents, both at the beginning of the document and at the start of each article. The first table of contents is abbreviated and lists only article titles, which provides limited value because it does not clearly indicate the content included within each article. As discussed elsewhere in this report, certain sections would be more appropriately located in different articles, making clear and comprehensive navigation especially important.

The pages following the abbreviated table of contents include an expanded version listing sections within each article; however, not all sections are included. In addition, each article begins with its own table of contents. Given the use of hyperlinks throughout the document, this approach is confusing and unnecessary. We recommend a single, comprehensive table of contents at the beginning of the Ordinance that includes all individual sections. For ease of navigation, a hyperlink at the bottom of each page could return the user to the main table of contents. The organizational outline provided in Attachment II reflects the table of contents structure we recommend.

Article 1.0 Purpose and Introduction

General Comment:

The purpose section of the Zoning Ordinance provides the legal basis for the regulations embodied in the Ordinance. In fact, it may be the first line of defense in any legal challenges to the Ordinance. The purpose section should closely mirror the language which establishes the legal authority found in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (MZEA), PA 110 of 2006. Based on our experience administering ordinances as well as providing expert testimony we recognize the importance of specifically crafted language.

Specific Comments:

The Ordinance should include a preamble. While the current Ordinance includes Section 34-1.7, "Necessity of this Chapter," we recommend replacing or expanding this provision into a more robust "Authority, Findings, and Purpose" section. This section should specifically cite the authority granted by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and more explicitly incorporate relevant language from the Act. It should also reference implementation of the goals and policies of the Master Plan. Adding more comprehensive language regarding the scope and intent of the Ordinance will provide the City with greater protection against legal challenges.

Similarly, we would recommend more robust language for the validity and reliability section, the scope and construction of regulations section and the conflicts section.

Article 2.0 Definitions

General Comment:

Frequently, the exact meaning of a definition can be the deciding factor for important decisions or to fend off challenges. Therefore, a thorough review of each definition is an important task along with the addition of any new definitions, which will add substance to the Ordinance.

Specific Comments:

A definition should be limited to describing the meaning of a term. When regulatory standards are incorporated into a definition, there is a risk that the operative requirement may be overlooked if the definition is not consulted. In this respect, the City's Ordinance generally does a good job of separating definitions from regulations within Article 2.

A common issue, however, is the inclusion of definitions or critical terms throughout the body of the Ordinance that are either absent from, or potentially inconsistent with, the definitions in Article 2. One such term is "accessory structure," which appears throughout the Ordinance but is not defined.

We recommend that all definitions be consolidated within Article 2. While this report does not attempt to evaluate each individual definition, a comprehensive review of all defined terms will be necessary during the rewrite process. Staff who have experience administering the Ordinance can often be especially helpful in identifying terms they believe should be defined but currently are not.

Article 3.0 Zoning Districts

General Comment:

The portion of an ordinance dedicated to Zoning Districts should generally consist of sections on the establishment of districts, the zoning map, boundary interpretations, the intent and purpose of each district, permitted uses and dimensional requirements. The existing article 3 includes this and much more than what should normally be included in Zoning District Article. This article inappropriately includes sections like Nuisance Factors, Cluster Option, PUDs, sections on access, or sustainable design. Many of these should be incorporated into other articles with similar regulations such as a General Provisions Article or a standalone Plan Unit Development Article.

Specific Comments:

Section 34-3.1 Districts Established. This article should include a section focused only on the establishment of districts, listing each district by name. It should also include sections on the Zoning Map, and interpretations of the zoning map.

Section 34-3.1.1 through 34-3.1.13 and 34-3.1.19 through 34-3.1.29. Currently, each district subsection in this section includes a statement of intent, a list of permitted uses, dimensional regulations, and a series of links to applicable standards and regulations located throughout the Ordinance. There are a number of provisions that are listed in each district which are repetitive or can be better organized in another section of the zoning ordinance.

Permitted uses should not be included in individual district subsections but instead provided only in a comprehensive land use and zoning matrix. Currently the ordinance provides such a table, however, it is awkwardly located at the beginning of the ordinance with no context. As noted in the introduction we recommend presenting permitted uses only in one location so that there is no confusion about where to look. Further, when amendments are made in the future there is only one location that needs to be changed. In our experience the matrix is the best tool for accessing this information. Typically, a developer is looking for a district to locate a specific use. A single use may be permitted in multiple districts which can be indicated in the table. If there are specific use standards or regulations a link to the location of the specific use standards can be provided in an additional column added to the end of the table.

Similarly, regulations such as setbacks, height, lot area, and other dimensional requirements could be included in a table of comprehensive dimensional regulations rather than in individual districts. Again, the use of a comprehensive table is a best practice that makes the ordinance easier to read and apply. If there are special exceptions or nuances that need additional explanation that could be provided in a special exceptions or exemptions section following the table. Like the land use matrix, this information is provided in the current ordinance in a "District Summary Table" at the beginning of the document. It should be located within this proposed article.

Finally, each district has a list of links to various applicable regulations. Specific use regulations should be compiled within one dedicated article. As noted above, the sections where a specific use regulation is located should be referenced in a column on the land use table. Other regulations for elements that may be necessary for any developments such as landscaping, parking or signage should be placed in their own dedicated article. Applicability of such regulations to a particular use or a district should be established within each article.

There are currently 34 zoning districts. These include traditional zoning districts as well as a number of special districts and overlay districts. There are only 23 future land use categories in the future land use plan in the master plan. It may be beneficial to combine districts, especially some of the single-family district. There are 14 different residential districts including 8 single-family districts. We would like to work with the city to evaluate the differences between these districts to determine if there is purposeful and meaningful objectives that are achieved by maintaining these differences or if the same fundamental results would occur using a set of consolidated regulations. Additionally there are 4 office districts and 4 business districts. Similar to the residential districts we would like to explore the fundamental differences between these districts in terms of use restrictions and dimensional requirements to determine if there are legitimate goals that are being achieved by keeping separate regulations and if there are opportunities to combine and eliminate districts.

34-3.1.14 through 34-3.1.18 Special Purpose districts

There are 5 Special Purpose districts which each allow for a limited number of uses. This approach is a unique way to regulate these very limited and specific uses. Each district indicates that the district is designed to accommodate specific uses which are generally compatible with one-family residential areas but which because of particular characteristics of size or use should not be permitted in a one-family district without review and rezoning by the council. Such structure may inhibit the potential reuse or redevelopment of buildings or land in the future if the current use is abandoned. If these uses are generally compatible with residential districts, we would recommend making the use a special use in the appropriate districts and providing supplemental specific land use regulations.

One district of particular concern is the SP-3 Special Purpose District, which includes churches. This raises a potential issue under the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). RLUIPA's "equal terms" provision prohibits a local government from imposing or implementing land use regulations that treat a religious assembly or institution on less than equal terms with a nonreligious assembly or institution.

If the SP-3 District requires rezoning or another discretionary approval process for churches, while comparable secular places of assembly, such as theaters or other assembly uses, are permitted through a less burdensome process, the Ordinance may present a significant compliance concern under federal law. For that reason, we recommend careful review and revision of this district's use regulations to ensure that religious uses are not subject to more restrictive treatment than similar nonreligious assembly uses.

34-3.1.30 P-1 Vehicular Parking District

There is limited application of this district in the city. It appears that these districts are immediately adjacent to the parcels that they serve. We question why the district boundaries for such uses couldn't be expanded to accommodate the parking lot. Further, if there is a perceived need to have standalone parking we would recommend making them a permitted or special use in certain districts that might need them. The design standards and limitations of use would go into the general parking article

34-3.1.31 through 34-3.1.33 FWR-1 FWR-2 and FWR-3 FREEWAY REDEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT

It is unclear the need for 3 different freeway overlay districts. While the intent of the districts to, encourage redevelopment of the designated areas and to allow for the potential for greater building height is consistent with the direction from the master plan, we feel that a form based code could better achieve these goals. The structure of the article, run-on sentences, and oddly placed intent statements make it difficult for a user to easily find salient requirements. The current building regulations are overly prescriptive and complicated. The building standards, while intended to achieve more desirable building designs, are formatted in a way that makes it difficult to follow.

Additionally, these sections include subsections on landscaping, parking, pedestrian access and other elements that as described in other parts of this review should be incorporated into other articles in the ordinance.

34-3.1.34 GR-1 Grand River Corridor Overlay 1

This district, like the freeway redevelopment districts, should be reorganized for readability and clarity. We would recommend reestablishing this as a form based district to more effectively realize

the intent of the code and meet the goals of the master plan for this area. See separate proposal for the Grand River Form Based code.

The overlay districts and special development option districts that have their one unique approval process or seem to be encouraged to go through a Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. We recommend removing procedural requirements from the individual district regulations and rather relocate them in the Site Plan Approval Article. Similarly, PUD process requirements and eligibility for PUD should be housed only in the PUD article.

34-3.2 BOUNDARIES 34-3.3 ZONING OF VACATED AREAS 34-3.4 ZONING OF ANNEXED AREAS
These three sections are appropriate in the Districts Established Article as noted above.

34-3.5 NOTES TO SCHEDULE OF REGULATIONS This section contains a wide range of regulations, including requirements related to landscaping, setbacks, parking, mechanical equipment, spacing between buildings, and other topics. These provisions do not appear to be organized in a logical manner and, as a result, require the use of a table to determine applicability. The layout of this section is cumbersome, disjointed, and difficult to use. In particular, Table 34-3.5.1, Applicability of Notes to District Standards, requires users to move back and forth between provisions, creating a significant risk that important regulations may be overlooked.

We recommend that the regulations currently contained in this section be redistributed into the proposed topic-specific articles, such as those addressing landscaping and parking. Other standards that may apply across all districts, such as requirements for utility pedestals or the location and screening of mechanical equipment, should instead be placed in the proposed section on accessory structures within the General Provisions article.

In addition, this section includes several complex calculations that could be stated more simply to improve usability and understanding. While we recommend removing this section in its current form, any ordinance update should include a careful review to ensure that all necessary standards are retained and incorporated into the appropriate sections of the reorganized Ordinance.

Section 34-3.6 through 34-3.14 DISTRICT SPECIAL CONDITIONS
Similar to Section 3.5, some of the requirements in this section would be more appropriately incorporated into other sections of the Ordinance that address similar standards. Other provisions merely restate the need to comply with requirements found elsewhere in the Ordinance. In addition, some requirements reference specific uses that could be more effectively addressed through the proposed use matrix. Where this section identifies the need for site plan review, we recommend instead that applicability be clearly articulated within an enhanced Site Plan Review article. Overall, the content of this section is largely redundant, unnecessary, and confusing. We recommend that it be removed; however, as part of any ordinance update, this section should be carefully reviewed to ensure that all necessary standards are retained and relocated to the appropriate sections of the revised Ordinance.

34-3.15 SUBDIVISION OPEN SPACE PLAN
This section is intended to allow reductions in the dimensional requirements for residential lots and to permit clustering of lots when the resulting development would preserve open space or natural

features. However, because subdivisions are infrequently used in Michigan, we recommend that these provisions be relocated to the City's Subdivision Code.

34-3.16 NUISANCE FACTORS

This section is weak and appears to be randomly placed within the Ordinance. We recommend creating a dedicated Environmental Regulations article that would establish clear standards for nuisance factors identified in the Ordinance, including noise, dust, smoke, odor, glare, fumes, flashes, vibration, shock waves, heat, electronic or atomic radiation or interference, objectionable effluent, and rubbish.

Additional items currently included within the definition of nuisance factors, such as the congregation of people, particularly at night, passenger traffic, and the intrusion of traffic onto nonabutting street frontage, should be further evaluated to clarify their intended meaning and purpose. These issues may require a different regulatory approach than the other nuisance factors listed above.

34-3.17 ONE-FAMILY CLUSTER OPTION

This section is intended to allow reductions in dimensional requirements for residential lots and to permit clustering where there are unusual site conditions or where development would preserve open space or natural features. A more detailed review of this section is warranted to both encourage its use and incorporate current best practices.

34-3.18 MAJOR ROAD FRONTAGE OPTION

This section appears to serve a very specific purpose. We would defer to City staff and the City Attorney to clarify its intent and determine whether it is still necessary. However, it is unclear whether the objectives of this section could instead be addressed through the Ordinance's provisions on nonconformities or through the variance process.

34-3.19 PLANNED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The requirements in this section are highly prescriptive and include complex density calculations intended to facilitate mixed-density developments with a specified mix of housing types in certain ratios. It appears that these regulations have been applied to a number of developments within the community. However, the overall purpose of this section is unclear. If the intent is to regulate and control density, there may be clearer and more effective ways to accomplish that objective.

It may be necessary to retain these provisions to the extent they govern existing development sites. However, it is unclear whether they remain relevant or appropriate for application to future developments.

34-3.20 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

We recommend a dedicated article for Planned Unit Developments. This article should contain a strong intent section, applicability section, design standards, a clear procedural section, approval standards and a public benefit standard section. Such community benefits should reflect the values of the community as identified in the city's master plan and may include but may not be limited to public art, low impact design, public amenities and spaces, affordability, and transit connections

34-3.22 MARGINAL ACCESS DRIVES

34-5.13 Access to Major or Secondary Thoroughfare

34-3.24 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
These sections should be consolidated into the proposed Off-Street Parking, Loading, and Access Standards Article. There are various regulations on access peppered throughout this document. All regulations on access should be consolidated into one article

34-3.25 Noise and Glare
This should be incorporated into the proposed Environment Regulations Article

34-3.26 GENERAL EXCEPTIONS
This section contains a number of use regulations that are embedded within its subsections and are not easily located. We recommend creating a dedicated General Provisions article containing standards that apply across all zoning districts. Individual sections within that article could incorporate many of the current subsections from Section 34-3.26, but in a format that is easier to find, understand, and apply, without requiring users to navigate to them through links from other parts of the Ordinance.

Article 4.0 Use Standards

General Comment:

This section establishes supplemental standards for specific uses. These standards were presumably considered necessary at the time of adoption to ensure that such uses were developed and operated in a manner appropriate for the community. Input from staff and, where appropriate, the community may be helpful in evaluating whether these regulations have achieved their intended outcomes. We have been provided with staff notes regarding certain uses, and those comments should be incorporated into any future update.

All uses addressed in this section should be reviewed to determine whether the standards remain consistent with contemporary practice and current best practices. In addition, some listed uses may be outdated and no longer necessary, while newer uses that may warrant supplemental standards, such as data centers, may need to be added.

Specific Comments:

34-4.20 Special Land Uses
This section includes use-specific provisions for a variety of uses, including outdoor theaters, television and radio towers, cemeteries, mining and excavation operations, public riding or boarding stables, and nurseries or greenhouses. Special uses should instead be identified in the Ordinance's use table, with use-specific standards organized in separate sections, as noted in the specific comments for Article 3 in this report.

Article 5.0 Site Standards

General comment: Includes a variety of sections that should be their own article as well as many sections that should be incorporated into the general provisions section of the ordinance as they would potentially be regulations that would apply to all districts.

Specific comments:

34-5.1 Accessory Buildings and Structures
This section should be reorganized to improve clarity and functionality. In addition, several confusing regulations within the section should be evaluated to better understand their intent and purpose, and then rewritten to more clearly achieve that purpose. There are also various statements and regulations related to accessory structures scattered throughout the Ordinance that should be consolidated into this section. Likewise, pools are regulated in multiple locations, which in some cases creates conflicts, and those provisions should also be consolidated here. We recommend that this section be incorporated into the proposed General Provisions article.

34-5.2 Off-street Parking Requirements
34-5.3 Off-street Parking Layout, Standards, Construction and Maintenance
34-5.4 Off-street Loading and Unloading
These sections should be consolidated into a dedicated article addressing Off-Street Parking, Loading, and Access Standards. Parking lot design standards are currently located in various sections throughout the Ordinance and should be brought together in this article for improved clarity and usability. Parking space requirements should also be reviewed to ensure that they reflect contemporary standards and do not result in the overparking of sites. Consideration should be given to curbside pick-up areas, short-term parking spaces, and rideshare accommodations. In addition, the Ordinance currently lacks standards addressing electric vehicle parking, which should be incorporated into this article. A section addressing vehicular and pedestrian access should also be included, consolidating related variance requirements that are presently scattered throughout the Ordinance.

34-5.5 Signs
A separate sign article should be created. This article should be thoroughly reviewed to ensure compliance with case law.

34-5.6 Acceleration - Deceleration – Passing Lanes
Should be included in the Off-Street Parking, Loading, and Access Standards Article

34-5.7 Storage of Recreational Equipment or Trailers
Should be included in the Off-Street Parking, Loading, and Access Standards Article

34-5.8 Flood Zone Controls
This should be incorporated into the proposed Environment Regulations Article

34-5.9 Entryway Structures
Should be included as a section in the Landscaping and Screening Article.

34-5.10 Corner Clearance
Should be included in the General Provision article.

34-5.11 Frontage on Public Street
Should be included in the Off-Street Parking, Loading, and Access Standards Article

34-5.12 Fences

Should be included as a section in the general provisions Article.

34-5.13 Access to Major or Secondary Thoroughfare
Should be included in the Off-Street Parking, Loading, and Access Standards Article

34-5.14 Landscape Development
All landscape standards should be included as a section in a dedicated LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING Article. Most of the Ordinance's landscaping requirements are listed in this section, although additional standards are listed throughout the Ordinance. For example, the notes to the schedule of regulations in Section 34-3.5 require all front yard parking lots to be landscaped. Similar requirements are listed in Section 34-5.14(5).

Landscaping requirements for specific areas could be simplified. Terminology also needs to be reconciled. For example, screening for parking lots are required to provide separation from "public thoroughfares."

34-5.15 Walls and Berms
Should be included as a section in the LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING Article.

34-5.16 Exterior Lighting
Rather than being placed within site standards, we recommend that lighting regulations be organized in a separate article. Several of the current standards appear outdated. For example, LED lighting is now the norm rather than the exception, and the perceived brightness of LED fixtures is often influenced by color temperature, or K-value. In general, fixtures above 3500K can appear excessively bright. Shielding requirements in this section should also be updated, along with more effective standards for wall-pack lighting, which is a frequent source of glare. In addition, the Ordinance should establish clear requirements for lighting and photometric plans, as the quality and level of detail in such plans can vary considerably in the absence of consistent standards.

The current review language also raises concerns. Review is required only when "the installation or modification of outdoor lighting is part of a development that requires site plan approval." As written, this suggests that existing lighting may remain, even when site plan review is otherwise required, so long as no lighting modifications are proposed. Further, if lighting standards apply only in connection with developments requiring site plan review, new development not subject to site plan review, such as individual residential development, may create lighting impacts for neighboring properties without being subject to clear standards.

The Ordinance currently regulates maximum illumination based on paved surface area and measures lighting output in lumens. We recommend instead establishing maximum illumination limits in footcandles, which is a more typical and functional regulatory standard. In addition, the current maximum illumination level of 0.3 footcandles at property boundaries may be difficult to achieve in more urbanized commercial areas. Allowing a higher threshold in certain contexts or for certain uses could provide greater flexibility for businesses while still protecting against excessive glare and light spill.

34-5.17 Screening of Rooftop Equipment
Should be included in the proposed General Provision Article.

34-5.18 Tree Protection, Removal and Replacement
This should be incorporated into the proposed Environmental Regulations Article

34-5.19 Pedestrian Access and Connectivity From Public Rights-of-Way
Should be included in the Off-Street Parking, Loading, and Access Standards Article

34-5.20 Design Standards
New article. We defer to staff.

34-5.21 Public Art Requirements
New article. We defer to staff.

6.0 Development Procedures

General Comment: This article includes 2 sections that should be in their own article including Site Plan Review, and Special Land Use and Special Land Use Approval Standards. The section on public hearings should be included in an administration and enforcement article while the other two sections only reference other sections in the ordinance and are therefore unnecessary and should be removed.

Specific Comments:

34-6.1 Site Plan Review
Site plan review requirements should be consolidated into a single article in the Zoning Ordinance. They are currently split between the zoning ordinance and general code. Within the zoning ordinance there are different sections that address applicability and process. This should all be consolidated to one article.

We have drafted a site plan review amendment that is currently being considered by the City.

34-6.2 NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Should be included in an Administration and enforcement article

34-6.3 Special Land Use and Special Land Use Approval Standards
A single Special Land Use article should be created. This article should include the approval process and designate the decision-making authority. It is also important to establish specific decision-making criteria and how and when conditions may be applied. This article should also include enforcement and revocation criteria.

Additionally, as noted previously, there are some special use requirements listed as a subsection in the Ordinance's Article 4 use-specific requirements (Section 34-4.20). All special land use requirements should be listed in a single consolidated article.

7.0 Administration, Appeals and Enforcement

General Comments: This article should be broken into multiple standalone sections including an Administration and Enforcement section, a Nonconforming Lots, Uses and Structures section, a Zoning Board of appeals section, and a Rezoning and Zoning Ordinance Amendment section.

Specific Comments:

34-7.1 Nonconformities
This should be a single article that covers nonconforming lots, uses and structures. It should begin with a strong intent and purpose section. The section needs to be rewritten for clarity and consistency and organized in a manner that makes it easier to navigate and comprehend.

34-7.2 through 34-7.10 and 34-13 (Generally Administration and Enforcement)
These sections of the Zoning Ordinance should be consolidated into a single, standalone Administration and Enforcement article located near the beginning of the Ordinance, typically following the definitions article. This article should establish the framework for how the Ordinance is administered in practice by identifying both the officials responsible for enforcement and the procedures necessary to ensure compliance. It should also make clear that the role of the Zoning Administrator is not merely administrative, but also coordinative, serving as a link among applicants, staff, and decision-making bodies such as the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and City Council.

A key component of this article should be the requirement for a Certificate of Zoning Compliance before any land or structure may be used, occupied, or altered. This certificate should confirm that the proposed use or activity complies with the Ordinance and helps ensure that development does not proceed outside of established regulations. Applications should include sufficient detail, such as site layout, dimensions, and proposed uses, and may be subject to review by multiple City officials before being approved, conditionally approved, or denied.

The article should also emphasize transparency and due process in zoning decisions. Public hearings are required for many types of requests, including rezonings, variances, and special land uses, and notice procedures should be clearly articulated. Mailed notice, newspaper publication, and online posting help ensure that surrounding property owners and the public are properly informed and have an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

To support orderly development, the Ordinance should also include appropriate financial and procedural safeguards. Performance guarantees and completion guarantees may be required to ensure that infrastructure and site improvements, such as roads, utilities, and landscaping, are completed as approved. For more complex developments, including Planned Unit Developments, development agreements may be used to document expectations, timelines, and responsibilities, thereby creating a clear and enforceable framework between the applicant and the City.

Finally, the article should clearly outline enforcement mechanisms. Violations may result in fines, legal action, and orders to correct or cease unlawful activity. Each day that a violation continues may be treated as a separate offense, underscoring the importance of compliance. In addition to imposing penalties, the City should retain the authority to pursue legal action to prevent or abate violations, reinforcing the Ordinance's role in protecting the public health, safety, and welfare.

34-7.11 Changes and Amendment
34-7.12 Petition for Amendments; Fee
There should be a single standalone article for Rezoning and Zoning Ordinance Amendment. This article should include sections on who can apply for an amendment, information required, process, authority for decision making, and decision-making criteria. Clear and consistent decision-making criteria is especially important for defensibility of final decisions.

34-7.14 Board of Appeals
The Ordinance should include a single, standalone article dedicated to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). This article should clearly establish the types of appeals and requests over which the ZBA has decision-making authority, who may apply, the applicable procedures, and the standards and criteria for review.

Based on our review, the variance criteria do not appear to be fully consistent with current case law and should be carefully evaluated and revised as needed. In addition, the category of "exceptions and special approvals" appears to be distinct from a variance, yet the purpose of that distinction and the applicable review criteria are unclear. Because many common development activities fall within this category, we are concerned that it creates unnecessary administrative burdens and introduces regulatory ambiguity.

It also appears that most categories of temporary uses require approval by the ZBA. We do not recommend this approach. Temporary uses are more typically reviewed by the City Council, Planning Commission, or as an administrative function based on clear standards and criteria. These provisions would be more appropriately located in the proposed General Provisions article, within a section dedicated to Special Events, Seasonal Sales, and Other Temporary Uses.

ATTACHMENT II

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTLINE

DRAFT TEMPLATE

ARTICLE 1 TITLE, PURPOSE AND LEGAL CLAUSES.....1 - 1
Section 1.01 Title
Section 1.02 Authority, Findings, and Purpose
Section 1.03 Validity and Severability
Section 1.04 Scope and Construction of Regulations
Section 1.05 Conflicts
Section 1.06 Repeal of Ordinance

ARTICLE 2 DEFINITIONS.....2 - 1
Section 2.01 Interpretation of Article Provisions
Section 2.02 Definitions

ARTICLE 3 ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT.....3 - 1
Section 3.01 Zoning Administrator Appointment
Section 3.02 Duties
Section 3.03 Zoning Certification Process
Section 3.04 Records
Section 3.05 Fees and Escrows
Section 3.06 Withholding of Approval
Section 3.07 Completion of Construction
Section 3.08 Public Hearing Notice Requirements
Section 3.09 Performance Guarantees
Section 3.10 Development Agreements
Section 3.11 Violations and Penalties

ARTICLE 4 ESTABLISHMENT OF DISTRICTS.....4 - 1
Section 4.01 Establishment of Districts
Section 4.02 Zoning Map
Section 4.03 Interpretation of District Boundaries
Section 4.04 Zoning of Vacated Areas
Section 4.05 Zoning of Annexed Areas

ARTICLE 5 ZONING DISTRICT REGULATIONS.....5 – 1
Section 5.01 Intent and Purpose
Section 5.02 Uses Permitted
Section 5.03 Area and Size Requirements
Section 5.04 General Exceptions

ARTICLE 6 RESERVED

ARTICLE 7 RESERVED

ARTICLE 8 SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS.....8 - 1

Section 8.01 Intent
Section 8.02 Building, Structures, and Uses Requiring Site Plan Review
Section 8.03 Site Plan Review Procedures
Section 8.04 Administrative Plan Review
Section 8.05 Site Plan Review Standards
Section 8.06 Data Required for Preliminary and Final Site Plans
Section 8.07 Amendments
Section 8.08 Extension, Revocation, and Abandonment of Site Plan

ARTICLE 9 SPECIAL LAND USES.....9 - 1

Section 9.01 Intent
Section 9.02 Procedures
Section 9.03 Standards for Special Land Uses
Section 9.04 Conditions of Approval
Section 9.05 Extensions, Amendments, Expansions, and Changes in Uses
Section 9.06 Inspections
Section 9.07 Revocation

ARTICLE 10 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT.....10 - 1

Section 10.01 Intent
Section 10.02 Uses Permitted
Section 10.03 Standards for Approval
Section 10.04 Preliminary Development Plan Approval
Section 10.05 Final Development Plan Approval
Section 10.06 Amendment
Section 10.07 Abandonment
Section 10.08 Appeals
Section 10.09 Violations

ARTICLE 11 GENERAL PROVISIONS.....11 - 1

Section 11.01 Purpose
Section 11.02 Fences and Walls
Section 11.03 Essential Services
Section 11.04 Uses and Buildings Per Lot and Limitations
Section 11.05 Accessory Buildings and Structures
Section 11.06 Frontage on Public Street Required
Section 11.07 Special Events, Seasonal Sales, and Other Temporary Uses
Section 11.08 Exterior Appliances

ARTICLE 12 SPECIFIC USE PROVISIONS.....12 - 1

Section 12.01 Adult Foster Care Facilities
Section 12.02 Adult-Oriented Uses
Section 12.03 Automotive Uses

Section 12.04 Contractor's Yards
Section 12.05 Day Care Facilities
Section 12.06 Drive-Through and Drive-In Facilities
Section 12.07 Funeral Homes and Mortuaries
Section 12.08 Garden Centers and Nurseries
Section 12.09 Home Occupation / Home-Based Businesses
Section 12.10 Indoor Recreation Facilities
Section 12.11 Marihuana Business Regulations
Section 12.12 Nursing Homes, Senior Assisted Living Facilities, and Convalescent Centers
Section 12.13 Open Air Businesses
Section 12.14 Outdoor Seating and Service Areas
Section 12.15 Outdoor Storage
Section 12.16 Places of Assembly
Section 12.17 Self-Storage Facilities
Section 12.18 Single Family Dwellings
Section 12.19 Solar Energy
Section 12.20 Wind Energy
Section 12.21 Wireless Communication Facilities

ARTICLE 13 SIGN REGULATIONS.....13 - 1
Section 13.01 Intent
Section 13.02 Sign Computation
Section 13.03 Exempt Signs
Section 13.04 Prohibited Signs
Section 13.05 General Standards
Section 13.06 Permitted Signs
Section 13.07 Permanent Signs
Section 13.08 Temporary Signs
Section 13.09 Electronic Message Signs
Section 13.10 Nonconforming and Abandoned Signs

ARTICLE 14 OFF-STREET PARKING, LOADING, AND ACCESS STANDARDS.....14 - 1
Section 14.01 Intent
Section 14.02 Streets, Roadways, and Rights-of-Way
Section 14.03 Clear Vision Zone
Section 14.04 Vehicle Parking Requirements
Section 14.05 Bicycle Parking Requirements
Section 14.06 Plug-In Electric Vehicle Parking Requirements
Section 14.07 Off-Street Loading Requirements

ARTICLE 15 LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING.....15 - 1
Section 15.01 Intent
Section 15.02 Application of Requirements
Section 15.03 Landscape Plan Requirements
Section 15.04 Screening Between Land Uses
Section 15.05 Parking Lot Landscaping
Section 15.06 Required Street Tree Greenbelt Planting

Section 15.07 Site Landscaping
Section 15.08 Nonresidential Waste Receptacle Screening
Section 15.09 Landscape Elements
Section 15.10 Minimum Size and Spacing Requirements
Section 15.11 Stormwater Control Features
Section 15.12 Waiver or Modification of Standards for Special Situations
Section 15.13 Tree Protection During Construction

ARTICLE 16 EXTERIOR LIGHTING STANDARDS……16 - 1
Section 16.01 Intent
Section 16.02 Applicability
Section 16.03 Standards for Exterior Lighting
Section 16.04 Conditions of Approval
Section 16.05 Exemptions
Section 16.06 Prohibited Lighting

ARTICLE 17 ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS……17 - 1
Section 17.01 Environmental Performance Standards
Section 17.02 Regulations of Floodplain Areas
Section 17.03 Drains and Drainage

ARTICLE 18 NONCONFORMING LOTS, USES, AND STRUCTURES……18 - 1
Section 18.01 Purpose and Intent
Section 18.02 General Requirements: Uses and Structures
Section 18.03 Requirements for Nonconforming Uses
Section 18.04 Requirements for Nonconforming Structures
Section 18.05 Requirements for Nonconforming Lots

ARTICLE 19 ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS……19 - 1
Section 19.01 Establishment
Section 19.02 Membership
Section 19.03 Rules Governing the Board of Appeals
Section 19.04 Powers and Duties of Zoning Board of Appeals
Section 19.05 Rules and Procedures for Variances
Section 19.06 Zoning Board of Appeals Approval
Section 19.07 Approval Periods

ARTICLE 20 REZONING AND ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS……20 - 1
Section 20.01 Initiation of Zoning Ordinance Map and Text Amendments
Section 20.02 Zoning Ordinance Text and Map Amendment Application Procedures
Section 20.03 Rezoning and Zoning Ordinance Amendment Process
Section 20.04 Criteria for Amendment of the Official Zoning Map (Rezoning)
Section 20.05 Criteria for Amendment of the Official Zoning Ordinance Text
Section 20.06 Conditional Rezoning of Land
Section 20.07 Amendments Required to Conform to Court Decree

B. SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS

Carlisle Wortman Associates Site Plan Process Memo (March 17, 2026)

Carlisle | Wortman
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To: Charmaine Kettler-Schmult
Diane Mulville-Friel
Kirsten Mellem

From: Ben Carlisle, AICP
Mike Auerbach, AICP

Date: March 17, 2026

Re: Site Plan Process

We have been asked by the City to review its site plan process and provide best-practice recommendations. Our review has focused on two primary areas: (1) the review process and (2) submittal requirements. We believe that implementing the recommended changes, along with clarifying both procedural steps and submittal expectations, will help create a fair, predictable, and efficient review process for staff and applicants alike. Attached for your review is a draft site plan review ordinance.

In reviewing the draft ordinance, we have identified several key policy and implementation questions for the City to consider:

1. **Required Site Plan Data.**
   The draft includes a range of site plan data requirements in a table format. Please note that the data requirements differ depending on whether the application is for preliminary/administrative site plan or final site plan approval.

   Questions for staff: Are the site plan submittal requirements realistic, appropriate, and proportional to the type of review being requested?

2. **Administrative Site Plan Review.**
   We have separated the site plan process into administrative/preliminary review and final review**.** The projects and circumstances that qualify for administrative review by staff are listed under Section 34-6.1.3.C.

   Questions for staff: Are City officials and staff comfortable with the categories of items proposed for administrative review.

3. **Preliminary and Final Site Plan Review Process.**
   The proposed site plan review process is meant to follow the City's current practice. The Planning Commission approves all preliminary site plans and final site plan is approved administratively.

   Questions for staff: Are there any preliminary site plans that the Planning Commission should approve? Who is best positioned to approve final site plans: the Planning Commission or staff?

4. **Variance Process and Timing.**
   We have suggested a process under which the applicant first appears before the Planning Commission for preliminary site plan review, then proceeds to the Zoning Board of Appeals for any necessary variances. Alternatively, an applicant could be required to present their Preliminary Site Plan to the Planning Commission for a *tentative* approval, subject to the condition that they obtain any necessary variances. If the variances are granted, the applicant could then return to the Planning Commission for a Preliminary Site Plan approval.

   Questions for staff: What is the appropriate site plan review sequence if a variance is required?

5. **Engineering Review and Building Permits.**
   Under the proposed site plan review process, an applicant would apply for engineering plan approval after obtaining Final Site Plan approval.

   Questions for staff: At what point in the review process should an applicant apply for engineering review and building permits? For example, should those applications be permitted only after final site plan approval, or at some earlier point during the review process?

6. **Zoning Administration.**
   The current ordinance appears to defer a significant amount of zoning administration authority to the Code Enforcement Officer. We recommend that the ordinance instead define the role of Zoning Administrator and place zoning administration responsibilities under that office. Example definitions to accomplish that are as follows:

   "ZONING ADMINISTRATION. This Zoning Ordinance shall be administered by the Zoning Administrator or such deputies as designated by the Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Administrator shall be designated by the City Manager."

   "ZONING ADMINISTRATOR. The official of the City of Farmington Hills charged with the administration of this Zoning Ordinance."

7. **Site Plan Expiration.**
   We have created a site plan expiration process which includes three (3) years for Prelmiary Site Plan, and two (2) years for Final Site Plan. In both cases, staff could grant extensions in one (1) year increments if an applicant requests an extension in writing. The draft does not limit the number of extensions that can be granted.

   Questions for staff: Are the extension timeframes reasonable?

8. **Development Agreements.**
   It does not appear that the current ordinance includes a requirement or authorization for a development agreement. We recommend adding such a provision.

9. **Site Plan Review Standards.**
   We have added site plan review standards to better assist staff and the Planning Commission in evaluating site plans in a more consistent and objective manner.

We look forward to meeting with you and discussing these items further.

Sincerely

Benjamin R. Carli

CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.
Benjamin R. Carlisle, AICP, LEED-AP
President

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Mike Auerbach, AICP
Associate

Chapter 21, Planning, Article II, Site Plan Regulations

ARTICLE III. SITE PLAN REGULATIONS[1]

Sec. 21-51. Definitions.

In the interpretation of this article, the following definition shall apply:

Site plan design standards means the city engineering design requirements as adopted by council resolution.

Cross reference(s)—Definitions and rules of construction generally, § 1-2.

Sec. 21-52. Site plan required.

No building permit shall be issued for the construction or reconstruction of any building or structure, except detached single-family residences and buildings or structures accessory thereto, unless and until a site plan has been filed and approved in conformance with this article. Such permit shall be issued and construction performed only in accordance with an approved site plan. The provisions of this article shall be in addition to any requirements of the zoning ordinance, chapter 34, as amended, with respect to site plan review.

(Code 1981, § 62.020)

Sec. 21-53. Specifications, contents.

(a) For the purpose of this article, a site plan shall be defined as a map or drawing of the entire lot or parcel of land upon which the building or structure is to be constructed.

(b) A site plan submitted to the planning commission or department of public services, in accordance with section 21-59, shall include the following:

(1) A scale of not less than one (1) inch equals fifty (50) feet if the subject property is less than twenty-five (25) acres, and one (1) inch equals one hundred (100) feet if twenty-five (25) acres or more;

(2) Date, north arrow and scale;

(3) The dimensions of all lot and property lines, showing the relationship of the subject property to abutting properties;

(4) The location of all existing and proposed structures on the subject property and all existing structures within fifty (50) feet of the subject property;

(5) The location of all existing and proposed drives and parking areas with proposed and existing striping indicated;

(6) The location and right-of-way widths of all abutting streets and alleys and the location of driveways or intersecting streets within one hundred (100) feet of the zoning lot on either side of the abutting street;

(7) The location of lighting structures, if applicable;

[1]State law reference(s)—Site plan, MCL 125.584d.

(8) The proposed location and dimensions of any pedestrian sidewalks;

(9) Existing ground elevations on the site on an appropriate grid or by contours, including existing ground elevations on adjacent land within fifty (50) feet of the subject property and existing building, drive and/or parking lot elevations and elevations of any adjacent unusual surface conditions;

(10) A preliminary grading plan in detail sufficient to determine whether or not extensive grading of the site is proposed and to enable the building height to be determined. Spot grades are sufficient, but should include locations near the major corners of the buildings. First floor elevations and rooftop elevations should be indicated. If the proposed building height is to be within five (5) feet of the maximum height limit and the grade is not constant, the average grade along each major building face shall be provided;

(11) The location of proposed fire hydrants with reasonable access thereto for firefighting, police and other emergency equipment;

(12) The names and addresses of the architect, planner, designer, engineer and other persons responsible for the preparation of the site plan;

(13) A location map showing relation to major cross streets;

(14) The legal description of the parcel;

(15) Any other provision required under chapter 34.

(c) The site plan must be sealed by a registered architect, planner, landscape architect or engineer licensed to practice in the state.

(d) A site plan submitted to the engineering division must also be in conformance with the requirements set forth in the site plan design standards as established by resolution of the council.

(Code 1981, § 62.030)

Sec. 21-54. Filing procedure, distribution of copies for review, recommendations.

(a) If a site plan is required to be submitted to the planning commission in accordance with zoning ordinance, chapter 34, prior to application for a building permit, the owner or developer shall submit to the city clerk eight (8) copies of the proposed site plan. The clerk will then forward plans to the engineering division, the planning consultant and the community development division for review comments to be presented to the planning commission. Submittal to the city clerk must be made on or prior to the eighteenth of the month before the planning commission meeting.

(b) Following the planning commission approval, or prior to or at the time of the application for a building permit, where planning commission approval was not required, the owner or developer shall submit to the engineering division a minimum of four (4) copies of the proposed site plan. The engineering division shall then review the site plan for conformance to the site plan design standards. The engineering division shall forward the site plan to the community development division for review and, thereafter, coordinate and indicate the community development division's review comments within the engineering review. At the discretion of the engineering division, the site plan may be forwarded for review by other agencies, such as the city consultant engineer and/or planner, the county road commission, the county department of public works, the county drain commission, the department of state highways and transportation, and any other agency who may have a jurisdictional interest in the site.

(c) Upon review and approval by the engineering division, the approved site plan will be forwarded to the building division. A building permit shall not be issued without written approval of the site plan by the engineering division.

(Code 1981, § 62.040)

Sec. 21-55. Revisions to approved plans.

Amendments and/or changes to a previously approved site plan may be made in the same manner in which the original site plan was approved.

(Code 1981, § 62.050)

Sec. 21-56. Final approval.

Upon completion of the work in accordance with the approved site plan, the owner or developer will request a final approval of the site. Upon receipt of this request, the engineering division will perform a final inspection. If all work has been completed in accordance with the approved plan, the engineering division shall notify the building division in writing. A certificate of occupancy will not be issued without this written approval.

(Code 1981, § 62.060)

Sec. 21-57. Engineering certification.

The engineering division may, as a prerequisite for final approval, require a written certification from the engineer or architect who designed the plan stating that all work has been performed in accordance with the approved plan.

(Code 1981, § 62.070)

Sec. 21-58. When plan not required.

Submittal of the site plan to the engineering division will not be required if in the opinion of the director of public services the improvement does not change existing conditions on the site, or the improvement will be of such minor nature that a site plan is not required in the opinion of the director.

(Code 1981, § 62.080)

Sec. 21-59. Planning commission approval.

Planning commission review and approval of a site plan is required for those uses where site plan approval by the planning commission is required by the zoning ordinance, chapter 34, as amended, and as required by other chapters of this Code.

(Code 1981, § 62.090)

Sec. 21-60. Fees.

Fees shall be paid by the owner, developer or contractor for site plan review, in accordance with the schedule of fees for site plan review as established by resolution of the council.

(Code 1981, § 62.100)

Secs. 21-61—21-75. Reserved.

Chapter 34, Zoning, Article 6.0, Development Procedures

Section 34-6.1, Site Plan Review

6.0 Development Procedures

34-6.1 SITE PLAN REVIEW

1. Whenever the provisions of this chapter require submission of a site plan to the planning commission, it shall be submitted in accordance with the provisions of this Section and article III of chapter 21. A site plan shall meet all applicable requirements of this chapter and shall be approved if in compliance with such requirements. In instances of conflict between article III of chapter 21 and this chapter, the requirements of this chapter shall prevail.
2. In the process of reviewing a site plan, the planning commission shall consider the following:
   A. The location and design of driveways providing vehicular ingress to and egress from the site, in relation to streets giving access to the site, to nearby driveways of other property and in relation to pedestrian traffic.
   B. The traffic circulation features within the site and the location of automobile parking areas.
   C. The planning commission may make such requirements with respect to any matters as will assure:
      i. Safety and convenience of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic both within the site and in relation to access streets.
      ii. Satisfactory and harmonious relationships between the development on the site and the existing and prospective development of contiguous land and of adjacent neighborhoods.
   D. The planning commission may further require landscaping, fences and walls in pursuance of these objectives and same shall be provided and maintained as a condition of the establishment and the continued maintenance of any use to which they are appurtenant.
3. Whenever a landscape or greenbelt plan is required by provision of this chapter, plans shall be submitted concurrently with the site plan for review by the planning commission. The applicant may apply to the planning department to delay submission of the landscape or greenbelt plan and proceed with the site plan when they can demonstrate the following:
   A. The plans do not propose removing more than 10% of the existing trees, as identified on a tree survey, and
   B. The application does not propose adding 3,000 square feet or more of hard surface area, and
   C. The applicant does not propose adding or relocating outdoor storage areas or loading areas, and
   D. The use is not a special approval use, and
   E. The site does not abut a residential district.

   Landscape or greenbelt plans that were not submitted with the site plan application shall be submitted to the city within three (3) months from time of site plan approval.
4. Site plan approval by the planning commission shall remain effective for a period of three (3) years; provided, however, that any plan submitted with the application for a building permit shall meet all requirements of this chapter in effect at the time the permit is applied for. If a building permit is not obtained within three (3) years, the approval shall expire and become null and void.
5. Site plans shall be submitted in accordance with the following:
   A. Scale:
      i. For zoning lots of twenty-five (25) acres or less; one inch equals fifty (50) feet minimum.
      ii. For zoning lots of over twenty-five (25) acres; one inch equals one hundred (100) feet minimum.
   B. The location of driveways or intersecting streets within one hundred (100) feet of the zoning lot and on either side of the abutting street shall be indicated.
   C. A preliminary grading plan in detail sufficient to determine whether or not extensive grading of the site is proposed and to enable the building height to be determined. Spot grades are sufficient, but should include locations near the major corners of buildings. First floor elevations and rooftop elevations should be indicated. If the proposed building height is to be within five (5) feet of the maximum height limit and the grade is not constant, the average grade along each major building face shall be provided.

Draft ZTA 1, 2026 (Section 34-6.1, Site Plan Review)

SECTION 34-6.1 SITE PLAN REVIEW

SECTION 34-6.1.1 INTENT

The site plan review requirements in this Article are intended to provide a consistent and uniform method for reviewing proposed development plans to ensure full compliance with the regulations in this Ordinance, other applicable ordinances, and applicable state and federal laws. These requirements are intended to encourage a harmonious relationship of buildings and uses both within a site and in relation to adjacent uses; achieve efficient use of land; encourage innovative design solutions; protect natural resources; ensure safety for internal and external vehicular and pedestrian users; achieve innovative stormwater management solutions; and prevent adverse impacts on adjoining or nearby properties. It is further the intent of these provisions to encourage cooperation and consultation between the City and the applicant to facilitate development in accordance with the City land use objectives.

SECTION 34-6.1.2 SITE PLAN REQUIRED

1. **Site plan review required.** The following buildings, structures, and uses require site plan review:
   A. Any proposed or permitted uses and related buildings, except single-family dwellings;
   B. Any proposed special approval or special use and related buildings;
   C. Any alteration, addition, or expansion of an existing permitted or special approval or special land use and/or related building;
   D. Any building or use for which site plan review is required by this chapter;
   E. Expansion or paving of off-street parking and/or a change in vehicular or pedestrian circulation or access.
   F. A non-residential use permitted in a residential district.
   G. A substantial revision to a development that has received Preliminary or Final Site Plan Approval, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
2. **Site plan review not required.** Erection, moving, relocation, conversion, or structural alterations to a one- or two-family dwelling on an individual lot, and its accessory use(s) or structure(s), are exempt from the full site plan review process. However, other applicable approvals are still required such as a review for compliance with this Chapter as set forth Section 34-7.6 and any required building permits.

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SECTION 34-6.1.3 SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCEDURES

1. **Pre-application meeting.** Prior to submittal of a preliminary site plan application, the applicant shall schedule a meeting with the City to discuss the project, submittal requirements, and review procedures. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss applicable standards and technical issues, and to determine the appropriate type of review process based on this chapter. The Zoning Administrator may waive the pre-application meeting upon determining that the meeting is unnecessary based on the nature of the proposed improvements or changes.

2. Preliminary Site Plan Procedures.

A. **Application and fee for a preliminary site plan.** An application for a preliminary site plan review shall be filed with the Zoning Administrator and include the number of copies specified on the application of a preliminary site plan. An application for preliminary site plan review shall be accompanied by the required fees, as well as other data, exhibits, and information hereinafter required. The Zoning Administrator is authorized to determine the quantity and format of plan sets that are required.

B. **Required data for a preliminary site plan.** An application for approval of a preliminary site plan shall provide the information required for a preliminary site plan as set forth in Section 34-6.1.4, Required Site Plan Data. The Zoning Administrator shall forward the application and site plan(s) to the appropriate City departments for review. All reviews shall be returned to the Zoning Administrator.

C. **Planning Commission review of preliminary site plan.** The Zoning Administrator shall determine if the preliminary site plan includes the required information set forth in this chapter and the Engineering Standards. The Zoning Administrator shall transmit complete submittals of the application and preliminary site plan drawing(s) to the Planning Commission prior to its next available regularly scheduled meeting. The Planning Commission shall undertake a study of the same and shall give its approval or disapproval of the preliminary site plan, advising the applicant, in writing, of recommended changes or modifications in the proposed site plan as are needed to achieve conformity with the standards specified in this chapter.

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D. **Variance requests.** When the applicant intends to seek a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals for a proposal that requires Planning Commission review, the applicant shall first apply for Preliminary Site Plan approval from the Planning Commission. If the Preliminary Site Plan is approved, it shall be conditioned upon the granting of any necessary variances by the Zoning Board of Appeals. Any necessary variances must be obtained prior to Final Site Plan review.

3. Final Site Plan Procedures.

A. Prior to submittal of any of any building and engineering construction permit applications, the petitioner shall obtain Final Site Plan approval. This final site plan submittal shall include those items specified under Section of this Article. It shall be the responsibility of the petitioner to secure all necessary approvals and authorizations related to the items required under this chapter.

B. The Zoning Administrator shall review the submittal for Final Site Plan Approval to ascertain that all the requirements of this chapter have been satisfied. Any submittal which fails to include the required modifications, information, and/ or documents shall be deemed incomplete and held in abeyance until the petitioner rectifies all deficiencies.

C. In the event that the Final Site Plan has been substantially revised from the Preliminary Site Plan Approval, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, the applicant shall be directed to reapply for a new Preliminary Site Plan approval or to revise the Final Site Plan to bring it into conformance with the approved Preliminary Site Plan, or send the revised Final Site Plan to the Planning Commission for consideration.

D. The Zoning Administrator shall review the Final Site Plan to ensure that it is consistent with Preliminary Site Plan Approval. The Zoning Administrator shall confirm that all necessary City Department approvals, authorizations or certifications have been received from Departments including, but not limited to, the Engineering Division, and Fire Department. Upon verification of all required City approvals, the Zoning Administrator shall then grant Final Site Plan Approval and shall notify the Engineering Division and Building Official that construction permit applications may be reviewed and granted for the project.

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4. Administrative site plan review procedures.

A. The Zoning Administrator is authorized to review and approve a site plan as set forth in this section, provided all other standards of this Ordinance are met. If the Zoning Administrator determines that all applicable Ordinance standards are met, the Zoning Administrator may issue final site plan approval without requiring a separate preliminary site plan approval.

B. The Zoning Administrator may require Planning Commission review and approval if the Zoning Administrator determines that a site plan cannot be approved administratively.

C. All applications for administrative site plan approval shall include the materials and submittal requirements set forth in Section 34-6.1.4, Required Site Plan Data. The Zoning Administrator may waive any submittal requirement deemed unnecessary.

D. The Zoning Administrator may conduct an administrative review of a site plan for the following projects or under the following circumstances:

i. Minor changes during construction required by outside governmental agencies.

ii. Increase in parking or loading area of up to twenty-five (25) percent of what is existing, or 6,000 square feet of pavement area without any building changes, which ever is less.

iii. Changes to the building height that do not add additional floor area nor exceed the maximum height requirements of the district.

iv. Expansion of an existing principal building of up to twenty-five (25) percent of the existing floor area in the event of no impact to other site requirements or improvements.

v. A change in use to a similar or less intense use provided the site shall not require any significant changes in the existing site facilities such as parking, landscaping, lighting, or sidewalks.

vi. A change from a nonconforming use to a conforming use.

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vii. Accessory buildings, structures, and uses in the event of no impact to other site requirements or improvements.

viii. Aesthetic and architectural changes to a building or structure.

ix. Home occupations.

x. Sign installation, relocation, or replacement meeting the dimensional and locational standards of this Ordinance.

xi. Site improvements such as installation of walls, fences, lighting, or landscaping consistent with the Ordinance standards.

xii. Temporary uses, sales, seasonal outdoor sales, and special events.

xiii. Reuse or renovation of existing buildings with no additional hard surfacing or exterior improvements.

SECTION 34-6.1.4 REQUIRED SITE PLAN DATA

All plans shall be prepared by a professional engineer or architect registered in the State of Michigan whose seal shall be affixed to the first sheet. All landscape plans for sites of one acre or greater shall be prepared by a landscape architect licensed in the State of Michigan whose seal has been affixed to the first sheet. Preliminary and final site plan submittals shall include the information set forth in Table 6.1.4, Site Plan Submittal Requirements. The Zoning Administrator may waive data submittal requirements if deemed unnecessary based on the nature of the proposed improvements or changes.

Table 6.1.4 Site Plan Submittal Requirements

Item	Required for	
	Preliminary	Final
1. General Requirements		
1.1. Name, address, and contact information of the applicant and property owner.	X	X
1.2. Name, address, and contact information of firm or individual who prepared the site plan include professional license number of architect, engineer, designer, landscape architect or planner who prepared plan.	X	X
1.3. North arrow, legend, graphic and written scale on all sheets.	X	X

Item	Required for	
	Preliminary	Final
1.4. Title block(s) indicating the name of the development.	X	X
1.5. Type of site plan “Preliminary” or “Final” (as appropriate).	X	X
1.6. Dates of submission and revisions (month, day, year).	X	X
1.7. Legal and common description of property, including parcel identification (Sidwell) number(s).	X	X
1.8. General location map showing site in relation to major cross streets.	X	X
1.9. Net acreage (minus rights-of-way) and total acreage, to the nearest one-tenth 1/10) acre.	X	X
1.10. Written description of proposed project or use, type of building or structures, and name of proposed development, if applicable.	X	X
1.11. Total project construction cost.	X	X
1.12. Itemized engineering cost estimate.		X
1.13. Schedule for completing the project, including the phasing or timing of all proposed developments, if applicable.	X	X
2. Site Layout		
2.1. An overall plan for the entire development, drawn to scale.	X	X
2.2. Dimensions of all lot and property lines, showing the relationship of the subject property to abutting properties.	X	X
2.3. Location of all existing and proposed buildings, structures, parking areas, and other improvements on the site and within 50 feet of the subject property.	X	X
2.4. Setback dimensions for all buildings and structures. Setbacks must be dimensioned from minimum locations and measured from lot lines. When lot lines abuts a street, measure setback from the existing or proposed right-of-way lines, whichever is greater.	X	X
2.5. All existing and proposed easements, including type.	X	X

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Item	Required for	
	Preliminary	Final
2.6. The location and dimensions of all existing and proposed drives and parking areas with proposed and existing striping indicated.	X	X
2.7. The proposed location and dimensions of any pedestrian sidewalks.	X	X
3. Site Data Table		
3.1. Zoning district of site and all adjacent property.	X	X
3.2. Land use of site and all adjacent property.	X	X
3.3. Proposed use of site.	X	X
3.4. Gross and net lot area (acres and square feet).	X	X
3.5. Gross floor area and usable floor area of all buildings, including accessory buildings (square feet of each and overall total).	X	X
3.6. Floor area ratio (total gross floor area of buildings divided by net lot area).	X	X
3.7. Percent lot coverage (ground floor area of buildings divided by net lot area).	X	X
3.8. Impervious surface ratio (total square feet of impervious surface areas divided by net lot area).	X	X
3.9. Number and type of dwelling units and density for residential projects.	X	X
3.10. Building height in feet and number of stories.	X	X
3.11. Required and proposed front yard open space (percent).	X	X
3.12. Required and proposed setbacks (in feet).	X	X
3.13. Proposed and required number of regular and accessible parking and loading spaces (include calculations used).	X	X
4. Tree Survey		
4.1. Tree survey per Sec. 34-5.18, tree permit reviewed separately (refer to tree survey checklist on City website).	X	X
5. Natural Features		
5.1. Existing and proposed ground elevations on the site on an appropriate grid or by contours, including existing and proposed ground elevations on adjacent land up to one hundred (100) feet of the subject property and existing building, drive	X	X

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Item	Required for	
	Preliminary	Final
and/or parking lot elevations and elevations of any adjacent unusual surface conditions.		
5.2. Location of all existing drainage courses, lakes, streams, rivers, creeks, brooks, ponds, and detention basins, including intermittent streams and ponds with water elevation level indicated and watercourse setbacks noted as required.	X	X
5.3. Boundaries of 100-year floodplain (flood hazard area) and floodways if located on the property or immediately adjacent to the property.	X	X
5.4. Location and boundaries of wetlands and wetland setbacks.	X	X
5.5. Any proposed filling, draining, cutting, dredging or other alteration proposed for wetlands and setbacks must be graphically depicted and quantified in a table on the site plan. A wetlands determination may be waived by the Zoning Administrator based on applicable site information.		X
5.6. Soils information, location, and extent of soils that are unbuildable in their natural state because of organic content or water table level.		X
5.7. Groundwater information on the site, with supporting evidence, including but not limited to site-specific soils information.		X
5.8. Soil erosion control plan.		X
6. Access and Circulation		
6.1. Dimensions, curve radii, and center lines of existing and proposed access points, roads, and road rights-of-way or access easements.	X	X
6.2. The location and right-of-way widths of all abutting streets and alleys and the location of driveways or intersecting streets within 100 feet of the zoning lot on either side of the abutting street.	X	X
6.3. Location and dimensions of proposed roads, driveways, parking lots, pedestrian sidewalks, and nonmotorized pathways.	X	X
6.4. Cross-section details of proposed roads, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, and nonmotorized paths		X

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Item	Required for	
	Preliminary	Final
illustrating materials and thickness. Geotechnical and pavement design report for public and private roads.		
6.5. Dimensions of acceleration, deceleration, and passing lanes.		X
6.6. Location, dimensions, and surface material (asphaltic or concrete paving) of dedicated loading/unloading area(s).	X	X
6.7. Dimensions of parking spaces, islands, drive aisles and maneuvering lanes.	X	X
6.8. Location of proposed hydrants and required access for firefighting, police and other emergency equipment. Plans must detail access lanes for emergency vehicles, length of dead-end access roads and parking lots, provisions for the fire apparatus manuvering per code, height of overhangs, sky walks, bridges or other similar structures, security gates restricting access, and location and spacing of fire hydrants.	X	X
6.9. Traffic regulatory signs and pavement markings.		X
7. Landscaping		
7.1. A landscape plan per Section 34-5.14 (refer to landscape plan checklist on City website).	X	X
8. Building, Structure, and Miscellaneous Site Information		
8.1. Location, height, and outside dimensions of all proposed buildings and structures.	X	X
8.2. Location of any outdoor sales or display areas.	X	X
8.3. Building floor plans and total floor area.	X	X
8.4. Details on accessory structures and any screening.	X	X
8.5. The location of any outdoor storage of materials and the manner by which it will be screened.	X	X
8.6. Building elevations drawn at an appropriate scale and including design details to demonstrate compliance with applicable ordinance requirements.	X	X
8.7. Location of all signs per Section 34-5.5, Sign permit reviewed separately.	X	X
9. Exterior Lighting		
9.1. Exterior Lighting Plan per Section 34-5.16.	X	X

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Item	Required for	
	Preliminary	Final
10. Utilities, Drainage, and Related Issues		
10.1. Location of existing and proposed sanitary sewers and septic systems.	X	X
10.2. Size and details of existing and proposed sanitary sewers and septic systems, including profile views and specifications.		X
10.3. Location of existing and proposed water mains, well sites, water service, and fire hydrants.	X	X
10.4. Size and details of existing and proposed water mains, well sites, water service, and fire hydrants, including profile views and specifications.		X
10.5. Site grading, drainage patterns, and other stormwater management measures.	X	X
10.6. Location storm sewers, drains, water quality treatments, and stormwater retention and detention facilities.	X	X
10.7. Size and details of storm sewers and drains, including profile views and specifications, and stormwater drainage and retention/detention calculations per adopted standards.		X
10.8. Location of above- and below-ground gas, electric, and telephone lines, existing and proposed.	X	X
10.9. Location of transformers and utility boxes and required screening.	X	X
10.10. Location of dumpsters and screening details.	X	X
10.11. Assessments of potential impacts from the use, processing, or movement of hazardous materials or chemicals, if applicable.		X
10.12. Location of roof-top mechanical equipment and screening details.	X	X
11. Additional Information Required for Multiple-Family Residential Development		
11.1. The number and location of each type of residential unit (one-bedroom units, two-bedroom units, etc.).	X	X
11.2. Density calculations by type of residential unit (dwelling units per acre).	X	X
11.3. Garage and/or carport locations and details, if proposed.	X	X
11.4. Mailbox clusters.	X	X

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Item	Required for	
	Preliminary	Final
11.5. Location, dimensions, floor plans, and elevations of common building(s) (e.g., recreation, laundry, etc.), if applicable.	X	X
11.6. Swimming pool fencing detail, including height and type of fence, if applicable.	X	X
11.7. Location and size of recreation and open space areas.	X	X
11.8. Indication of type of recreation facilities proposed for recreation area.	X	X
12. Public Art (if required)		
12.1. Public art requirements per Sec. 34-5.21	X	X
13. Additional Study		
13.1. Traffic and/or parking study.	As required	
13.2. Environmental assessment.	As required	
13.3. Noise.	As required	
13.4. Additional study as required by Zoning Administrator.	As required	
13.5. Master grading plan including finished grades/brick ledge grades, and first floor elevations.	As required	
14. Outside Agency Approval		
14.1. Evidence that the plan has been submitted for review to affected local, county, state, and federal agencies, including but not limited to the Road Commission for Oakland County, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner, Oakland County Health Department, the Michigan Department of the Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and Michigan Department of Transportation.		X

SECTION 34-6.1.5 PROCEDURE AFTER FINAL SITE PLAN APPROVAL

Upon certification of the approved final site plan by the Zoning Administrator, the applicant may apply for the applicable construction and operating approvals, including, but not limited to engineering permits, building permits, tree permits, and business licenses.

SECTION 34-6.1.6 AS BUILT PLANS AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

1. As-built drawings as required by the City Engineer shall be submitted and approved prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

2. The City may, as a condition of final site plan approval, require the proprietor and/or developer to enter into a development agreement with the City. Such agreement shall set forth and define the responsibilities of the proprietor and the City, as set forth in <Insert>

SECTION 34-6.1.7 EXTENSION, REVOCATION, AND ABANDONMENT OF SITE PLAN APPROVAL

1. **Preliminary Site Plan.** Preliminary Site Plan Approval shall be effective for a period of two (2) years. Within that two (2) year period, the petitioner shall submit a complete application for Final Site Plan Approval to the Zoning Administrator in accordance with Section 34-6.1.3. If the petitioner does not submit a complete application of the Final Site Plan within three (3) years, the Preliminary Site Plan Approval shall expire and become null and void, and the project shall be considered abandoned. If the petitioner does not receive Final Site Plan Approval within one (1) year of application of the Final Site Plan, the Preliminary Site Plan Approval shall expire and become null and void, and the project shall be considered abandoned. Extensions may be granted in one (1) year increments by administrative approval, provided no changes have been made to the approved plan, and that the approved plan still complies with applicable ordinance requirements. No more than three (3) extensions may be granted. All requests for extensions shall be made in writing and include a statement of why the extension is necessary.

2. **Final Site Plan.** Final site plan approval is valid for a period of two (2) years from the date of Final Site Plan approval by the Zoning Administrator within which time all necessary building or construction permits shall be secured and substantial construction completed. Extensions may be granted in one (1) year increments by administrative approval, provided no changes have been made to the approved plan and that the approved plan still complies with applicable ordinance requirements. No more than three (3) extensions may be granted. All requests for extensions shall be made in writing and include a statement of why the extension is necessary.

3. **Revocation.** The Planning Commission may, upon hearing, revoke approval of a site plan if the Planning Commission determines that any information on the approved site plan is in error. Upon revocation, work on the affected part of the development, or on the entire development, as determined by the Planning Commission, shall cease. The Planning Commission may direct the Zoning Administrator to issue a stop-work order to enforce its determination. Upon revocation, the Planning Commission may require the applicant to amend the site plan in a manner appropriate to reflect the corrected information. Any work so suspended shall not be resumed until an amended site plan is approved by the Planning Commission.

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SECTION 34-6.1.8 SITE PLAN APPROVAL STANDARDS

Site plans shall be approved if the Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator, as applicable, reviews the site plan and determines that it meets the following standards:

1. **Compliance with all regulations.** The proposed plan complies with all applicable regulations of this Article and Ordinance.
2. **Standards.** Further, in consideration of each site plan, the Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator, as applicable, shall endeavor to assure the following:
   A. The proposed use will not be injurious to the general health, safety, welfare, and character of the City and surrounding neighborhood.
   B. The proposed development is consistent with the Master Plan.
   C. There is a proper relationship between public thoroughfares and proposed service drives, driveways, and parking areas.
   D. The proposed development provides for proper development of roads, easements, and public utilities.
   E. Building placement and orientation provides a strong visual and functional relationship with its site, adjacent sites, and nearby thoroughfares. Such placement and orientation is consistent within sites and to adjacent sites to provide distinct building groups which exhibit similar orientation, scale, and proportion.
   F. Site access and circulation shall be designed to ensure the safe and convenient movement of vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit, where applicable. Where possible, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic shall be provided to avoid conflicts and unsafe conditions.
   G. Internal circulation shall be arranged to provide a practical means of emergency personnel and vehicle access to all sides of a building.
   H. Site planning and design of specific improvements will accomplish the preservation and protection of existing natural resources and features, such as lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, groundwater, trees, and wooded areas, including understory trees.
   I. The proposed development will utilize the natural topography to the maximum extent possible, minimizing the amount of cutting, filling, and grading required, and preventing soil erosion or sedimentation.

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J. The design of storm sewers, stormwater facilities, roads, parking lots, driveways, water mains, sanitary sewers, and other site improvements meets the design and construction standards of the City and other appropriate agencies.

K. Landscaping, including grass, trees, shrubs, and other vegetation, is provided to maintain and improve the aesthetic quality of the site and area.

L. The site plan complies with all City ordinances and any other applicable laws.

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Timeline for Zoning Text Amendment

ZTA 1, 2026 (Section 34-6.1, Site Plan Review)

Site Plan Review (Zoning Text Amendment 1, 2026 & City Code Amendment 1, 2026)

Meeting Type		Meeting Purpose	Meeting Date	Legal to Clerk	Legal Publish Date
1	PC - Regular Meeting	Schedule Study Session for 6/18/26 to discuss need for zoning audit and ordinance amendments related to site plan review process (no ordinance draft)	5/21/2026 @ 7:30 pm	N/A	N/A
2	CC - Study Session	Staff presentation on need for zoning audit and ordinance amendments related to site plan review process (no draft ordinance)	6/1/2026 @ 6:00 pm	N/A	N/A
3	PC - Study Session	Staff presentation on need for zoning audit and ordinance amendments related to site plan review process (include draft ordinances)	6/18/2026 @ 6:00 pm	N/A	N/A
4	Developer Engagement	Send information email outlining changes to site plan review process (no draft ordinances)	TBD	N/A	N/A
5	Joint Study Session (CC, PC, ZBA)	Staff presentation on need for zoning audit and ordinance amendments related to site plan review process (include draft ordinance)	7/20/2026 @ 5:00 pm	N/A	N/A
6	PC - Regular Meeting	PC to discuss the proposed ordinance amendments related to site plan review process (draft of ZTA and CCA and set for PC public hearing)	8/20/2026 @ 7:30 pm	N/A	N/A
7	PC - Public Hearing	PC holds public hearing and recommends approval of the proposed ordinances related to site plan review process (ZTA & CCA)	9/17/2026 @ 7:30 pm	8/28/2026	9/2/2026
8	CC - Study Session	CC holds study session to review PC approved ordinances related to site plan review process (ZTA & CCA)	9/28/26 or 10/12/2026 @ 6:00 pm		
9	CC - Public Hearing	CC holds public hearing to introduce and approve ordinances related to site plan review process (ZTA & CCA)	10/12/2026 @ 7:30 pm	9/23/2026	9/27/2026
10	CC - Regular Meeting	Consideration of approval of the ENACTMENT of ordinances related to site plan review process (ZTA & CCA)	10/26/2026 @ 7:30 pm	N/A	N/A

Note: ZTA & CCA become effective 21 days after formal adoption.

Consideration of approval of the ENACTMENT of ordinance C-___-2026, amending the Farmington Hills Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 34, “Zoning,” Article 6.0, "Development Procedures" in order to amend Section 34-6.1, "Site Plan Review" relating to submission of a site plan to the planning commission, (ZTA 1, 2026); and summary for publication.

Consideration of approval of the ENACTMENT of Ordinance C-___-2026, repeal the City of Farmington Hills Code of Ordinances Chapter 21, “Planning,” Article II, “Site Plan Regulations,” (City Code Amendment __, 2026); and summary for publication.

City of Farmington Hills

Project Development and Site Plan Guide

PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS

STEP 1: **Site Plan (and Open Space Plan, if necessary) Review and Approval by the Planning Commission and City Council (if required).**

STEP 2: **Landscape Plan Review and Approval by the Planning Commission. (To be submitted at same time as the Site Plan)**

STEP 3: **Engineering Plan Review – (must be in conformance with the approved site plan and landscape plan).**

STEP 4: **Building Permit application and Construction Plan Review.**

STEP 5: **Tree Permit Application and Approval.**

STEP 6: **Building Permit Issued.**

STEP: 1 – SITE PLAN AND LANDSCAPE PLAN SUBMISSION, REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The applicant should obtain a copy of the Site Plan application, Fee Schedule, Schedule of Regulations (Zoning Ordinance) and all Design Standards from the Department of Planning and Community Development or the City's Web site (www.fhgov.com). The applicant should also contact the Engineering Division for a copy of the Farmington Hills Site Engineering Design Standards. These documents contain all the necessary information for designing a site plan and putting together a site plan submission package.

The submission package must be received at the Planning Office by 3:30 P.M. on the 1st day of the month to be pre reviewed and revisions submitted no later than the 18th of the month in order to be placed the following months Planning Commission agenda. In the case of the 18th of the month falling on a Saturday or Sunday, the package can be submitted by Noon the following Monday.
First submittal on the 18th can be done if directed by the City Planner.

Proponents are urged to submit their application prior to the 1st. This provides an opportunity to bring in any documents which may have been inadvertently forgotten or correct any errors or omissions on the plans when they are submitted.

Prior to submitting a package, applicants are encouraged to meet with the Engineering Division, Planning Office, and Fire Department to discuss their project. All of the items listed in the submission package below must be submitted together as a package. If any portion is missing, the Planning Office may reject the submission package.

Submission Package

1. **Completely fill out the application. This includes the site characteristics, property ownership, and applicant information. This information must be typed or printed in ink.**

2. **Completely fill out the Hazardous Substance Reporting Form. If you have any questions regarding completion of the form, please contact the Fire Marshal at 248/871-2820.**

3. **A Tree Protection Affidavit must be completely filled out and submitted if regulated trees (six inches in diameter at breast height) are not present on or near the property. See Section 34-5.18 of the Zoning Ordinance for a detailed description of the Tree Protection Ordinance.**

4. **Proof of Ownership for the property – i.e., Title Insurance or a Purchase Agreement. If the property is owned by a corporation or partnership, the names of the principal owners must be submitted. <u>The owner of record must sign the application.</u>**

5. **Plan submittal:**

A. **Eight (8) copies of the sealed site plan folded 8 ½"x 11" and sealed by a registered planner, architect, landscape architect or engineer licensed to practice in the state.**

Landscape Plan, see Step #2.
If a Landscape plan is needed, Planning Commission will review the landscape plan at the same time as the site plan.

Eight (8) copies of lighting plan. Whenever the installation or modification of outdoor lighting is part of a development that requires site plan approval, the approving body shall review and approve all proposed lighting as part of its site plan approval process and all lighting shall be subject to the provisions of Ordinance Section 34-5.16.2.

A site plan is defined as a map or drawing of the entire lot or parcel of land upon which the building or structure is to be constructed and shall include the following:

A scale of not less than one (1") inch equals fifty (50') feet if the subject property is less than twenty-five (25) acres, and one (1") inch equals one hundred (100') feet if twenty-five (25) acres or more;

Date, north arrow and scale;

The dimensions of all lot and property lines, showing the relationship of the subject property to abutting properties;

The location of all existing and proposed structures on the subject property and all existing structures within fifty (50) feet of the subject property;

The location of all existing and proposed drives and parking areas with proposed and existing striping indicated;

The location and right-of-way widths of all abutting streets and alleys and the location of driveways or intersecting streets within one hundred (100') feet of the zoning lot on either side of the abutting street;

The location and detail of lighting structures, if applicable;

The proposed location and dimensions of any pedestrian sidewalks;

Existing ground elevations on the site on an appropriate grid or by contours, including existing ground elevations on adjacent land within fifty (50') feet of the subject property and existing building, drive and/or parking lot elevations and elevations of any adjacent unusual surface conditions;

A preliminary grading plan in detail, sufficient to determine whether or not extensive grading of the site is proposed and to enable the building height to be determined. Spot grades are sufficient but should include locations near the major corners of the buildings. First floor elevations and rooftop elevations should be indicated. If the proposed building height is to be within five (5') of the maximum height limit and the grade is not constant, the average grade along each major building face shall be provided;

The location of proposed fire hydrants with reasonable access thereto for fire fighting, police and other emergency equipment;

The names and addresses of the architect, planner, designer, engineer, and other persons responsible for the preparation of the site plan;

A location map showing relation to major cross streets;

The legal description of the parcel;

Any other provision required under Chapter 34 of the City Code.

The placement of all freestanding signs must be in accordance with Section 34-5.5 of the Zoning Ordinance (signs). Signs should be integrated into the site plan design, however, they should <u>not</u> be shown on the site plan (exception below). Signs require a separate permit, and are available from the Building Division at 248-871-2450 for more information (or, again, check the city's website). A sign plan, however, <u>is required</u> for <u>ALL</u> PUD Plan applications.

B. **Three (3) copies of the tree survey (if required by Ordinance) with the seal or signature of both a registered land surveyor and a registered landscape architect or arborist. These plans must include all information required by ordinance.**

C. **Two (2) sealed copies of the tree survey superimposed on the site plan. These plans must include the disposition of each tree and statement of tree protection.**

D. **Fifteen (15) copies of the site plan reduced to 11"x 17".**

E. **Copies of building elevations and floor plans may be required by the Zoning Ordinance. If required, submit three (3) copies.**

F. **Landscape plans may also be required – please refer to Step 2.**

1. Fees:

All fees must be paid at the time plans are submitted. Fees are outlined in the Fee Schedule and can be obtained from the Planning Office or on the City's website (www.fhgov.com). You should always retain your receipts for review fees that have been paid.

2. If open space plans are required please refer to Step #2.

Review

The Submission Package is forwarded to the City Engineering Division, the Fire Marshal and the City's Planning Consultant. Their reviews are forwarded to the Planning Office, generally, one (1) week prior to the meeting. Copies of those reviews are sent to the applicant whose name appears on the application. The applicant should be prepared to address any problems or deficiencies identified in the review letters at the Planning Commission meeting. Please note that revised plans cannot be submitted prior to the scheduled meeting due to inadequate time to review the plans.

If there are numerous deficiencies identified in the review letters, the applicant may wish to request adjournment of the application from the scheduled meeting to make the necessary corrections. Revised plans could be submitted by the 18th of the month to be heard at the following month's meeting. Adjournments must be requested in writing.

STEP 2: - LANDSCAPE PLAN/OPEN SPACE PLAN, REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Landscape Plans are required as stated in the Zoning Ordinance, Section 34-5.14 and must be submitted after site plan approval.

Eight (8) copies of the plan and fifteen (15) reduce copies (11 x 17), sealed by a registered landscape architect, and must be submitted to the Planning Office the same time as the Site Plan is submitted with the required review fee. With the Site Plan these plans are forwarded to the Engineering Division and the Planning Consultant for review. If their review identifies any problems with the plan, the review letters will be forwarded to the applicant so the necessary corrections can be made and revised plans can be submitted. When plans have been submitted which meet all Zoning Ordinance and engineering standards, the plan will be scheduled on the next available Planning Commission agenda. The applicant will be required to attend the Planning Commission meeting to answer any questions. Permits will not be issued until the landscape plan is approved.

Open space plans are required for all Cluster Site Plans and Open Space Plats/Plans and must be submitted with the submission package. Six (6) copies of the open space plan and fifteen (15) reduce copies (11 x 17), sealed by a registered landscape architect, must be submitted to the Planning Office and will require review and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council.

STEP 3: - ENGINEERING PLAN REVIEW AND APPROVAL

The site plan approval process includes a preliminary engineering review, however, final site engineering drawings must be submitted to the Engineering Division for review and approval after site plan approval. Applicants should contact the Engineering Division to determine what needs to be submitted at 248-871-2560.

STEP 4: - BUILDING CONSTRUCTION REVIEW AND PERMIT

The applicant should contact the Building Division at 248-871-2450 to determine the submission requirements for a building permit. The permit application will be forwarded to the Planning Office for approval following verification of site plan, landscape plan, and site engineering approvals.

STEP 5: - TREE PERMIT APPLICATION

If a tree permit is required by Ordinance, a tree permit application must be filled out and submitted to the Planning Office with a $60.00 fee, at the time a building permit application is submitted. Please remember that all required wooden snow fencing must be installed per Ordinance requirements prior to submitting the tree permit application. The building permit will not be issued until a tree permit has been approved.

STEP 6: - BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION AND ISSUANCE

Once all the required plans and permits have been approved by the appropriate authority, a Building Permit Application can be obtained from the Building Division.

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN APPLYING FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL

1. **The submission package must be submitted to the Planning Office by the 1st or 18th of the month, see Step #1. The Planning Office is open Monday thru Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.**

2. **All plans must be submitted in accordance with this document and all applicable ordinance requirements.**

3. **A complete submission package must be submitted in order to be accepted.**

4. **The required seals must be on all plans including two (2) seals on the tree survey and superimposed tree survey.**

5. **Review the Zoning Ordinance thoroughly to make sure all requirements are included on the plan and that adequate information is supplied (i.e., parking calculations, building height, parking lot trees identified on the site plan, spot grades, walls, dumpster, loading, etc.).**

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AVAILABLE

The following design principles and Landscape/Open Space Plan checklist are available upon request from the Planning Office or on the city's website (www.fhgov.com).

- **Parking Lot Landscape Guidelines – This provides suggested planting locations for required plants in and around parking lots.**

- **Landscape/Open Space Plan checklist - All requirements are listed in the Zoning Ordinance, however, this checklist offers further suggestions and reiterates notes that must be included on the plan.**

- **RC Zoning District Berm Alternative Design Principles – Under Section 34-3.7 of the Ordinance, a marginal access road may be required. The principles provide guidelines for landscape development in the area adjacent to the access road.**

- **Berm Planting and Design Plan – General Design Principles – These are applicable to any required or proposed berm.**

- **OS-3 District – Landscape Design Principles – Since this zoning district is specifically designed to retain existing natural features, these principles are to be used as a guide in preparing plans for landscape development.**

- **Bufferyard Design Principles – this provides calculations for determining the required landscape treatment between multiple family buildings and residential property lines.**

- **Landscape Design Principles for Densely Wooded Areas (Woodlot Design Principles) – This provides alternative calculations for required tree replacement.**

- **Tree Survey and Superimposed Tree Survey checklist – All requirements are listed in the Zoning Ordinance, however, this checklist offers further suggestions and reiterates notes that must be included on the plan.**

- **Landscape Design Principles for Storm Water Detention Basins – This provides guidelines for all detention basin development.**

SITE PLAN APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

	PLANNING COMMISSION		CITY COUNCIL	
	REGULAR HEARING	PUBLIC HEARING	REGULAR MEETING	PUBLIC HEARING
Cluster Option Qualification		✓		
Cluster Site Plan/Open Space Plan	✓	✓		✓
Major Road Frontage Option (duplex)		✓		
Planned Residential Development Conceptual Plan	✓	✓		✓
Multi-Family Site Plans within an Approved PRD	✓		✓	
Site Plans for "Principle Uses Permitted" and "Principle Uses Permitted Subject to Special Conditions" in any Zoning District	✓			
Site Plans for "Principal Uses Permitted Subject to Special Approval" in any Zoning District.		✓		
PUD Qualification	✓			
PUD Plan Approval	✓	✓		✓
Site Plans within an Approved PUD	✓			
Plats:				
Tentative Approval	✓	✓		
Final Preliminary Plat Approval			✓	
Final Plat Approval			✓	
Site Condominium Plans:				
Tentative Approval	✓	✓		
Final Preliminary Plan Approval			✓	
Final Plan Approval			✓	

DRAFT MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING
MAY 21, 2026

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN
MAY 21, 2026 7:30 P.M.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER
The Planning Commission Regular Meeting was called to order by Chair Lindquist at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners present:	Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Lindquist, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet, Ware
Commissioners Absent:	None
Others Present:	City Planner Mulville-Friel, Staff Engineer Dawkins, City Attorney Schultz, Planning Consultant Auerbach (Carlisle Wortman)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTION by Stimson, support by Trafelet, to approve the agenda as published.
Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

REGULAR MEETING

A. SITE PLAN APPROVAL 69-11-2025

LOCATION:	**35080 Grand River Avenue**
PARCEL I.D.:	**22-23-21-351-031**
PROPOSAL:	**Redevelop a 6.8 acre site to establish a "Customer Experience Center" for used vehicle sales and purchases within the B-3, General Business District**
ACTION REQUESTED:	**Site Plan Approval**
APPLICANT:	**Carvana, LLC (Brendan Weak, Authorized Representative)**
OWNER:	**R S Grand River LLC**

Planner review
Referencing the May 12, 2026 Carlisle Wortman Site Plan Review, Planning Consultant Auerbach gave the background and review for this request for site plan approval to redevelop a 6.8 acre site located north of Grand River Avenue and East of Drake Road, to establish a Carvana "Customer Experience Center". The site was previously used as an auto dealership that had two principal buildings with interior sales space, service bays, and storage areas.

Carvana primarily sells vehicles online, and the center would be used to deliver vehicles that were sold online to customers. There would also be minor vehicle detailing and receiving of trade-ins and returns on site.

Planning Consultant Auerbach made the following points:
- 80-100 vehicles will be stored on site at a time.
- Facility hours of operation will be 7:00am-9:00pm.
- Public hours of operation will vary.
- There will be 30-40 staff and three managers on site.

- On site detailing will consist of cleaning, rinsing, inspections, and minor equipment adjustments.
- The western building is approximately 28,600 square feet, and previously contained a showroom, service bays, and a washing area.
- The eastern building is approximately 7,500 square feet, and previously was used as office storage and additional service space.
- The northern portion of the site contains a gravel section with a small telecommunications building that is in use and will remain.
- The site is zoned B-3 General Business. The property to the north of the site is zoned B-3 General Business, but the northernmost portion of the site abuts property that is zoned L-1 Light Industrial. The property to the east of the site is zoned L-1 Light Industrial; property to the west is zoned B-3 General Business.
- The uses to the east of the site include an indoor recreation facility, a dance school, and smaller commercial establishments. North of the site is a stormwater retention pond that serves the site and adjacent properties. The property to the west contains a McDonalds. South of the site is Grand River Avenue and the City of Farmington.
- The site configuration will remain largely unchanged. Parking lot islands will be added around the perimeter of the building that will define parking bays and drive aisles within the site. Parking bays along the western lot line will add separation between the parking lot and the lot line and will accommodate additional landscaping.
- The site is accessible by one divided driveway from Grand River Avenue and an existing cross-access drive from the McDonald's on the southern property line.
- There is a cross-access easement along the western lot line that does not appear traveled.
- There is an access easement from the driveway on Grand River Avenue to the telecommunications building.

Planning Consultant Auerbach explained that the primary consideration for the Commission was to determine whether the proposed use was permitted in the B-3 General Business district. Some automotive sales related use categories are permitted in the District including a new or used car sales room, show room, or office when the main use is carried on within a building with an open air display of vehicles as an accessory; and outdoor space for the sale or rental of new or used motor vehicles, trailers, mobile homes, boats, recreation vehicles, and similar products.

The proposed use differs from traditional auto sales establishments because at traditional auto sales establishments, customers browse and purchase cars on site, and Carvana customers browse and purchase cars online.

An additional use category permitted in the B-3 General Business district allows other commercial uses that are similar to and no more objectionable character than other uses permitted in the district. The Commission should determine whether the proposed use land impact would be comparable to permitted uses, particularly auto sales related uses, including whether the typical number of vehicles stored on site and the onsite operations are comparable to permitted uses.

The primary difference between the proposed use and traditional auto sales establishments is the online sales activity, but the functionality of the site is similar to traditional auto sales establishments.

The Commission could consider characteristics used to evaluate traditional auto sales establishments including traffic, trip generation, noise, and lighting. The Commission could impose conditions as part of approval to ensure that the use remains consistent with their findings, including a condition to prevent the site from being used for intensive auto repairs.

The previous auto dealership had auto repair stalls and registered underground tanks associated with auto repair on site. The applicant has indicated that the intensive auto repair facilities will be closed and removed in accordance with State requirements.

A condition as part of approval would ensure that future intensive auto repair facilities would require a special land use review.

Planning Consultant Auerbach recommended making a condition as part of approval that limited the number of vehicles on site to the amount proposed by the applicant, and specify that no outdoor storage is allowed in the required setbacks or off site, to ensure compliance with ordinance requirements.

Planning Consultant Auerbach explained that the site plan designates how different parking spaces will be used. Parking areas will be dedicated to customer parking adjacent to the western building, employee parking areas, and inventory. Inventory cannot be displayed within a required setback.

Existing onsite parking spaces encroach into a side yard setback. Additional landscape islands along the western lot line will add the additional required separation.

Because the number of required parking spaces for an auto dealership is based on the usable sales room floor area and the number of auto service stalls, which are not detailed in the site plan, the number of required parking spaces cannot be determined. There will be roughly 302 parking spaces on site which are anticipated to meet ordinance requirement.

Fifteen parking spaces in the northeast corner of the site will be extended and dedicated for single car haulers. The applicant should more fully describe what this entails.

The ordinance requires loading spaces to be provided in the rear yard, but the Commission has the discretion to allow loading spaces in a side yard if there are practical limitations that prevent loading spaces from being located in a rear yard, as long as the loading spaces are adequately screened. The proposed loading spaces location is between the two existing buildings and is set back significantly from the Grand River Avenue right-of-way, and appears to be sufficiently screened and set back.

Planning Consultant Auerbach noted that the Commission might want to consider whether the proposed tractor-trailer turning area is adequate.

A required pedestrian connection to the right-of-way was not shown on the plan. The ordinance allows the Commission to waive the connection requirement if there are practicality issues with providing the connection or the Commission determines that the connection would not be utilized.

The proposed plan generally meets ordinance landscaping requirements. Parking lot islands with canopy trees will be added around the building perimeters. 57 trees are required and 58 are provided, including 8 existing trees. The applicant has provided smaller shrub vegetation along the Grand River Avenue right-of-way, and the proposed varieties meet the ordinance's height and spacing requirements.

The applicant provided an inventory of the existing trees. Seven existing trees will be removed, including some invasive species. No landmark trees will be removed.

Lighting will include 10 building-mounted fixtures between 10'-20' in height. The applicant will utilize 22 existing light poles, and fixtures will be mounted between 22'-26' in height. The proposed fixtures meet the ordinance's maximum height requirements, but there are some deviations relative to the lighting plan, and additional lighting plan updates need to be submitted.

Deviations include illumination levels that exceed the maximum level permitted along the lot line in several locations. The maximum illumination level on the western lot line is approximately 4.8 foot candles. The maximum illumination level on the southern lot line is approximately 1.8 foot candles. The maximum illumination level on the eastern lot line is approximately 3.2 foot candles. The maximum illumination level permitted by the ordinance is 0.3 foot candles, but the Commission can allow greater illumination if it provides a public safety benefit.

Planning Consultant Auerbach explained that the ordinance requires any existing building to be brought into compliance with design requirements if there are exterior facade modifications beyond a one-for-one replacement of windows and doors. The applicant's narrative states that they will perform a facelift, but does not clarify the extent of exterior modifications. If the modifications require that the buildings be brought into compliance, some waivers would be required including for exterior material requirements for facades facing a public right-of-way, and requirements for fenestration visible from the right-of-way. There are insufficient elevation details to evaluate necessary waivers at this time.

The site is located in a special planning area where public art is required for projects with a cost of $2 million or greater. The estimate for the proposed site plan is approximately $400,000, and public art will not be required.

Commissioner questions
Commissioner Mantey raised concerns that lighting from the site previously illuminated the apartments across the street.

In response to questions from Commissioner Mantey, Planning Consultant Auerbach acknowledged that illumination levels had been calculated and not measured. If a waiver was not granted, staff could perform a zoning compliance inspection and measure illumination levels. Additionally, if a waiver was not granted, the applicant would need to submit an updated lighting plan that demonstrates compliance with the ordinance. Planning Consultant Auerbach added that the lighting plan did not include shielding specifications.

In response to a question from Commissioner Ware, Planning Consultant Auerbach explained that the proposed use was different enough from a traditional dealership to require a site plan review, and the

Commission could determine whether the proposed use should be permitted as a car sales use or as a similar use.

Commissioner Ware noted that many car sales begin online, and traditional dealerships were operating similar to the Carvana sales model.

City Attorney Schultz explained that if the Commission determined that the proposed use met the definition of an auto dealership, or was similar enough to a traditional dealership to meet the similar use requirement, then the proposed use would be regulated the same as a traditional dealership.

Chair Lindquist asked why lighting would be required after business hours if there are no on site sales.

Commissioner Stimson agreed that online car sales were the norm, and that Carvana was similar to other auto dealerships. A kiosk could be used for onsite browsing, but a kiosk would still be an online process.

City Attorney Schultz clarified that the Commission had to determine whether the proposed use was permitted by the zoning ordinance before considering the details of the site plan.

Commissioner Countegan suggested that the existing ordinance language might need to be updated to reflect current market conditions.

Commissioner Brickner noted that the existing buildings were built prior to current ordinance requirements, and the Commission should consider whether current ordinance requirements were met including lighting, dumpster enclosures, ADA parking, and rooftop screening requirements.

Planning Consultant Auerbach pointed out that the intent of the ordinance was to allow legal existing nonconformities to continue but to encourage the gradual elimination of nonconformities over time, whenever a site plan review is required.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mantey, City Attorney Schultz clarified that approval conditions would ensure the approved use would not change or expand in the future.

Applicant presentation
Attorney Dennis Cowan PC, 2716 Trafford, Royal Oak, was present on behalf of this application for site plan review. Project Manager Emily Garcia, Carvana; and Project Engineer Jamie Antoniewicz, Atwell, were also present.

Mr. Cowan made the following points:

- Carvana chose the site because of its size, former use as a car dealership, accessibility, ample parking, and a large existing building that will be used to prep vehicles before pick-up or delivery.
- The site would not have a Carvana tower.
- The applicant believed the use met the definition of the ordinance as a used car operation with an office, with a main use carried on within the building consisting of vehicle preparation and

transaction completion, and with the open-air display of vehicles consisting of vehicles stored on a temporary basis.

- The proposed use was a similar commercial use to uses permitted in the district and was not of a more objectionable nature, with no body repair, spray painting, car sales, mechanics, diagnostic testing, muffler repair, or oil changes on site. The proposed use would produce less noise and traffic, less odor, and be more environmentally safe than a traditional dealership. Cars that were received as a trade-in would be removed from the site and taken to a reconditioning and repair hub in Flint.
- Carvana would look like a car dealership, and most people would call Carvana a car dealership.
- Carvana did not have any issues with the proposed conditions, except that they asked that there would not be a restriction to the number of vehicles on the site. The 80-100 vehicle estimate in the submittal documents was informational and an average amount. The maximum amount could spike. Analysis showed that about 200 spaces would be available for cars, and the applicant would like to be able to utilize all of the available spaces when necessary. The number of available spaces was one reason that the site was chosen.
- There would not be a change to the footprint of the two existing buildings. Carvana would only use the main building at this time. Carvana is aware that any future use of the smaller building would require Planning Commission review.
- The cost of site improvements was about $400,000 and was not within the public art requirement.
- There were no underground tanks on the site, and the above-ground storage tanks had been removed. The existing hoists were above ground only, and were also going to be removed. There is no existing car wash equipment.

Mr. Antoniewicz, Atwell, made the following points:

- Few changes were required to make the site operational, and additional parking lot islands and landscaping would bring the site more into compliance. There are mature trees on the southwest corner of the entrance. The applicant will plant trees in the southeast portion of the site.
- The applicant was requesting operational lighting. The site was surrounded by commercial property, and the existing light pole locations made meeting light level requirements at the property line difficult. Carvana requested consideration for light levels that exceeded the requirements. There would not be spotlights on the apartments. Existing pole-mounted floodlights would be removed from the site.
- Lighting will be reduced to 70% during non-operational hours, and facade lighting will be turned off. Some lighting will remain on for safety and security.
- The existing rooftop mechanical units were not observable from Grand River Avenue, and the applicant requested consideration for the screening requirement.
- A facelift of the building would include painting and repairs as needed, including the possibility of replacing some stairs, but the building configuration would remain unchanged.

In response to a question from Chair Lindquist, Ms. Garcia said the cost of the facelift was not yet known. Chair Lindquist pointed out that the cost of the facelift and the cost of exterior work on the second building should be added to the cost of the project for consideration of the public art requirement.

Commissioner questions
In response to questions from the Commission, the applicant team gave the following further information:

- Operational hours in the documentation would be the maximum number of hours, but there might be flexibility in hours of operation throughout the year. Site lighting was needed for employees managing inventory. Reduced lighting during non-operational hours was needed for security purposes.
- Inventory would typically range from 100-200 vehicles.
- Operational hours were 7:00am-9:00pm and public hours were 8:00am-9:00pm.
- The increased inventory estimate of 100-200 vehicles allowed for an increase in business and matched potential storage.
- The proposed location of the turning area for multi-vehicle delivery vehicles was based on limitations of the site, including the turning radius around the building.
- The average of 80-100 vehicles would be moved within 24 to 72 hours, requiring 4-6 multi-vehicle delivery vehicle trips on site per day. This estimate was similar to multi-vehicle delivery vehicle trips at traditional dealerships.
- New signage was proposed but not shown on the elevations. The applicant would apply for a sign permit separately.
- Carvana was requesting that a loading area be allowed in a side yard and was also requesting that the proposed illumination levels be approved.
- The site plan did not include a pedestrian connection because they felt a pedestrian connection was not needed, but they were open to input about including a pedestrian connection.
- Carvana was asking for consideration of the existing building materials, and asking for relief from adding additional rooftop screening.
- As stated, the project cost was below the public art requirement.
- The dumpster would be screened.
- In response to a question from Commissioner Mantey, Mr. Antoniewicz said the applicant was requesting that ADA parking would not be required at the unused building.
- There were 300 parking spaces on site. The applicant estimated that 100 parking spaces would be used by customers, employees, and vendors; and proposed using the remaining 200 parking spaces for inventory.

Planning Consultant Auerbach said the Commission could determine that there are not sufficient changes to warrant additional rooftop screening, and that no additional screening is required.

A condition limiting vehicle storage was proposed for the Commission's deliberation. However, the site plan itself could be considered as an adequate record of the number of parking spaces. The applicant would be limited to the approved number of parking spaces by default and could not store inventory in the setback.

Commissioner Countegan noted that a decision to consider the proposed use as a dealership could lead to updating the ordinance to reflect the current market, and was simpler than a decision to consider the proposed use as a similar use, which required justification. Commissioner Mantey agreed that other car dealerships operated similarly to Carvana.

Chair Lindquist noted that a traditional dealership would not have a limit on inventory, but would be limited by the number of parking spaces they were required to have.

Planning Consultant Auerbach said the site plan designated 50 parking spaces for employees and 15 parking spaces for customers, which met the ordinance requirement. The site plan allowed up to 235 parking spaces for inventory.

In response to a question from Commissioner Ware, Planning Consultant Auerbach said that a parking spaces use condition was proposed for consideration if the Commission determined that the proposed use was not a traditional dealership. A parking spaces use analysis was important if the use were considered similar to an auto dealership, in order to answer questions such regarding where customers and employees would park.

> In response to a question from Chair Lindquist, Ms. Garcia said that auto sales sold through the site would be Farmington Hills revenue generating sales.

In response to a question from Commissioner Brickner, City Attorney Schultz said the Commission reviews the plan to determine whether there is sufficient parking, and whether the plan meets ordinance requirements, including customer and employee parking.

Planning Consultant Auerbach suggested adding a determination to the motion that handicapped parking spaces adjacent to the east building are not required until a use is permitted for that building.

Motion by Stimson, support by Countegan to grant preliminary site plan approval for the Carvana SP 69-11-2025 proposal based on the information provided by the applicants, the May 12, 2026 Carlisle/Wortman review letter, the May 8, 2026 City Engineer review letter, the May 1, 2026 Fire Marshal review letter, and the findings that the proposal meets the requirements of Section 34-6.1 of the City of Farmington Hills Zoning Ordinance and applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements subject to the following:

- *Use Determination*
  The proposed use qualifies as an outdoor display for sale or rental of new or used motor vehicles, trailers, mobile homes, boats, recreation vehicles, or other similar products.
- *Loading Space*
  The loading space may be permitted in the side yard as proposed. Site conditions limit the space available in the rear yard, and the side yard location is adequately set back and screened from the street.
- *Illumination Levels*
  The applicant must submit a revised lighting plan that demonstrates compliance with the 0.3 footcandle property line illumination limit. Additional illumination does not provide public safety benefits and may be a nuisance to drivers and adjacent properties.
- *Pedestrian Connection*
  The required pedestrian connection must be provided. The applicant has not demonstrated that it is impractical to provide the connection.
- *Design Requirements*

Provided that no significant façade modifications beyond one-for-one window replacements are proposed, the buildings do not need to be brought into compliance with Section 34-5.20 design requirements.

This approval is subject to the following conditions and determinations, based upon the Commission's finding that the proposed use is a new or used car dealership:

- No inoperable, damaged, wrecked, or visibly derelict vehicles will be stored on site.
- Vehicle carrier unloading will only take place in the approved side loading area; no unloading/staging in Grand River, drive aisles, or required setbacks is permitted.
- No outdoor display/storage of inventory is permitted in required setbacks.
- All items identified in the May 12, 2026 Carlisle/Wortman review letter shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Planner.
- All items identified in the May 8, 2026 City Engineer review letter shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the City Engineer.
- All items identified in the May 1, 2026 Fire Marshal review letter shall be addressed to the reasonable satisfaction of the Fire Marshal.
- Additional rooftop screening is not required.
- Handicapped parking spaces adjacent to the east building are not required until a use is permitted for that building.

Commissioner discussion

Commissioner Grant noted concerns about the accuracy of the applicant's estimated costs. Commissioner Mantey agreed with those concerns, noting that the public art requirement should be enforced if the City was able to identify an increased value of $2 million.

Chair Lindquist felt strongly that a condition that "no body work, painting, collision repair, engine rebuilding, mechanical repair, or major reconditioning will be conducted" should be included in the motion. Commissioner Countegan observed that the condition was not relevant to the determined use. Commissioner Ware said that a business should not be prevented from doing what's normal for their type of business.

Chair Lindquist argued that the applicant does not call the site a dealership, and that the applicant has stated that they would not be doing the activities listed in the condition. The condition was important to establish the new model type of dealership described by the applicants as a sales center only, and not a repair center.

Commissioner Countegan noted that the Commission was making a use determination that the use was a car dealership, with knowledge of the applicant's site plan, and determining that the requirements of a car dealership applied. Commissioner Brickner said that if there was a distinction between the applicant's and a traditional dealership under the ordinance, then the condition would be necessary. However, the Commission was determining that the use was a car dealership.

City Planner Mulville-Friel explained that auto repair is considered an incidental accessory use for a traditional car dealership. However, a use such as a spray booth would require special approval because of the potential nuisance hazard, according to the ordinance.

City Attorney Schultz said that under the motion as stated, conditions were not necessary to make a distinction between the applicant and a traditional dealership under the ordinance. He did not have concerns about the motion as stated.

Commissioner Bricker raised the possibility of preventing the applicant from doing engine repairs and mechanical repairs in the future. Commissioner Stimson said that the applicant should be treated like an auto dealership. City Planner Mulville-Friel added that a site plan change would require City approval.

Commissioner Ware was concerned that the Commission would restrict the applicant's ability to manage their own business.

Chair Lindquist noted the difference between the Carvana proposal and traditional dealerships, and observed that conditioning the motion, and limiting future environmentally unfriendly practices, would be more desirable than the motion on the table.

Commissioner Countegan noted that the Commission had been asked to determine whether the applicant was a car dealership. He felt the project was a dealership and that dealerships were a good investment in the community; the property was a dealership in the past and probably would be again in the future; and that the property should have more flexibility going forward to adapt to refinements and improvements.

Chair Lindquist said he was supportive of the applicant's business model, and that the Commission should use the opportunity to establish a new type of model by including the condition that "no body work, painting, collision repair, engine rebuilding, mechanical repair, or major reconditioning will be conducted."

Commissioner Grant said she would not support the motion without condition referenced by Chair Lindquist.

Roll call vote:

Brickner	**yes**
Countegan	**yes**
Grant	**no**
Lindquist	**no**
Mantey	**yes**
Stimson	**yes**
Trafelet	**yes**
Ware	**yes**

Motion passed 6-2.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES **April 16, 2026**

MOTION by Grant, support by Ware, to approve the April 16, 2026 meeting minutes as submitted. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None.

COMMISSIONER/STAFF COMMENTS
City Planner Mulville-Friel said there would be a special study meeting to discuss site plan review, text amendments, and the zoning ordinance audit, at 6pm on June 20.

Planning Consultant Auerbach noted that a Washington Township ordinance addressing High Energy Intensive Development (HEID) that was included in the meeting packet was being shared with multiple communities as an example.

ADJOURNMENT
MOTION by Brickner, support by Mantey, to adjourn the meeting.
Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting ended at 9:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tanji Grant
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem