

# New senior center will advance 'dream of building a downtown Livonia'



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LIVONIA — Mayor Maureen Miller Brosnan thinks Livonia is doing well.

During her annual state of the city address March 19, the mayor touted all of the good things she thinks the city has, naming safety, a local road repair program, the small business community and the city's large parks system as examples.

The one thing missing, she says, is [a common gathering space](#). Now in her second term, Brosnan is inching closer to a central campaign promise she's been working on for years: A downtown-like area.

"The dream of building a downtown Livonia is closer than it's ever been," she said. "The time is now."

**Officials will break ground on new senior center**



Brosnan said she expects to break ground for a new senior center in the near future. The \$22 million project, she said, is mostly funded by grants from state, federal and county officials. The city also dedicated \$4 million of its American Rescue Plan dollars toward the project.

"The senior center itself is going to feature a lot of amenities that, quite frankly, were prioritized by seniors themselves," Brosnan said.

The senior center, now at 15218 Farmington Road, will be relocated to become an extension of the Kirksey Recreation Center at 15100 Hubbard Street. The new center will be 25,000 square feet and include space for gathering, classes, dining and more. The addition of a senior center wing, Brosnan said, will also mean the Kirksey Recreation Center will see some updates as well.

The Livonia Public Schools Board of Education voted to sell the city 4.1 acres of the Bentley Field property, right next to the Kirksey Recreation Center, during a meeting Monday, March 18, creating room for the city to add parking and a dedicated entrance to the senior center.

Brosnan said the new center will likely include an 18-month buildout.

## Making way for a downtown-like space



When the senior center moves, Livonia will be able to demolish the buildings at the northwest corner of Civic Center Park, which includes the current senior center, the old courthouse and Sam's Place restaurant. Those demolitions will create 10 acres of space for new development in the beginning of what officials hope will be a downtown-like space. During the Livonia Vision 21 Master Plan process, residents said they'd like to see [retail, dining and middle-market housing](#) in a downtown-like area.

"Imagine a clean slate," Brosnan said. "What do we want to see coming in there? Residents have told us what they want to see built at that vibrant Civic Center area; the challenge now is for us to build it."

Brosnan said her office is determining how to move Livonia City Hall and the Livonia Police Department, creating more space for new development. The mayor and others feel a downtown-like area would be transformational for Livonia.

"Reimagining our city's central campus into a bikeable, walkable gathering space with restaurants and stores will soon become the greatest legacy we'll leave to our children," said Peter Ventura, a founding member of P.A. Commercial and a member of the Livonia Planning Commission, during a video Brosnan played.

Brosnan said the Bennett Library will remain in Civic Center and would be the "centerpiece" of the property. The city's libraries recently underwent a strategic planning process to determine what's next for the system, which includes the [long-closed Alfred Noble branch](#) on the south end of the city. Brosnan said she expects to share details on the plan this spring.

## **Another push for a nondiscrimination ordinance**

The mayor said she's worked toward developing a more welcoming reputation for Livonia. As she's done in several state of the city addresses, Brosnan said she'd like to see city council adopt a nondiscrimination ordinance.

Council voted down [a proposed ordinance](#) from Brosnan's office in 2022.

"We have a responsibility to speak clearly and take action on our inclusive values," she said. "So I am standing here today encouraging council to take this issue up — to take up the issue of a nondiscrimination ordinance. I stand ready to work with you."

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