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NEWS

Livonia voters to decide on \$150M downtown development plan, upgrades for first responde



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Livonia residents will decide in August whether to fund a multimillion-dollar vision for a brand-new downtown, with supporters saying it will breathe new life into the city while opponents argue the millage is too costly.



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By: Meghan
Posted 10:48 PM, Jul 0

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Livonia residents will decide in August whether to fund a millage for a brand-new downtown with supporters saying it will

breathe new life into the city while opponents argue the millage is too costly.

Dozens of Livonia residents gathered outside the city's Civic Center Monday evening to protest the proposal.

Watch the video report below:



The protesters united with one clear message for city council: they will not support the millage on the August ballot.

"I'm very passionate about not tearing down this beautiful library that was built less than 40 years ago," said Jim Biga, a lifelong resident of Livonia.



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"The dynamics of this community would change dramatically," added Eileen McDonnell, a resident and city council candidate.

The millage has been a controversial topic in the community since the beginning of the year. City council is asking residents to vote yes on a \$150 million bond proposal to fund the construction of a new downtown for the city.

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The plan includes demolishing and rebuilding the Civic Center, Bennett Library and police department, along with renovations to the fire department and five other fire houses around the city.

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Some residents expressed support for improving first responder facilities but opposed other aspects of the proposal.

"I find it disingenuous to attach first responder needs, which I'm 100% in support of, and handcuffing them to capital project," Patrick Brockway, a resident and city council candidate, said. "If you don't support the project to tear down the civic center, that means you hate firefighters. So, I feel like it disenfranchises voters and we can do better as a city."



McDonnell told me she supports building a downtown but not this specific millage.

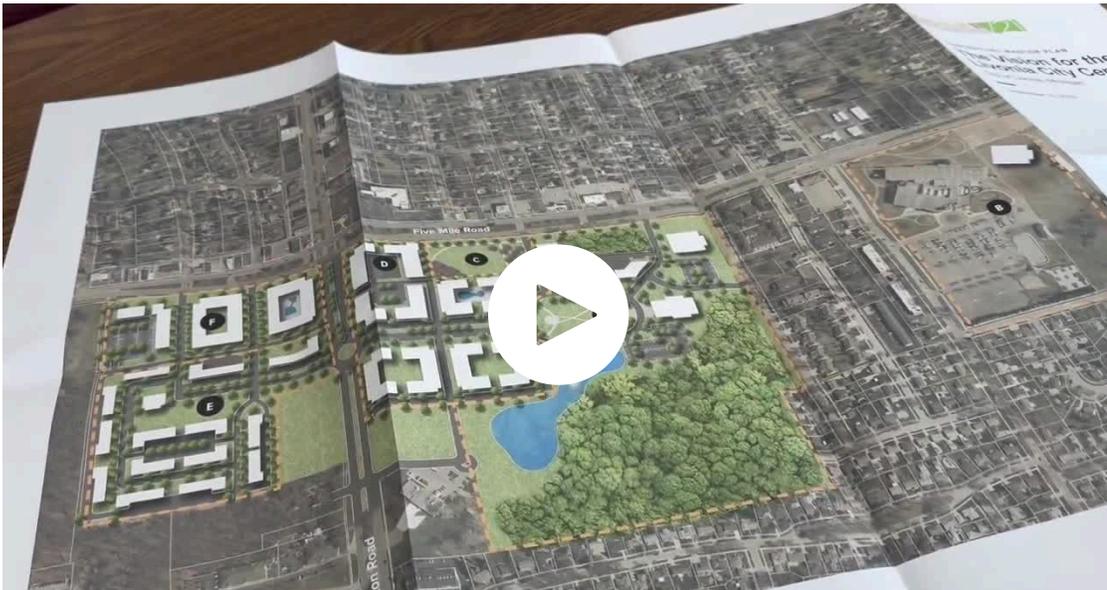
"City hall's a little out of place for right now — it's much too big, costs a lot of money to run, so I'm not in opposition to that," she said.

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However, McDonnell explained her opposition.

"It expanded from being three sections of the city to be renovated, to what we have now, which could include tearing down the Bennett Library," she said.

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Not all residents oppose the plan. One resident in full support of the millage told me she loves the library and would welcome a new one.

"I'm all for expanding that, pumping money into it. If in the process of doing that we incorporate all of these other resources that are in outdated buildings, great," she said.

City Councilman Robert Donovic believes the city has delayed these improvements for too long.



"I don't want to fix a long-term issue with a Band-Aid. I don't want to do a shorter solution on a long-term issue," Donovic said.

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Residents will have a chance to have their voices heard on Aug. 5 at the ballot box.

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