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Livonia considers \$56.9M police station after \$100M bond proposal fails last November



Months after voters defeated a ballot measure to fund the building of a new police station, new plans to fund the construction of the facility are emerging.

 By: Christiana Ford

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LIVONIA, Mich. (WXYZ) — Livonia city officials are considering another plan for a new police station after voters rejected a broader \$150 million bond proposal last November. The new plan carries a price tag of up to \$56.9 million and marks the first public discussion on the matter since the bond vote.

Watch Christiana Ford's video report:



The city's current police station was built in 1961.

Eric Marcotte, a captain with the Livonia Police Department, pointed to deteriorating conditions inside the facility, including a bathroom that has remained largely unchanged since the building opened more than six decades ago.

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"This is the original bathroom from 1961. There's a big hole down at the bottom there, where we've had animals come in," Marcotte said.

Marcotte said the department has repeatedly attempted to address the building's problems, but the fixes have their limits.

"The pipes have been cut and refixed several times over," Marcotte said, showing the boiler room in the basement.

The issues extend beyond the bathrooms. Officials cite repeat flooding, foundational problems, and a lack of space as additional reasons the current facility is no longer adequate. Lockers and dated locker rooms with limited space and a lack of storage.

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Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan is now pursuing an alternative financing plan after the bond measure failed. Her team presented a proposal to the City Council's Capital Outlay Committee for a new 70,000-square-foot police department to be built adjacent to the 16th District Court on Five Mile Road. The building and required sitework would cost an estimated \$48.15 million, funded in part by a 1% fee on tax bills.

Additional sitework, including a parking garage, relocation of a cell tower, and a plaza between the police station and courthouse, would add more than \$8.7 million to the total, bringing the potential cost to \$56.9 million. Funding for those additional items has not yet been secured. Miller Brosnan has made trips to Lansing and D.C. to meet with lawmakers to secure funding.

"This is the next step for the city, no matter what happens. This is the oldest building that we currently have on our city campus. It was built in 1961. This is a building never designed to be a police station," Miller Brosnan said.



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The proposed location near the Brookfield community has drawn criticism from some residents.

Susan Paluchniak, a Livonia resident, said she opposes placing a police station in a residential area.

"I am very upset, communities do not want police stations in residential areas for a certain reason," Paluchniak said. "They want to keep the residents safe, the residents don't want the noise, the traffic."

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Resident Laura Jannika also expressed frustration with the city's approach to financing the project without another public vote.

"I feel like it was a little sneaky to do that. They say they can do it, they have a right to do it, but people aren't gonna like that. We already voted against this; we don't want you to just throw a tax on us," Jannika said.



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Jannika says many feel a lack of transparency with the process and the inability to contribute to changes made.

She is a part of a group advocating for more accessibility at current facilities like city hall and the library.

“We wanted a ramp to get into city hall so people can join into a city hall meeting and be able to have a voice. They don’t have a voice now. They can’t go to the library, there’s not an accessible bathroom,” said Jannika.

Other residents mentioned they would have liked to see the fire department included in the plan.

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One council member on the committee even shared an alternative location for a new police department off Five Mile on social media, but it has not been formally introduced or discussed.

7 New Detroit brought those concerns to the mayor.

“You know what I think people need to focus on is that we have an opportunity here in the city to take care of our police station, our police department, and our public safety efforts. We have the funds available to build a new modern facility that deals with our modern needs,” said Miller Brosnan.

She disagreed with those saying the process has not been transparent and said conversations date back six years. Miller Brosnan added that there are no plans to change the location.

"Should it move to any other location, I'm not so certain that funding's available to make a change of that magnitude at this point," said Miller Brosnan.

Not all residents share concerns. Tamara Oliverio said the new station is something the department has earned.

“If we want the best police officers, we want the safest city, we want to do the best by our residents, then we need to take care of our police department to attract the best people. Having state-of-the-art safe facilities and a safe working space is part of that,” said Oliverio. **“It’s something that our police department deserves, it's something that the chief of police is asking for, the police union is asking for, so I don't understand why it's so controversial.”**



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Mayor Miller Brosnan framed the project as the city's most pressing infrastructure need.

"While we want to solve all of those other problems that we have on our city campus, this is our chance to solve this, our singular most important problem, and building a new station and bringing to our city something that they truly deserve," Miller Brosnan said.

If the proposal clears the Capital Outlay Committee and receives full City Council approval, construction could begin by fall.

The Capital Outlay Committee meeting is on Wednesday, March 11, at 7 p.m. for their second discussion on the topic.

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