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City of Farmington Hills Selected to Receive Nearly \$850,000 in Grants to Improve Parks, Recreation and Crosswalks

A majority of the grant funding will support the creation of an adaptive playground and improve accessible parking at Heritage Park

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich. (Jan. 22, 2026) – Safer crosswalks and an adaptive playground are among the improvements expected in Farmington Hills after the City was selected to receive nearly \$850,000 in grant funding. Securing this grant funding reinforces the City's reputation for fiscal responsibility and its dedication to bringing improvements to the community while limiting the burden on taxpayers.

“The City of Farmington Hills team is always looking for ways to further enhance the high quality of life that community members experience and deserve,” said Acting City Manager Karen Mondora. “I am proud of them for seeking out and securing these funds to make the Farmington Hills community safer and more inclusive for everyone who lives, works and visits.”

Funding for Parks and Recreation

The Farmington Hills Special Services Department, which manages the City's extensive roster of parks and recreational programming and venues, was recently recommended for approval to receive a \$500,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund development grant to improve the playground and parking in Heritage Park. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) made the recommendation for the City to benefit from the grant program, which is administered by the United States Department of Interior's National Park Service (NPS) and implemented by the MDNR. Farmington Hills was among 13 communities recommended for the grant statewide.

As laid out in the City's five-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan for 2024-2028, the City's goal is to create an adaptive playground and improve accessibility of parking in Heritage Park, which is visited by more than 750,000 guests annually. Approximately \$700,000 from the City's parks millage will also be earmarked for these improvements, for a total investment of nearly \$1.2 million.

Construction on the new playground and improved parking lot is expected to begin in the 2026/2027 fiscal year. A design for the playground has not been finalized, and the Special

Services Department plans to consider community input on desired features prior to starting construction. The City has entered a preliminary interlocal agreement with Oakland County Parks to support additional investment in Heritage Park.

The City's Special Services Department also secured \$20,000 from Mercedes Benz Financial Services (MBFS) toward nature education. Of that, \$18,000 will be used to fund nature education pods and interpretive signs along The Hawk Nature Trail on the campus of The Hawk, the City's award-winning arts and recreation venue on 12 Mile Road. The pods will be areas along The Hawk Nature Trail that encourage outdoor, hands-on learning by teaching community members about the natural world through information about sustainability and the environment. This work is expected to be completed in the summer of 2026.

The remaining \$2,000 from MBFS will be used to fund school field trips to the Farmington Hills Nature Center through Farmington Hills Nature Center Environmental Education Field Trip Scholarships. The scholarships will cover the cost of transportation from school to Heritage Park and/or the educational programming once students arrive. This portion of the grant is estimated to support nature education for approximately 300 students in one school year. School groups interested in applying for a scholarship can contact the Farmington Hills Nature Center at (248) 473-1870 for more information.

MBFS has been a long-time supporter of parks and recreation in Farmington Hills through their contributions to Farmington Hills Friends of the Parks. Past contributions have supported several Special Services programs and initiatives, including construction of The Hawk Nature Trail and funding field trips to the Farmington Hills Nature Center. MBFS also sponsored the City's Free Summer Concert Series for several years.

The Cultural Arts Division was also recently selected to receive a \$1,000 grant from the Farmington & Farmington Hills Foundation for Youth & Families. The funding will support the Rock Around The Hawk. This award-winning program is a free drop-in event for little ones, ages 18-months to five-years-old, and their caregivers that exposes families to music, art and other cultural activities. One Friday morning each month, The Hawk Theatre's Black Box transforms into a magical, musical experience that lightheartedly pays homage to unique global music festivals and cultural institutions with age-appropriate themes, activities, crafts, music and dancing. The Farmington & Farmington Hills Foundation for Youth & Families has supported the program for several years.

The City of Farmington Hills Special Services Department prides itself on offering recreational programming for people of all ages, interests and abilities. The Special Services Department manages over 600 acres of parks, including 90 athletic fields and over six miles of walking and hiking trails. The Department also operates the City's recreation and arts venues, including The Hawk, the Costick Activities Center, the Farmington Hills Golf Club, Farmington Hills Ice Arena and more, as well as several historic buildings in Heritage Park.

Funding for Crosswalk Improvements

The Farmington Hills Public Services Department, which manages local roads, was selected to receive \$325,000 through Southeast Michigan Council of Government's Safe Streets Now grant program. The program distributes millions of dollars in federal Transportation Alternative Program funds to local transportation programs. The City will use the funds to improve

pedestrian crossings at six locations across Farmington Hills. Most of the selected locations are marked as crosswalks and are near schools, but do not include signals. The City plans to add flashing lights to make crossing at these locations safer.

Locations selected for these improvements include: 14 Mile Road east of Northwestern Highway near Warner Middle School, Farmington Road at Tulipwood Road near STEAM Academy and the Farmington Family YMCA, 11 Mile Road at Old Homestead Drive and Drake Road at Howard Road in the area of Hillside Elementary, and Shiawassee Street at Tuck Road near Visions Unlimited. Funds will also be used to improve the sidewalks at Nine Mile Road at Wittington Street, where sidewalks are currently insufficient for non-motorized transportation. These locations see approximately 2,800-14,600 vehicles per day, dependent on the classification of the road. This funding is expected to be available to the City in 2028, at which time the crosswalk improvements are expected to begin.

The City of Farmington Hills Public Services Department oversees engineering, public works, public services and building maintenance. The Public Services Department provides the essential civil infrastructure that keeps the City running, including roads, water, sewer, solid waste removal and recycling. This includes essential road maintenance, like plowing and salting local roads in the winter, and clearing fallen trees in City rights-of-way.

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About the City of Farmington Hills

The City of Farmington Hills is a place where everyone is welcome. Founded in 1973, it is one of the largest communities in Oakland County. Farmington Hills is home to more than 83,000 residents who speak more than 60 languages, and more than 75 Fortune 500 businesses, including multinational corporations like Nissan and Bosch. The City is routinely recognized as one of the safest cities of its size and is known for its extensive amenities, including over 600 acres of parks, 90 athletic fields, six miles of hiking and walking trails, the Farmington Hills Golf Club, and an Ice Arena. Farmington Hills is also home to The Hawk, an award-winning, approximately 270,000-square-foot recreation and arts venue, which includes The Hawk Theatre and The Hawk Makerspace. For more information, visit www.fhgov.com.

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Note for reporters: Although the Cities of Farmington Hills and Farmington share similar names and are both communities in Oakland County, they are two distinct and separate cities. Farmington Hills is the larger of the two, both in population and size. Farmington is a historic city with its own unique governance and community. Please be sure to differentiate between the two cities in your reporting to avoid confusion.