

# MEMORANDUM



**TO:** PLANNING COMMISSION  
**FROM:** SRI RAVALI KOMARAGIRI, PLANNER  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
**SUBJECT:** FARMINGTON HILLS: GRAND RIVER CORRIDOR VISION  
PLAN REVIEW  
**DATE:** JULY 21, 2017

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The City of Farmington Hills has provided the City of Novi the opportunity to comment on their intent to adopt the Farmington/Farmington Hills Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) Grand River Corridor Vision Plan as a sub plan to the City's master plan as required by the State of Michigan Municipal Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008, as amended). Grand River Vision plan was originally adopted on August 22, 2013. The draft document, available [here](#), is proposed to be adopted as a sub plan to the City of Farmington Hills Master Plan.

The Grand River Improvement Authority homepage indicates the following regarding the current update process:

*Following the completion of a two-year grant funded feasibility process, the Cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills moved forward with a cooperative effort to revitalize the Grand River Corridor. In October 2011, both communities created a Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA). Through an inter-local agreement, these two Authorities were charged with the task of breathing new life into a Corridor that, despite its strengths, has seen decline and disinvestment.*

The City of Farmington Hills borders the City of Novi's east boundary between Eight Mile Road and Fourteen Mile Road. Farmington Hill is similar in physical size as of Novi (about 30 square miles), but is larger in population. The following table indicates the size of the cities compared to Novi

	City of Farmington	Farmington Hills	Novi
Households, 2011-2015	4,671	34,013	23,077
Population estimates, July 1, 2016,	10,514	81,129	59,211

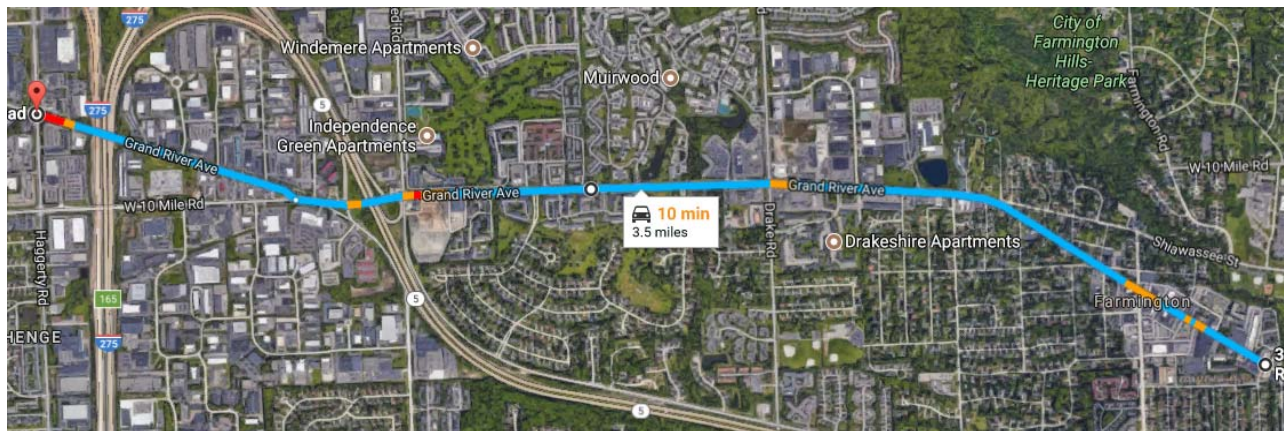
*Source: United States Census Bureau*

## PROJECT STUDY AREA AND EFFECTS ON NOVI

Haggerty Road acts as a line of separation between Farmington Hills and Novi. Grand River Corridor is one of the most influential and oldest thoroughfares in Southeast Michigan and it runs through Farmington and Novi. However, the project study area (page 7 of vision plan) stops at the intersection of Mayfield Street and Grand River Avenue in Farmington. There is an approximate 3.5 mile stretch along Grand River

Avenue in Farmington Hills which is not included in their project study area (see below). As part of 2016 Master Plan update (draft), Novi planning staff and consultants studied Grand River Corridor. Our study area included Grand River Corridor from Haggerty Road to Wixom Road.

Farmington Hills is preceding us in our efforts to improve Grand River Corridor. Even though there is a gap (see picture) between study boundaries of both cities, Novi's Planning Staff believes that the proposed Vision Plan will complement Novi's CIA plan in the future and will likely to have a positive impact on the City of Novi. It does not conflict with our goals or negatively impact the City of Novi's infrastructure. The Joint CIA performed an extensive outreach to gather public input. Novi staff supports their efforts.



Our Master plan draft update suggested creating a Corridor Improvement authority (CIA) as a funding mechanism for corridor improvements. Our assistant City Manager Victor Cardenas is currently heading up the steering committee consisting of staff and consultants to create a Grand River Corridor Improvement Plan and to establish the CIA.

## DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Their Vision plan suggests eight development principles (listed on page 43) such as community image and character, mobility, connections, redevelopment, neighborhood and housing, public space and sustainability that describe the desired direction of future growth. The principles serve as framework to implement the recommendations provided in the plan. The Vision plan also focuses on four focus areas (listed on page 55) that are selected by the task force as the best opportunities for redevelopment. Their vision statement is stated as follows:

*"The Grand River Corridor will provide a balance of land uses that will reinvigorate and enhance both the business and residential communities. A variety of developments will bring together combinations of shopping, living, working, and recreation in settings marked by distinctive architecture, public gathering areas, and transportation options."*

Our Master plan draft update suggested that the vision for the Grand River includes developing a cohesive corridor with an identity that is unique to Grand River Avenue as it traverses through the City of Novi. Grand River Corridor in Farmington and Novi are unique in nature with respect to the challenges and opportunities. There is a general overlap with certain non-motorized, community imaging such as gateways, public gathering spaces, a zoning overlay and redevelopment goals.

## **NOTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The chapter on implementation (page 78) lists their strategies in detail. Some of the strategies can be in alignment with our goals for our Corridor. Staff found a couple recommendations through the report that are interesting to note. They are listed below:

- **Future bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor**

Our Master plan draft update recommends the following

*“Work with Farmington, Farmington Hills, the Regional Transit Authority, and other communities and agencies to establish Grand River as a future bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor, plan appropriate transit stops based on the six identified activity corridors.”*

Their Vision plan identifies six locations for future BRT stops. It provides an opportunity for future collaboration as recommended by our update.

- **Road Diet**

Our staff found an interesting recommendation from their cursory transportation analysis of Grand River Avenue. The road diet is a relatively new and interesting concept.

*“Based on the results of the transportation analysis, it was determined that the feasibility of a road diet on Grand River Avenue should be further analyzed. By eliminating travel lanes on Grand River Avenue there is potential to gain additional Right of Way (ROW) for public use such as a bike lane, expanded streetscape, or other types of public space while generally maintaining an acceptable level of service. Narrowing the roadway would also likely help to reduce travel speeds and create a more human scaled environment throughout the Corridor”*

- **Development Incentives**

*“Allow for broader redevelopment of underutilized sites, considering incentives to motivate developers such as parking reductions, building height or density bonuses, or flexible non-conforming standards.”*

- **Community Imaging**

*“Create a streetscape design for the Corridor that includes concepts for the median and along the street edge, to help unify the Corridor. Traditional lighting, landscaping, public art, road design, non-motorized facilities and utility improvements should be incorporated.”*

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is the planning staff's recommendation that the Planning Commission authorize the Planning Commission Chair to send a letter to the City of Farmington Hills Planning Commission complimenting them on their proposed adoption of Grand River Corridor Vision Plan as a sub plan to the City's Master Plan amendments and state that their proposed Plan supports the City of Novi's Master Plan for Land Use (draft letter attached).

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions on this matter. Additional information on the process of developing the plan is available at:

<http://grandriver.fhgov.com/home.aspx>

Attachments



July 26, 2017

Grand River Corridor Vision Plan Draft  
City of Farmington Hills Planning Commission  
Attn: Mark Stec, City Planner  
31555 West Eleven Mile Road  
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

**CITY COUNCIL**

**Mayor**  
Bob Gatt

**Mayor Pro Tem**  
Dave Staudt

Andrew Mutch

Wayne Wrobel

Laura Marie Casey

Gwen Markham

Brian Burke

**City Manager**  
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248.347.0415  
248.735.5600 fax

**Planning Division**  
248.347.0475  
248.735-5633 fax

**Ordinance Enforcement  
Division**  
248.735.5678  
248.735.5600 fax

RE: Grand River Corridor Vision Plan as a subplan to City's master plan

Dear Mr. Topper:

The City of Novi Planning Commission has reviewed the *City of Farmington Hills's Grand River Corridor Vision Plan* which is proposed to be included as a sub plan to your Master Plan and the Commission has no objections to the plan as presented. Please consider the attached memo from planner, Sri Ravali Komaragiri dated July 21, 2017 as the Planning Commission's review of the matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposed update to your Master Plan.

Sincerely,

Mark Pehrson, Chairman  
City of Novi Planning Commission

Attachment

CC: Alexandria Stankovich, Senior Planner  
Oakland County Planning

**City of Novi**  
45175 Ten Mile Road  
Novi, Michigan 48375

cityofnovi.org



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

June 28, 2017

Mark Pehrson, Planning Commission Chair  
C/O Charles Boulard, Community Development Director  
City of Novi Community Development Department  
45175 Ten Mile Road  
Novi, MI 48375

**RE: Notice of intent to adopt the Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority's *Grand River Corridor Vision Plan* as a subplan to the City's Master Plan**

Dear Mr. Pehrson,

Pursuant to the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008, as amended), this letter is sent to inform you of The City of Farmington Hills' intent to adopt the Farmington/Farmington Hills Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) *Grand River Corridor Vision Plan* as a subplan to the City's master plan. Please find a copy of the vision plan enclosed via CD. Pursuant to the requirements of the Act, we are requesting your review and comment in advance of the City of Farmington Hills Planning Commission Public Hearing (tentatively scheduled to be held in August, 2017).

If you would like to provide comments on the proposed adoption of the vision plan as a subplan to the master plan, please submit them within 42 days of this mailing (by August 9, 2017). The City intends not to provide any further notice or copies of the subplan unless requested. If you wish to receive a hardcopy of the plan please submit a request via email to [mstec@fhgov.com](mailto:mstec@fhgov.com). The vision plan in its entirety, as well as additional information on the process that went into developing the plan, is also available for viewing and download through the CIA website at <http://grandriver.fhgov.com/>.

Please submit comments to:

City of Farmington Hills Planning Commission  
Attn: Mark Stec, City Planner  
31555 West Eleven Mile Road  
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and consideration of the adoption of the vision plan as part of our City's Master Plan. Please feel free to contact me at (248)871-2544 or the aforementioned email address if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Stec".

Mark Stec  
City Planner

Enclosure

**RECEIVED**

**JUN 30 2017**

**CITY OF NOVI  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Administration 248.871.2550 248.871.2521 Fax	Building Division 248.871.2450 248.871.2451 Fax	Community Development 248.871.2543 248.871.2521 Fax	Planning Office 248.871.2540 248.871.2521 Fax	Zoning and Code Enforcement 248.871.2520 248.871.2521 Fax
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July 12, 2017

Cortney Hanson, Clerk  
City of Novi  
45175 W Ten Mile Rd  
Novi, MI 48375

Dear Ms. Hanson:

According to Farmington Hills, they sent you copy of the **Grand River Corridor Vision Plan (County Code Master Plan No. 17-06)**, a proposed amendment to the existing Farmington Hills Master Plan, for review and comment. Under the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, neighboring communities, utilities, and Oakland County have 42 days to submit comments on draft amendments.

The Oakland County Coordinating Zoning Committee (CZC) will consider the draft amendment at a meeting on Tuesday, **August 1, 2017** scheduled to begin at **9:00 a.m.** It will be held in the Board of Commissioners' Auditorium, Committee Room A, 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac. This meeting falls within the 42-day comment period.

Under state law, our review shall include a statement indicating whether the proposed amendment is "inconsistent with the plan of any city, village, or township" that received notice of the draft amendment. Therefore, you are encouraged to comment if you have any concerns. If you have comments on the plan, send them directly to Farmington Hills and we request that you send a copy to Oakland County as well. Please direct the County's copy to my attention. I would appreciate receiving your comments by **July 19, 2017**, if possible.

You are welcome to attend the Coordinating Zoning Committee meeting. If you have questions, please feel free to call me at (248) 452-2166 or email me at [stankovicha@oakgov.com](mailto:stankovicha@oakgov.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandria Stankovich".

Alexandria Stankovich, AICP  
Senior Planner

cc: Charles Boulard, Community Dev Director  
Mark Pehrson, Novi Plng Comm Chair  
O.C. Commissioner Hugh Crawford