

# Financing plan is forum focus

By Casey Hans  
Staff writer

Those looking toward a revitalized downtown for Farmington are moving closer to that goal.

Residents, business people and others interested in its fate will be given the chance Nov. 3 to question city officials about their intentions for financing a rejuvenation of the city's central business district.

That is the date set for a public hearing to discuss a tax increment financing proposal and details of a \$1.44 million plan to bring pedestrian lighting, new sidewalks and additional landscaping to the 64-acre development district.

The Farmington City Council voted Monday 3-0 to schedule the hearing, where interested parties, including property owners and representatives of other local taxing authorities, can discuss the plan.

The council vote came after members reviewed the 26-page plan prepared by city administrators and city planner Christopher Wazany.

"Now that we have the plan and the people we need the money," Mayor William Hartsock said, "I read the report with a great deal of interest and anticipation. We've never had a comprehensive plan."

THE CITY'S Downtown Development Authority board of directors adopted the plan and authorized the presentation to city council at a Sept. 9 meeting. City officials said they will now wait and see who has questions and comments.

Council members were generally supportive of the plan, and had only a few comments before setting the hearing date.

Councilman Richard Tupper suggested a more definite plan to staff the DDA to supervise future maintenance and to keep the project going.

"We need a permanent staff. . . . to go around and keep the thing going," he said.

"I'm glad to see it all coming together," Councilman Arnold Campbell said about the plan. "I can see a lot of work went into this." Council members Ralph Yoder and Shirley Richardson were absent for Monday's vote.

Wazany called the plan "important not only to the downtown, but the . . . n general attitude and spirit of the community. This is a representative physical element that says something about the people of the city."

The city seeks a multi-year TIFA plan, a possible \$400,000 loan from the city's general fund to complete the renovation project and an additional 2-mill tax levy for continued maintenance in the designated DDA district.

The district with its 135 businesses is bounded roughly by Liberty on the west, Thomas on the north, Mayfield

on the east and Slocum on the south.

THE DDA board has also discussed the issuance of revenue bonds as a financing option. This would allow the entire plan to be completed in 10-24 months, instead of over a 5-phase tier, said board member and City Manager Robert Deadman, who presented the plan to council.

If this were option selected, the DDA may still ask the council for a loan, until the bonds could be sold, Deadman added.

The project has a total of seven phases — of which the first five would include physical renovation. The plan calls for \$190,000 to be spent in development planning, \$121,000 in maintenance, \$380,000 in public improvements and \$144,000 in interest expense for borrowed money or for debt retirement on bonds. Officials also estimate in their plan that \$700,000 in private sector projects will be under way during the rejuvenation process.

Upon completion, the project will include 160 trees, 108 lights, two proposed crosswalks on Grand River and Farmington roads and other amenities including five trash compactors in shielded areas, and decorative trash receptacles.

Officials are proposing to spend half a million dollars of the total project during the first phase, which would rejuvenate both sides of Grand River from Oakland to Warner and Farmington Road from Alta Loma and the Masonic Temple north of Grand River. This phase would also improve the parking area north of Grand River.

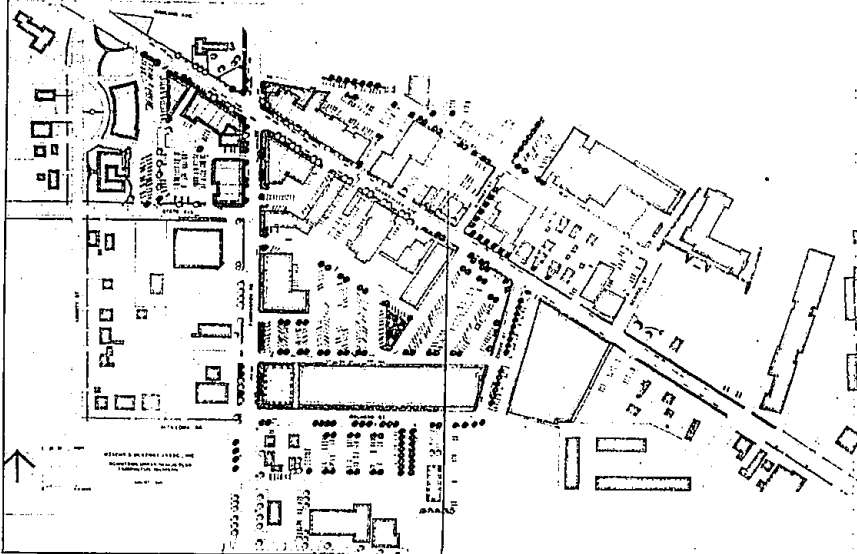
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This is the proposed DDA design plan. Landscaping improvements downtown can be seen. The small circles represent trees along downtown streets; the light ones are existing trees, the

dark ones proposed new trees and landscaping. Two proposed crosswalks are also shown — on Grand River and on Farmington Road.

**Farmington City Council will hold a public hearing Monday, Nov. 3, to discuss proposed downtown improvements and their financing.**

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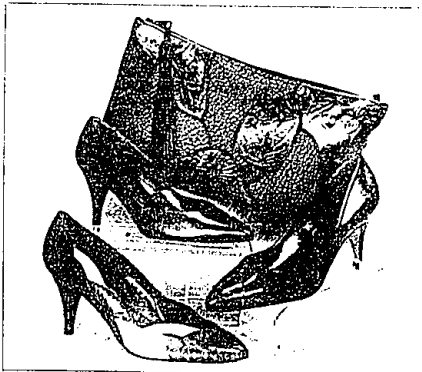
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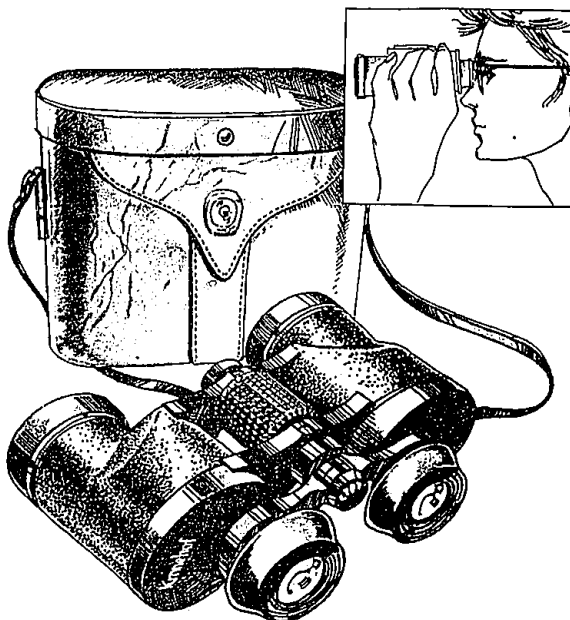
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