

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD  
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN  
JANUARY 23, 2025, 6:00 P.M.**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

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

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners Present: Aspinall (left 7:19pm), Brickner, Countegan, Grant, Mantey, Stimson, Trafelet, Varga, Ware

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present: Staff Planner Canty; Central Services Director Aranowski, IT Manager Lee; Acting Police Chief Piggot; Fire Chief Unruh, Deputy Fire Chief Olszewski; Special Services Director Schnackel, Special Services Deputy Director Farmer; Public Services Director Rushlow, DPW Superintendent Schueller; Secretary to the Planning and Community Development Director LaBelle

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION by Grant, support by Brickner, to approve the agenda as published.  
Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**REGULAR MEETING:**

**A. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN (CIP) 2025/2026 THROUGH 2030 – 2031**

ACTION REQUESTED: Set for Public Hearing

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

Department Directors reviewed the capital improvement accomplishments of the 2024/2025 year and laid out their desired capital projects for 2025/2026. A complete detail of the information is provided in the Capital Improvements Plan 2025/2026 - 2030/2031, which after approval will be available at the City Manager's Office.

The following minutes provide a short summary of 2025/2026 requests by department.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Acting Police Chief Piggott was present on behalf of the Police Department, and he reviewed in detail the accomplishments of the 2024/2025 year as listed in the CIP document.

2025/2026 requests include:

1. Laptop computers/technology upgrade: \$61,000.  
Department utilizes CJIS (Criminal Justice Information System) complaint laptop computers for investigators working the field. The current computers and tablets are unable to run the Windows 11 operating system which is now required to access all CLEMIS websites and applications. Department seeks to replace 15 Dell laptop computers and 2 Dell tablets.
2. Workstations/Office Furniture: \$173,000  
The Department's offices are outdated, with furniture dating back to 1987 and 1997. The design no longer accommodates the added officers or modern technology, leading to power issues and reduced collaboration. The spaces also lack secure storage for sensitive information. The proposal is to replace all office furniture.
3. Mobile Command Post: \$550,000.  
Mobile Command Post has been in service for 25 and needs replacement due to mechanical failures and outdated technology. DPW has assessed as not being roadworthy.

Discussion:

In response to questions, Acting Police Chief Piggott provided the following information:

- The Department is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest municipal police department in the state.
- Statistics regarding pedestrian and bicycle accidents can be provided.
- New data analyst position has been created and an experienced analyst has been hired.
- Women's locker room expansion (currently ongoing) should be complete within the next month or so.
- The Department does not have an electric vehicle.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Fire Chief Unruh and Deputy Fire Chief Olszewski were present on behalf of the Fire Department. Chief Unruh reviewed in detail the accomplishments of the 2024/2025 year as listed in the CIP document:

- A new fire engine, costing just over \$1 million, is in production, with delivery expected in late spring or early summer.
- An electric fire truck is not considered viable due to its high cost of \$3.8 million.
- The Department has received a utility vehicle and ballistic protection equipment.
- Fire Department was awarded a State funded grant in the amount of \$3,000,000 for the redesign and construction of Fire Headquarters to add an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This project is in the bidding phase, with construction expected to begin in late spring or early summer.
- The Department plans to move its headquarters to a temporary location (12-months) at The Hawk in the meantime.

2025/2026 Fire Equipment and Apparatus requests include:

- \$435,000 ambulance to replace an old unit. Build time is 23 months.
- \$75,000 utility vehicle replacement; the Department replaces one per year.
- \$170,000 for mobile computers and equipment
- \$250,000 construction contingency, building improvements, and OSHA requirements.

- \$70,000 fire engine refurbishment.

Discussion:

- 2024 was the Department's busiest year, with 12,899 runs. The Department is the second busiest in Oakland County.
- Each fire station has an ambulance and a fire truck. Ladder trucks are located at the Nine Mile and Drake (#4) and the Middlebelt (#2) stations. The ladder trucks are frequently used for mutual aid runs.
- The Department has 35 part-time and 73 full-time fire fighters. The Department is currently working with a consultant in order to provide clarity regarding the future vision for the Department, including what will be needed in terms of future staffing.

**TECHNOLOGY**

Director of Central Services Aranowski, and IT Manager Lee were present on behalf of the Central Services Department. Director Aranowski reviewed in detail the accomplishments of the 2024/2025 year as listed in the CIP document.

2025/2026 Capital project requests include:

1. City-wide technology:
  - Personal Computer & Notebook replacements for 300+ end users to accommodate Windows 11 continues.
  - Continued Implementation of Virtual Desktop & VPN functionality for various departments.
  - Infrastructure and software enhancements to support various departmental initiatives.
  - Continued upgrades to the network security infrastructure.
  - Implement communication system software and video for new EOC at Fire Department headquarters
2. Unified Communications and Smart Cities Projects
  - Video surveillance equipment: \$250,000 per year for years 2024/2025 through 2029/2030.
  - Smart Cities Projects: \$350,000 per year from 2025/2026 through 2030/2031.
3. ERP/Financial Software,
  - Initiated in February 2024. \$100,000 annual maintenance
  - New financial reporting, performance management and transparency software will require \$100,000 annual lease.
4. Enhanced security access at the Hawk, including 22 card readers to secure "employee only" offices, and 3 card readers on the third floor to provide secure access for temporary Fire Department headquarters.

Discussion:

- The Police Department's FLOCK security system (license plate reading and other tools) is completely separate from Central Services.
- Director Aranowski answered questions and clarified information about the 2025/2026 requests.

**Side Bar Discussion**

Commissioner Mantey advocated for including information regarding the SIFI fiber optic system being laid throughout the City. Even though this was being done at no cost to the City and therefore was not in

the CIP as a future project to be funded by the City, the CIP should mention this effort as a capital improvement for the residents.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Director of Special Services Schnackel and Deputy Director Farmer were present on behalf of the Parks and Recreation division. Director Schnackel reviewed in detail accomplishments of the 2024/2025 year as listed in the CIP document.

2025/2026 and beyond requests include:

1. The HAWK updates - \$16,000,000 over 6 years (see page 29 of the CIP document) .
2. 2025/2026 vehicles, equipment, and infrastructure - \$2,123,000 (see page 30 of the CIP document), with further amounts and projects listed out to 2030/2031.
3. Acquisition of Park Land - \$1,500,000
4. Costick Center/Senior Center - \$20,000,000

Discussion:

- Commission Mantey encouraged Public Services to use EV vehicles when possible.
- It was noted the old Boys & Girls Republic property at 28000 W. 9 Mile Road was still vacant and for sale. This property would make a great public park.
- The recording studio at The Hawk, as well as the repurposed classrooms, could include such activities as podcast studios, and music lessons such as piano lessons.
- Discussion focused on the cost of repairs for the Costick Center, and the options for moving forward with that building or a completely new building.
- Commissioner Varga asked that competitive swim meet facilities be part of the future planning.
- Director Schnackel and Deputy Director Farmer responded to questions about current programs and projects in the Department.

### **Sidebar discussion:**

The Commission discussed the county-owned detention pond at 13 Mile and Farmington Roads, which right now is not maintained and is an eyesore. Perhaps the area outside the fence could be used as a small recreation area with benches, for instance. A gauge could be used to measure the water that is in the basin over a period of time. In any event, the perimeter of the area needs to be landscaped and maintained.

### **PUBLIC SERVICES**

Public Services Director Rushlow and DPW Superintendent Schueller were present on behalf of the Public Services Department. Director Rushlow reviewed in detail accomplishments of the 2024/2025 year as listed in the CIP document.

2025/2026 proposed projects included:

Public Facilities

- DPW emergency power generator, \$810,000
- Fire Station #4 Parking Lot replacement \$1M
- Access management around PD parking lot, fuel station, west parking lot, \$1.8M
- City Hall parking lot permeable pavers replacements \$500,000

Drainage

- Grand River Ave and Haynes – MDOT, \$1M
- Storm sewer replacements in conjunction with road construction projects, \$2.5M

#### Sanitary Sewer

- CIPP lining program, \$2M (completed by WRC)
- Lift station improvements, \$500,000 (completed by WRC)

#### Water Main

- Kendallwood Subdivision #3 water main replacement, \$7M

#### Sidewalks

- Scottsdale North to 14 Mile Road, \$60,000
- Sidewalk installations in conjunction with road construction projects, \$300,000

#### Major Roads

- Halsted Road (12 Mile to 14 Mile), \$1.2M
- Folsom Road (9 Mile to Orchard Lake Road), \$4M
- Hallwood/Hallwod Court Industrial, \$1.3M

#### Local Roads

- Farm Meadows/Camelot Courts Subdivisions, Phase 1, \$7M
- Richland Gardens, Phase 1, \$5M
- Shady Ridge Drive Gravel Road Conversion, \$1M
- Pinebrook Estates (Elmhurst Avenue), \$1.3M
- Coventry (Scottsdale Road), \$1M
- Local road rehabilitation project candidates, \$5M

#### Discussion:

- Commissioners discussed the Citygate signate/landscaping at Orchard Lake Road and I-696, which was in last year's CIP, and which was moving forward.
- Commissioners discussed some of the history of the City relative to the infrastructure that has been installed, including the detention area at 13 Mile and Farmington Road, which was discussed earlier.

#### Regarding non-motorized pathways:

- Commissioner Mantey suggested that the section on Sidewalks (p. 53) decrease emphasis on the 2013 "point system" for sidewalk repair and installation and instead include language more aligned with the Master Plan regarding non-motorized pathways and sidewalks. The Master Plan is trying to create areas for people to gather, including areas where it may be possible to install the 10-foot sidewalks that qualify for federal funding.
- Regarding the Commission's past emphasis on sidewalk snow removal equipment, the consensus was not to include this as a line item this year, but to add language in the narrative about how important clear sidewalks are to a walkable community. The goal remains to target the 12 Mile and Orchard Lake area, and Grand River (particularly near any bus stops) for sidewalk snow removal. As stated in last year's CIP, people should not have to walk in the street when it snows – this was the opposite of walkability and accessibility.
- It was suggested that property owners be responsible for clearing their sidewalks, as was required in some nearby cities and townships.
- Commissioners discussed the Nine Mile Corridor effort, which seeks to bolster recreational opportunities and placemaking along the corridor and which includes multiple jurisdictions, including Farmington Hills, Farmington, Hazel Park, Ferndale, Southfield, and Oak Park. The group will be seeking state and federal funds for this project, which will include a non-motorized pathway

connecting the various municipalities.

- The CIP should state in its narrative the importance of adding covered structures to bus stops.

Edits, additions, and housekeeping items in the CIP included:

- As mentioned earlier, the SIFI fiber optics project could be acknowledged in the CIP as an important improvement project in the City.
- The CIP summary sheet on page 13 could be misleading to the public, who might think the totals represent a budget, or actual amounts spent, when the totals only represent estimates of what projects that are offered by the various departments will cost. The CIP is not a budget and all projects in the CIP will not be approved by City Council. It was suggested this summary be removed.
- The excel sheets (projects tables) need to be clearly titled.

After discussion and amendment, the following motion was offered:

**MOTION by Countegan, support by Varga, to set the Capital Improvements Plan 2025/2026 through 2030/2031 for Public Hearing for the Planning Commission's next available meeting agenda, with the following amendments:**

- **Remove chart on page 13**
- **Title the excel sheets**
- **In the section on sidewalks (p. 53) decrease emphasis or remove entirely the reference to the 2013 "point system" and instead include language more aligned with the Master Plan language regarding non-motorized pathways and sidewalks.**

**And**

**Add a narrative section entitled "*Planning Commission Priorities*", to include:**

- 1. The importance to a walkable city of clearing sidewalks in the winter, similar to the language discussed during the 2023 CIP review\*and emphasizing 12 Mile Road and Grand River, but without putting snow equipment in as a line item.**
- 2. The Planning Commission is supportive of the greater inter-community Nine Mile Corridor project, which includes a connector non-motorized pathway among several communities.**
- 3. Prioritize enclosed bus shelters, especially at those bus stops that are most heavily used.**
- 4. Reference the SIFI fiber optics project as the biggest infrastructure project going on in the City, emphasizing that the project is ongoing, authorized by City Council, will result in the City being more competitive, and that this \$72M project is occurring at no cost to the City.**

**Motion passed by voice vote.**

\*January 2023 MOTION:

MOTION by Grant, support by Varga, that based on community feedback during the ongoing Master Plan update process that there is a strong public desire to prioritize walkability, specifically during winter months, the Planning Commission recommends that:

- A line item of \$75,000 be allocated during the first year for sidewalk snow clearing and salting equipment, to be used along major roads, e.g., Grand River and 12 Mile Road, and
- That a paragraph be included in the CIP narrative noting this item has been added by the Planning Commission as a result of public input during the Master Plan update process.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS:**

None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION by Brickner, support by Varga, to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 pm.**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen Aspinall  
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem