

Mayor and City Council Members: front row - Mayor Pro Tem Valerie Knol, Mayor Vicki Barnett, Mary Newlin; back row - Michael Bridges, Samantha Steckloff, Ken Massey, Jackie Boleware



The Farmington Hills Focus is produced by the City of Farmington Hills. Articles are submitted by City department directors to highlight upcoming events, provide important news, and update residents on City projects and programs. Editor: Gillian Pines, gpines@fhgov.com



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City of Farmington Hills Michigan - Municipal Government

Police Department

Farmington Hills Enjoys Another Historic Drop in Crime

The Police Department is proud to report that the City of Farmington Hills continues to be one of the safest communities in the State of Michigan.

The most serious crime categories (referred to as Part A Crimes), continued to decline in Farmington Hills in 2019, seeing an overall decrease of 11%. This total Part A Crime is the lowest in the City's 46-year history.

Crime comparisons of note for 2019:

- Robbery decline of 22%
- Sexual Assaults decline of 18%
- Homicides (Zero) decline of 100%

In Farmington Hills:

- Violent crime rate is 1.14 per 1,000 people National average is 4.49
- Property crime rate is 11.25 per 1,000 people National average is 27.11
- Sex offender rate is 8.10 per 10,000 people National average is 27.9
- High school graduation rate is 95.2% National average is 84.6%

In fact *SafeWise*, a company that offers online safety solutions, named Farmington Hills the 22nd Safest City in the United States to Raise a Child with a population over 75,000. Police Chief Jeff King states that this new distinction as one of the Safest Places to Raise a Child is terrific news for parents, caregivers, and the community. It reflects the outstanding work of our police officers and school officials.

Lock It or Lose It

The Farmington Hills Police Department continues to promote the "Lock It or Lose It" program to remind residents that they play an important role in protecting their own property. A recent study of property crimes, including vehicle burglaries, showed that nearly two thirds of vehicles that were robbed were *unlocked*.

Follow these tips to decrease your chances of becoming a victim of theft:

- Lock your car doors at all times even if you are only going to be away from your vehicle momentarily.
- Close all windows including your sun/moon roof.
- Remove all valuables from plain sight in your vehicle such as purses, laptops, wallets, etc. If it is necessary to leave them in the vehicle, secure them in the trunk.
- If possible, park your vehicle in a locked garage or in a well-lit area.
- Report any suspicious activity in your neighborhood or workplace parking lot immediately to the police.
- If you suspect your vehicle has been broken into, please do not touch anything to help preserve potential evidence. Call the police so they can come to your location and take a report.

Traffic Crashes

During the 2019 spring and summer months, March 3 – September 23, the Farmington Hills Police Department responded to 968 property damage crashes (roadway related), and 307 private property damage crashes (non-roadway related.)

It is the responsibility of a vehicle driver who knows or who has reason to believe that he or she has been involved in a crash upon public or private property to immediately stop his or her vehicle at the scene of the crash and remain there until one of the following requirements are fulfilled:

- Exchange his or her name, address, operator's or chauffeur's license, and the registration number of the vehicle he or she is operating, including the name and address of the owner, to a police officer, or the individual struck.
- Render to any individual injured in the crash reasonable assistance in securing medical aid or arrange for or provide transportation to any injured individual.

If the vehicles are drivable and drivers are uninjured, you must move all vehicles out of the lanes of travel. In addition to the reporting duties, it is also required by law that you carry your driver's license, proof of insurance (either an electronic or hard copy), and your vehicle registration.

If you and the other driver decide to report your crash at another time, both drivers will need to agree on a mutual time to meet at the police station so police personnel can interview both drivers at the same time to get the most accurate depiction of what occurred. Vehicles involved in the crash will also need to be inspected for report documentation.

Distracted driving, and cell phone use while driving, has unfortunately become an everyday dangerous routine for most drivers. To watch a short video about a young man from Michigan and the dangers of distracted driving, go to YouTube and search for "Sam Howell's Journey." Please do your part to help keep our roadways safe!

Fire Department

Candle Safety

The Farmington Hills Fire Department reminds us that candles may be pretty to look at, but they can also be the cause of home fires and home fire deaths. Remember - a candle is an open flame!



This fire occurred because the candle burned down too far and caught the combustible decorative elements embedded in the candle wax on fire. Luckily the resident was in the room and was able to extinguish the flames before the fire spread. They brought the remnants of the candle to Fire Headquarters and asked the Fire Department to share the information to help prevent this from happening to others.

Candle with Care:

- Only use candle holders that are sturdy.
- Light candles carefully; keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- Keep candles at least one foot away from anything flammable. Three of every five candle fires start when flamable items are too close to the candle.
- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people fall asleep. More than one third of home candle fires start in the bedroom.
- Don't burn a candle all the way down; put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- Never use candles during a power outage. Have flashlights and battery-powered lighting handy and ready to use instead.
- Never light a candle if oxygen is used in the home.
- Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle.
 Keep matches and lighters up high and out of children's reach in a locked cabinet.
- As an alternative, use flameless candles in your home.
 They look and smell like the real thing!

For more information, go to www.nfpa.org/education.

Generator Safety



Downed utility lines, power company blackouts, heavy snowfalls or summer storms can all lead to power outages. Many people turn to a portable generator for a temporary solution without knowing the risks.

- Generators should be used outside in well-ventilated locations at least five feet away from all doors, windows, and vent openings. Measure the five foot distance from the generator exhaust system to the nearest building.
- Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building. The exhaust must be directed away from the building.
- Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it's hot.
- Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.
- When plugging in appliances, make sure they are plugged directly into the generator or a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord. Cords should be checked for cuts, tears, and a plug with three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- If you must connect the generator to the house wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install a properly-rated transfer switch in accordance with the National Electric Code (NEC) and all applicable State and Local electrical codes.

Be aware - A person can be poisoned by a small amount of carbon monoxide over a longer period of time or by a large amount of carbon monoxide over a shorter amount of time. Be sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.

For more information, go to www.nfpa.org/education.

- Before installing, check to make sure the detector is approved by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) to meet strict testing and safety requirements.
- Install the detector in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Connect multiple detectors when possible for all alarms to sound when one of them detects carbon monoxide.

Clerk's Office

Elections 2020

- March 10, 2020 Presidential Primary
- August 4, 2020 State Primary
- November 3, 2020 Presidential Election

The March 10, 2020 Election is a closed Primary Election where voters must select their ballot type prior to voting (Democratic, Republican or Proposals only – both party ballots will also contain the proposals but voters have the option of voting on proposals only if they do not wish to participate in the Presidential Primary.)

Important Deadlines

- Through Tuesday, March 10 until 8 p.m. A person may register to vote <u>in-person</u> at their local Clerk's Office with proof of residency.
- **Friday, March 6 at 5 p.m.** Deadline to request an absent voter ballot to be mailed via first class mail.
- Monday, March 9 until 4 p.m. Last day for registered voters to request an absent voter ballot <u>in-person</u> at the Clerk's Office. Photo ID <u>or</u> completion of an Affidavit Not in Possession of Photo ID is required.
- Tuesday, March 10 until 8 p.m. A person registering on Election Day in-person in the Clerk's Office may obtain and vote an absent voter ballot or vote in their proper precinct.

More details for the August and November Elections will be posted at www.fhgov.com as we get closer to those Election dates.

Voting By Absent Voter Ballot

- Any voter may now request an absent voter ballot for any Election – no reason is required. If you wish to be placed on the permanent absent voter list to automatically receive an absent voter <u>application</u> for each Election, please call the City Clerk's Office at 248-871-2410 or email permlist@fhgov.com.
- The deadline to request an absent voter ballot to be mailed is 5 p.m. on the Friday before an Election.
- Benefits of being on the Permanent Absent Voter List:
 - Automatically receive an absent voter application for every Election
 - Receive your absentee ballot prior to Election Day (upon receipt of your signed application)
 - Vote from home by absentee ballot and take your time to study the ballot
 - Avoid potential lines at the polls on Election Day

Absentee Ballot Envelopes Have a New Look!



Voters requesting an absent voter ballot will receive a blue and white envelope containing their ballot. This started with the March 10, 2020 Presidential Primary Election.

After voting the ballot, voters should place the ballot back inside the secrecy sleeve provided and then into the green and white return envelope to return the ballot to the City Clerk's Office.





DON'T FORGET TO SIGN THE RETURN ENVELOPE where indicated by the green arrow. A ballot cannot be accepted without the <u>voter's</u> signature.

Homeowner Association Contacts

The City Clerk's Office maintains a list of all Homeowner Associations and contact information. This enables the City to notify Associations of upcoming developments, road projects, etc. that may affect your subdivision. Please submit updated contact information to jmunoz@fhgov.com or fax it to the City Clerk at 248-871-2411. Please be sure to do this annually or as your officers and contact information changes.

Door to Door Peddlers/Solicitors

Spring time typically brings out more door-to-door peddlers/solicitors. Persons peddling door-to-door selling goods or services must be licensed with the City and have photo identification issued by the City Clerk's Office. Persons may only peddle/solicit between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

There are certain groups that are exempt from the City's licensing provisions, however they still should be able to provide Photo ID from their respective organizations and are asked to comply with local time requirements. Youth groups such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts or other similar youth organizations are also exempt if they are soliciting within three miles of their residence. For questions on licensing, contact the City Clerk's Office at 248-871-2410.

If you do not wish to have peddlers/solicitors come to your door, please consider posting a "no peddling/no soliciting" sign on your property. Peddlers/Solicitors are not permitted on property that is signed as such. Subdivision Associations may also post similar signage at entrances to their subdivisions.

Please be advised that State Law dictates that peddling/soliciting cannot be prohibited within the City, however licensed peddlers/solicitors must adhere to City ordinance requirements. Complaints regarding any peddler/solicitor should be directed to the City's Police Department. It is helpful if you can provide the name and/or organization for which the person was peddling/soliciting and your address or subdivision.

Housing Discrimination Notice

Housing discrimination is prohibited by law. For more information on housing discrimination, visit www.hud.gov/fairhousing. If you have a housing discrimination complaint, contact the Michigan Department of Civil Rights at 517-335-3165 or the HUD hotline at 1-800-669-9777 or 1-800-927-9275 (TTY).



Planning & Community Development

How to Determine the Size of a New Garage

Building a new garage is at the top of the project list for many homeowners who then wonder – *How big can I build it?*

The City's Zoning Ordinance defines a garage as an accessory structure. The floor area of all other existing accessory structures such as sheds, carports, garages, etc., must also be considered to determine the size of your new garage.

The total combined maximum floor area of all "accessory structures" may be up to 50% of the residential floor area. The floor area is the total area of all floors in the home *excluding* the basement (if it is unfinished), an attached garage or other areas of your home that are not classified as "livable area" such as an unheated enclosed patio area. You may also contact the City Assessing Office or log onto the Map Gallery on the City website at www.fhgov.com and input your address into the Parcels and Developments interactive map to access the assessing record of your home.

The maximum combined floor area of all accessory structures is 1,250 square feet even if the floor area of your home exceeds 2,500 square feet. Homes that are at or below 1,500 square feet may have up to 750 square feet of accessory structure floor area.

Common questions:

- What if my house is 3,500 square feet? The maximum combined floor area of all accessory structures is still 1,250 square feet.
- What if I have over two acres of land? The maximum size
 of accessory structures is not based on the acreage of the
 parcel, but the size of the home.
- How tall can I build my new garage? The maximum height
 of detached accessory structures is fourteen feet as
 measured from the ground to the mid-point of the eave
 and peak of the structure. The maximum height of an
 attached garage is determined by the zoning district your
 home is located in.
- Where can I place my new garage? In most cases, accessory structures may be located within side and rear yards only. Specific standards apply to homes on corner lots based on the relation of your home to your neighbors.

Example: A home is 2,000 square feet with an existing 450 square foot attached garage and no other sheds or accessory structures. What is the maximum allowable size of a new garage?

First, calculate the allowable accessory structure square footage: 2,000 square feet x .5 = 1000 square feet.

Next, subtract the existing accessory structure: 1000 square feet minus the 450 square foot existing garage = 550 square feet available for a new garage.

Stop by or call the Planning and Community Development Office at 248-871-2540 before you start planning for your new garage to find out about setback requirements, what zoning district your home is located in, building permit requirements, and to get answers to any other questions you might have.

Housing Rehabilitation Program Home Repair Loans

Funding for zero-interest, deferred home repair loans is provided by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Office (HUD). Homeowners may be eligible for loans to replace roofs, windows, furnaces, septic fields or hot water tanks. To qualify, applicants must own and occupy a home in Farmington Hills and the family must meet Federal income guidelines. A family of four, for example, must have a gross income of less than \$61,050. For information, call the Community Development Office at 248-871-2543 or go to www.fhgov.com, and search for Housing Rehabilitation Program.



The "Shocking" Facts about GFCIs - Ground Fault Circuit Interceptors

Ground Fault Circuit Interceptors or GFCIs are life safety devices required in dwellings by electrical codes primarily in wet areas such as kitchens and bathrooms. Commonly installed as receptacles or circuit breakers, GFCIs protect people from the effects of shock and electrocution.



A standard 15 AMP fuse or circuit breaker will shut off when the current flow exceeds 15 AMPs in a circuit; 1 AMP = 6.2×10 electrons flow through a conductor every second. A Class A GFCI will shut off when it detects a current flow of 4 to 6 milliamps; 1 milliamp = 1/1000 of an AMP. A human can feel the effect of electric shock at 1 milliamp and will not be able to let go at 10 milliamps; death can occur at over 30 milliamps.

GFCIs are tamper resistant for child safety and weather resistant for outdoor receptacles. Manufacturers are required to build self-testing GFCI receptacles that open or shut off if the protection fails. Monthly testing of GFCIs is recommended.

Spring Plant and Seed Swap May 30



The Beautification Commission's 20th Annual Plant and Seed Swap will be held on Saturday, May 30 at Heritage Park from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. – rain or shine – at the Heritage Park Visitor's Center parking lot, located off Farmington Road between Ten and Eleven Mile Roads. Every year, both amateur and Master Gardeners come prepared with gloves, wagons, and favorite plants and seeds to exchange. The Beautification Commission, Garden Club members, and Master Gardeners will all be available to answer questions and provide refreshments. For more information, call Charmaine Kettler-Schmult in the Community Development Office at 248-871-2543 or ckettler@fhgov.com.

Help the City of Farmington Hills maintain and increase its property values!



Zoning Division Tips

- Peeling and flaking paint is not only unsightly, it is a code violation. Please paint homes, garages, sheds, and any other structures when necessary.
- Owning a cat or dog has its duties. You cannot allow your dog or cat to leave waste behind and be a nuisance on public or even your own private property. Should an instance occur, you are responsible for immediately cleaning up the area.
- Outdoor storage of unlicensed and expired license vehicles, even if tarped, is not allowed. They must be kept in a garage.
- Trash containers are required to be watertight with handles and tight fitting lids. This keeps trash from escaping and stops most animals from scattering the contents.
- Grass must be cut before it reaches eight inches tall, it makes the neighborhood look clean and neat. It is a code violation for the grass to be higher than this height.
- Trash should be put at the curbside no earlier than 6 p.m. prior to the day of the pickup and removed within 12 hours of pickup.
- Firewood storage is limited to two face cords, stored above ground in an orderly manner. Storage in the front yard is prohibited.
- Cleaning and securing the gutters and downspouts helps preserve your roof and fascia. Please repair gutters and downspouts, and remove any debris.
- Swimming pools must be maintained in a clean and sanitary way and treated regularly so as not to create a health hazard or nuisance.
- Yards must be kept clear of all rubbish and other castoff material. Remove items such as discarded wood, bricks, and tires.
- Compost piles are regulated by size, location, and composition so they don't create an annoyance to the public.

Finance Department

Dog Licenses

Licenses are required for all dogs four months of age or older. Oneyear and three-year dog licenses may be purchased at the Treasury Division with proof of rabies vaccination. From January 1 through June 1, the cost is \$10.50 one-year/\$28.50 three-year for spayed/ neutered dogs (\$9.75 one-year/\$26.25 three-year if the owner is age 65 or older); \$18 one-year/\$51 three-year for male/female dogs (\$16.50 one-year/\$46.50 three-year if the owner is age 65 or older.)



After June 1, the license is considered delinquent and the annual cost is \$33 for all dogs. New animals over four months of age may be licensed at non-delinquent rates if the license is purchased within 30 days of acquisition. The City does not require cats to be licensed.

For questions regarding dog licenses, contact Oakland County Animal Control at 248-858-1070 #5 or www.oakgov.com/petadoption or contact the City of Farmington Hills Treasury Division at 248-871-2480.

For information about the William Grace Dog Park, located at 29040 Shiawassee Road, go to www.fhgov.com and click on the Activities tab, then click on Dog Park for rules and regulations, hours, and fees.

Treasury/Assessing Office Reminders

- Summer property tax bills are mailed around July 1 and may be paid without penalty through August 31.
 Thereafter, late penalties are assessed progressively up to 7% by the following February. Postmarks are not accepted by the City.
- Tax bills are mailed to the address of record and not forwarded by the post office, except for temporary forwarding orders.
- Changes of mailing address should be filed with the Assessor's Office.
- By law, failure to receive a property tax bill does not waive the tax bill or any charges for late payment.
- Every property should receive a property tax bill, even if
 the tax bill is to be paid via an escrow account. If you do
 not receive a summer property tax bill/statement by the
 end of the first week of July, or if you have any questions
 about your property taxes, call the Treasurer's Office at
 248-871-2480.
- If you have any questions regarding your property assessment or taxable value, call the Assessing Division at 248-871-2470.

Public Services Department

2020 Holiday Garbage/Recycling/Yard Waste Collection Schedule

Collection will not be scheduled on the following holidays: Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Memorial Day – Monday, May 25, 2020 Monday – No collection scheduled Collection one day behind Tuesday – Saturday

Independence Day – Saturday, July 4, 2020 Regular collection Monday – Friday No delay in schedule

Labor Day – Monday, September 7, 2020 Monday – No collection scheduled Collection one day behind Tuesday – Saturday

Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 26, 2020 Regular collection Monday – Wednesday Thursday – No collection scheduled Collection one day behind Friday – Saturday

Christmas Day – Friday, December 25, 2020 Regular collection Monday – Thursday Friday – No collection scheduled Collection one day behind – Friday collected Saturday

New Year's Day – Friday, January 1, 2021 Regular collection Monday – Thursday Friday – No collection scheduled Collection one day behind – Friday collected Saturday

Please note: Yard waste pickup will start during the week of April 13, 2020 and end during the week of December 7 with the last pickup day on Friday, December 11, 2020.



Hazardous Materials Drop-Off Day Saturday, May 2

In cooperation with Oakland Community College, the City will hold its annual HazMat Day on Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the OCC Orchard Ridge Campus in the northeast parking lot off Orchard Lake Road. Residents of Farmington Hills, Farmington, Novi, South Lyon, Southfield, Walled Lake, Milford, Milford Township, and Wixom are all eligible to participate with a driver's license or other proof of residency. Containers must be labeled, not hold more than five gallons or weigh more than 50 pounds, and be placed in a sturdy box on the floor or in the trunk. Farmington Hills residents may also go to any of the other regional HazMat events listed at www.rrrasoc.org. For a full list of accepted/unaccepted items, go to www.rrrasoc.org or call 248-208-2270.

2020 Spring/Summer - Road Construction Projects

Major Road Paving Projects

14 Mile Road (Middlebelt Road to Inkster Road) Grand River Avenue (Haggerty Road to Ten Mile Road) Hathaway Street

Local Road Paving Projects

Belfast Street

Canfield Avenue

Stonewood Court

Canterbury West Subdivision

Edythe Drive (includes Water Main Replacement and Sanitary Sewer Installation)

Cora/Haynes Street (Fink to Shiawassee)

Stone Creek and Westlake Subdivision (2020 and 2021 split project)
*Additional projects may be added dependent on bid pricing

New Sidewalks

Colfax sidewalk (Mayfield Street to Riverwalk Open Space)

Water Main Replacement Programs

Richland Gardens Subdivision Area – Water Main Replacement Kimberley Subdivision – Water Main Replacement (late summer/ early fall start)

Detention/Retention Basin Maintenance

The majority of subdivisions have a detention/retention pond or basin that holds storm water following a rain event and prevents surges of rain water runoff to downstream areas. Ongoing maintenance is typically the responsibility of the homeowners association including mowing, landscaping, clearing debris, repairing fencing, and ensuring that the flow of water is not blocked. For more information regarding basin ownership or maintenance procedures, contact the Public Services Department at 248-871-2530 or reference the guidebook on "Maintaining Your Detention Basin" available at www.fhgov.com.



Prevent West Nile Virus

- Eliminate standing water in toys, buckets, flower pots, tires, pet water bowls, unused pools, birdbaths, clogged rain gutters, and other containers to reduce areas where mosquitoes breed. (Creeks and retention areas that are healthy and running are not considered a prime area for mosquito breeding.)
- Use insect repellant, but follow manufacturers' guidelines and don't use on children younger than two.
- Wear protective clothing such as long sleeves and pants.
- Fix or install window and door screens to help mosquitoproof your home.

For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus.



Don't put unacceptable materials in the recycling cart. Follow the list of allowable materials referenced on the cart lid or listed at www.rrrasoc.org. Unacceptable items include garbage, garden hoses, plastic grocery bags, disposable diapers, needles, yard waste, food waste, and shredded paper.

Don't pile extra items next to the recycling cart, only recyclable items that are *in* the cart will be recycled.

Help beautify the City! Store recycling carts and garbage cans inside the garage or house between collection days. Containers may also be stored in the side or rear yards, but please don't store them in front yards.

Put all trash, recycling, and yard waste at the curbside by 7 a.m. on the assigned pickup day. All containers must be placed at the curb or edge of the street in front of your home no earlier than 6 p.m. on the evening before your collection day and must be retrieved no later than 12 hours following collection.

Keep recycling and garbage containers clean to prevent bins from attracting rodents and other vermin.

Check out the "Recycling Widget" on the City website to learn where to recycle, compost or properly dispose of a whole range of items. Go to www.fhgov.com, click on the Resident tab, click on Recycling, and then use the search box at the top of the page.

Use your smartphone to access the "Recycling Directory" from RRRASOC (Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County) available as a free mobile app. Go to the App Store or Google Play and search for "Recycling Authority."

Curbside Clothing Collection from Simple Recycling – Simple Recycling is a FREE residential curbside pickup service that takes unwanted clothing, shoes, accessories, and household discards including kitchenware, tools, toys, and books from every single-family household in Farmington Hills. Simply fill the orange bags with unwanted items and set them out for collection, away from the regular curbside items, on your weekly trash and recycling day. Simple Recycling will collect the full orange bags and leave new replacement bags behind. For more information, contact Simple Recycling at 866-835-5068 or www.simplerecycling.com.

Questions? Call the DPW at 248-871-2850 or visit www.fhgov.com