

## **Livonia showcases how creativity will improve quality of life. Embark with me on an incredible journey as we transform dreams into reality!**

Heads are turning across Southeast Michigan as our hometown celebrates **Livonia 75** with major plans to rebuild Five and Farmington

- Part Two of this four-part Special series appearing weekly on the Livonia transformation
- Public Safety plays a significant role in updating and upgrading Five and Farmington
- Part One: February 24, was an overview of the City Center Project

Livonia stands on the brink of a transformative journey, poised to reclaim its past glory with a bold and proactive approach. The days of deferring decisions are over; Livonia's revitalization is in full swing, powered by the steadfast support of our residents and the visionary leadership guiding us forward.

In this momentous phase, we explore the indispensable role that public safety has played, both historically and in present times, in shaping Livonia's identity and preparing us for a promising future. Join us as we delve into Part Two of this series, celebrating the unwavering commitment to public safety that has been the cornerstone of our community's growth and resilience.

**Get ready, Livonia – the best is yet to come!**



There was a time after my tenure as a Wayne County Commissioner when a pivotal moment arrived with a call from the President of the Plymouth Township Police Union who reached out to me. He was eager to run for Township Supervisor, and our subsequent collaboration led to a victorious campaign.

During the campaign, I fondly reminisced about my upbringing in Livonia while he admired the Livonia Police Department, regarding it as the envy of neighboring departments. He shared that the community's unwavering support and the state-of-the-art equipment provided to the officers were unparalleled.

As I reviewed the plans for Five and Farmington, that conversation resurfaced, and with it, a joyful realization: We have an outstanding fire and police department with a professional force, but our police department's building, as are each of the fire stations, was overdue for an upgrade.

As I reviewed the plans for the new City Center, I recalled the day in 1973 when the City of Livonia first hired me. I visited the police building to have my city ID card picture taken. Remarkably, 52 years later, that very building still stands, much as it was when Bob Turner, if there are any who remember him, was Police Chief and I was a young 24-year-old. Now, at 75, I see that both I and the police department have evolved significantly since those early days.

As a resident of Livonia, I acknowledge that while I can't change the physical specimen I've become, I can advocate for much-needed updates to our public safety infrastructure. It's high time we replace our Police headquarters and renovate all five of our fire stations.

If everything goes according to plan, the City of Livonia will place a proposal on the August ballot to build a new police station and renovate each of our fire stations. This initiative is crucial to ensure that our hometown continues to provide excellence in public safety.



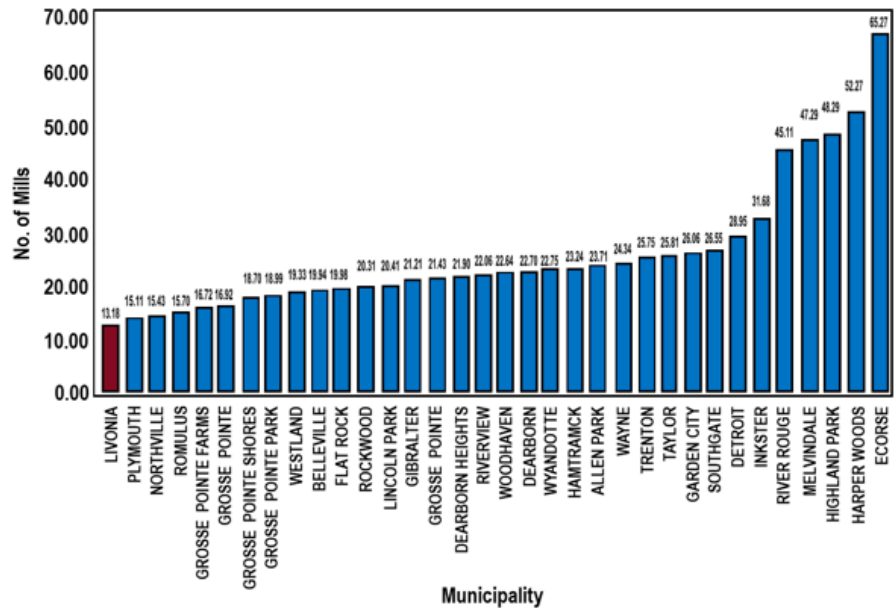
Livonia is confidently stepping into the future with a robust Vision 21 plan, revitalizing essential infrastructure with a blend of innovation and community spirit. A key initiative under this plan involves constructing a new police station and renovating our five existing fire stations.

The most pressing question on residents' minds is, "Will this new police station and fire station renovation increase my taxes?" The answer is clear: "Yes." The necessity for additional millage, which residents will vote on, is unavoidable.

In my conversations with city officials, elected and appointed over the past two months and even over the past two decades, they consistently highlight that Livonia currently boasts the lowest tax rate of any community in Wayne County.

This new proposal, even with the needed small tax increase, will ensure that Livonia continues to hold that title, maintaining our community's affordability.

CITY TAX RATE COMPARISON (2022)  
WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN



Significantly, the President of the City Council, Brandon McCullough, has joined forces with our Mayor, Maureen Brosnan, and Fire and Police Chiefs Robert Jennison and Thomas Goralski to champion the need for a new police station and the renovation of our fire stations.



As McCullough passionately emphasizes, "it's time for our hometown to step up and provide the modern facilities our dedicated public safety officers need to continue delivering top-notch service. Our Police and Fire Chiefs have laid out the urgent necessity for new buildings in this special edition of Musings, and the message is crystal clear: we need to act now!"

"By investing in these upgrades, we're not just supporting our officers, but we're also ensuring the safety and well-being of every resident. Let's rally together, says McCullough, "embrace this transformative change, and show our unwavering commitment to a safer, stronger Livonia."

By the last week of April, our City Council and administration will finalize the millage rate proposal for the voters. As they deliberate on the specifics, Musings will aim to thoroughly address the "why," the "how," and the "when."

To kickstart this dialogue, let's delve into the "why," beginning with a look at the history and evolving needs of our public safety department. The age of our current facilities, some dating

back to when Bob Turner was hired in 1952, underscores the urgency for these updates. As we honor our past, we also prepare Livonia for a more secure and resilient future.

Please stay tuned for more insights and talks on how this transformation will benefit our town.

## **Meet One of Our Original Police Officers (1952) who climbed the ranks and after 31 years became Public Safety Director before retiring in 1986.**

### **Meet Bob Turner--**

**Livonia Police Officer 1952**

**Livonia Police Chief 1969**

**Public Safety Director 1983**

**The Livonia Police Department honored Chief Turner for his years of service by naming the police headquarters the Robert J. Turner Building**

Robert J. Turner was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. Robert went to school at St. Cecilia High School in Detroit and joined the Navy in 1942. He was assigned to the battleship USS Washington (BB-56) and commissioned to the war in the South Pacific from 1942-1945. They engaged in many battles alongside the Indiana, South Dakota, Iowa, Alabama, and Minneapolis. The Washington and crew earned 13 Battle Stars and was never hit and never lost a man to the enemy.



Bob was hired into the Livonia Police Department on February 18, 1952. He was a hardworking police officer who graduated from the FBI Academy and became Chief of Detectives while working nights at the Detroit Race Course.



As he rose through the ranks and became an inspirational leader, he was promoted to Chief of Police on October 27, 1969, and continued in that position until December 1, 1983. Bob did a term as President of the Michigan Association of Police Chiefs from 1975-76.

The “Chief” was a policeman’s policeman and did everything he could to lead his officers with integrity and hard police work. Bob would battle with media, Mayors, unions, the Treasurer, City Hall, and many others to be sure his officers were getting the respect and resources to get the job done. He was also very protective of the citizens of Livonia and would have his rookie officers walking the beat in the neighborhoods to build relationships and trust with the citizens.

Bob finished his career as the Director of Public Safety until he retired on January 10, 1986.

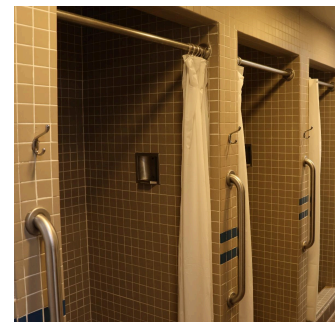
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## **Crumbling, antiquated, and inefficient – our police and fire stations are in dire need of major upgrades.**

This isn't a task for the future; the need is urgent. We must act now to ensure our public safety facilities can effectively serve and protect Livonia's residents, both today and for generations to come. Together, let's support this critical initiative and make Livonia safer and stronger.

The time for change is now. We can not continue kicking the can down the road.

**Are you ready to be part of this transformation?**



**Our police officers and firefighters are committed to protecting and serving Livonia, but to do so effectively,**

**they need buildings that can support their efforts, both now and into the future.**

**We asked our Fire and Police Chiefs to explain the need for a new police station and renovation of our fire stations. Here is their explanation:**



### **Commentary from Livonia Fire Chief Robert Jennison**

When four of Livonia's five fire stations were built from 1960-71, OSHA and MiOSHA did not exist to provide federal standards and guidance as the stations were created for a city that rapidly grew from 66,000 to 110,000 over the course of a decade. A fifth station was added in 1999, but advancements in a variety of areas have come a long way in the past 26 years, let alone the past 65 years since the first station was built. We have not kept up.

**Basic maintenance costs** for the next decade – with little to no operational, efficiency or growth improvements for the modern fire department – are expected to come with a price tag of more than \$7 million. The current buildings are literally crumbling.

Leaks come from plumbing and uninsulated roofs, windows and doors, with improvements difficult and costly since the 1960s used asbestos, galvanized pipes, lead paints and other resources we now know better about not using.

**These buildings were not created with employee safety taken into consideration.** There are no fire alarms or fire sprinkler suppression systems in four-of-five stations, no specific biohazard areas and no decontamination areas for firefighters/paramedics to return from emergencies to conduct gross decontamination before going through entire stations to get to regular showers after EMS or fire emergencies without contaminating stations living and eating areas. Being able to properly decontaminate fire gear and store it separately from living areas was never considered in the 1960s and '70s. Fire gear is washed right next to kitchen towels and daily uniforms. Even when clean, fire gear should be stored separate from living and sleeping quarters, and should have its own ventilation system since it will continue to off-gas contaminants, even after cleaning.

**Speaking of sleeping quarters, only one of five stations were built with female firefighters in mind.** Some improvements have been made to help accommodate hiring women (one unisex bathroom), but this is not nearly what is needed for a current or future work force. Current sleeping quarters have little-to-no privacy and there is zero room for expansion of the department to coincide with population and run volume increases.

**Exercise areas** in several stations have been pirated from the sleeping areas and can only accommodate one or two members at a time to exercise. Exercise areas being in sleeping areas makes them unusable in early mornings before shift or after hours due to disruption of members in the sleeping quarters. There are no proper locker room facilities at four of the five stations, plus very limited bathroom and showering facilities for male and female fire personnel.

**There is little to no available storage available** in any station for what is needed by a modern-day fire department. The department did not have programs to handle responses to hazardous materials, technical rescue, advanced life support EMS, water rescue, etc. when buildings were constructed in the 1960s-70s. The addition of all these programs takes space. Plus, uniform storage, fire extinguishers for all City-owned buildings, emergency management supplies, public education supplies and props all take space. Training props are stored both off site at Schoolcraft College and in the basement of the soon-to-be-demolished former courthouse next to the Civic Park Senior Center, with no place set for future storage.

**Training is only available at one station due to space limitations.** Both training and administrative areas are at capacity with no room for expansion. There is no locker room for administrative staff. Only headquarters and one station are ADA compliant following some 2017 renovations, which can create limitations for visitors at the other three stations. Even with headquarters being compliant, the public entrance is difficult to locate since it is behind security gates and there is almost no lobby space. Parking is also at maximum capacity at headquarters with just daily staff, meaning we are unable to hold classes with outside participants – which would utilize State and Federal funding – due to lack of proper training facilities.

**Technology needs of the 1960s differ greatly from today**, leading to a patchwork of hardware to attempt to use technology and prevent cyber attacks. Emergency generators in four of five stations do not support the full building, but only some lights and dispatch radios. The current electrical system was never designed or intended for the current electrical needs of a modern fire department and its equipment, resulting in multiple sub-panels and frequent electrical issues.

There are no **larger pieces of equipment** for fire departments than the firetrucks. They are larger, longer and heavier than they were 65 years ago, which means they don't fit very well today. The floor of one station collapsed in the truck bay three years ago due to the truck's weight and the age of infrastructure. Three of five stations have only two truck bays and drive-through capability has been mostly negated by the truck size and the lack of storage for a required reserve truck(s). Current trucks cannot even turn around in parking lots at some stations due to their size, and some parking spaces cannot be used in order to accommodate the turn radius.

**Spare trucks and trailers to support operations are stored outside** and are deteriorating due to the environment. Parts and equipment are stored in separate shipping containers due to the lack of indoor storage space.

**All of our stations need major upgrades. Not today or tomorrow, but yesterday.**



## Commentary from Livonia Police Chief Thomas Goralski

**When the City of Livonia incorporated 75 years ago, fewer than 18,000 residents called it home.** By 1960, as the population grew to 66,000, a new Livonia Police Department building was built; which has served the community since its construction in 1961. In the same year, a new Water Department facility was built near the new police department. Today, those same police and water buildings serve a city of nearly 100,000, with many of the same walls, rooms, and systems from over 60 years ago. In 1987, as the city's population surpassed 100,000, new construction between the water and police buildings connected the two into one larger building, to accommodate the growing needs of the Livonia Police Department.

Fast forward to 2025, and the building has reached a breaking point. **Heating and cooling systems that were once state-of-the-art now function poorly** and often break down, sometimes in the middle of extreme weather conditions. Boilers that once kept the building warm are now regularly failing and at the end of their lifespan. These ongoing issues have created a daily struggle to maintain a functional environment for officers and staff, who are dedicated to keeping the city safe.

In addition, **the layout of the building (2/3 of which was originally designed in 1961)** no longer works for the needs of a modern police department. Instead of flexible, open spaces that foster collaboration and community engagement, the station feels more like a fortress. This affects our ability to connect with the community we serve.

**Our space constraints have forced us to operate three separate property rooms** and three separate wellness/fitness areas when one of each would suffice. Many internal groups, like the Investigative Division, are scattered throughout the building, creating inefficiencies and communication issues. Additionally, the locker rooms, which were designed decades ago, are too small to accommodate the growing number of officers and the extensive equipment they use. The female locker rooms, originally a converted bathroom and storage space, are particularly cramped. The dispatchers' locker room is little more than a converted closet.

**Advances in technology also pose a challenge.** The hardware required for modern law enforcement is extensive, yet our current building lacks the space to store or support it. Most of the technology we use today (let alone future technology) did not exist when the building was first constructed. Our current facilities simply cannot accommodate these needs.



**The design of the jail, too, hinders efficiency.** Modern lock-up facilities are designed to be more streamlined, requiring fewer personnel to oversee them. Our current structure, however, is outdated and inefficient. Additionally, while we do have a fenced-in parking area for employees, it is insufficient for ensuring their safety, as it does not adequately protect them from potential threats. Meanwhile, there is an abundance of public parking that exceeds our needs.

**Perhaps most concerning is the state of the building itself. It's not just aging, it is literally falling apart.** The foundation, roof, plumbing, and electrical systems are all in poor condition; certainly, a contributor to this damage is due to the fact that the building is situated over an underground creek! The constant moisture and occasional flooding have caused lasting damage that cannot be repaired. As just one example the concrete flooring in the Detective Bureau has heaved upwards and cannot be repaired without demolishing a portion of the building. Plumbing issues are a daily concern, with frequent leaks causing areas of the building to be shut down for repairs. Some parts of the building still contain asbestos flooring, which can only be removed at great expense and with potential health risks to employees.

**A new building is necessary.** Surrounding communities are constructing new facilities to meet the demands of modern law enforcement. Livonia must not be left behind. A new police station would improve not only the working conditions for officers but also provide a more welcoming environment for residents to engage with law enforcement.

Moreover, **a new facility would help the department recruit, hire, and retain quality officers;** something that is increasingly important in today's competitive job market. As the department continues to evolve, space needs have shifted, and a more modern, efficient layout closer to the 16th District Court would help streamline operations. This change would make it easier to connect with the court system and improve communication with judicial services, benefiting both residents and officers.

We hosted a special focus group with Citizens Police Academy Alumni to discuss the future of the police station and gather input from the community. It's clear the time has come for change.

We are committed to protecting and serving Livonia, but to do so effectively, **we need a building that can support our efforts, both now and in the future.** We need the resources to continue doing so efficiently.



We urge the community to join the conversation and help ensure that Livonia's Police Officers have the tools and facilities necessary to continue keeping our city safe.

**15 months ago Livonia achieved history within the Police Department as for the first time there were two women serving as Lieutenants at the same time**



December 2023 marked a historic moment for our department with the promotion of Lt. Stacy Hayne and Lt. Jessica Sabbadin.

“This serves as a powerful reminder of the equality and inclusivity within the law enforcement profession, where anyone can thrive,” the yes well done department announced.

As of 2023, women make up approximately 13.8% of full-time law enforcement officers in the United States. When it comes to leadership positions, women hold about 9.6% of supervisory roles, which include ranks like lieutenants and sergeants.

These numbers highlight the ongoing efforts and challenges in achieving gender parity within law enforcement.

Lt. Hayne, with 13 years of dedicated service, and Lt. Sabbadin, with 23 years mostly in the detective bureau, exemplify the commitment and excellence that our department stands for. Their promotions are not just a personal achievement but a testament to the progressive strides we are making in our law enforcement community.



In 2026, we will see the construction of a new City Hall, replacing the outdated structure with a modern facility that better serves the needs of the residents and our city's administration today and into the future.

This project is fully funded through the city's capital improvement fund, ensuring that it moves forward without placing additional financial burdens on the community.

Next week, in Part Three, we will take a look at replacing our current City Hall, which was dedicated 46 years ago on October 27, 1979.

Livonia's Vision 21 is more than just a plan; it's a manifestation of the city's dedication to its residents and their future. By integrating community input at every stage, Livonia ensures that its development is reflective of the people's will and works toward building a city that is vibrant, inclusive, and resilient. As Livonia moves forward with this visionary plan, the city is poised to become a model of modern urban living, where progress and community go hand in hand.

**Get ready, Livonia—exciting times are ahead! We stand at the brink of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to transform a blank canvas into a thriving masterpiece. As Five Mile and Farmington comes to life, Livonia is poised to once again become a trendsetter, inspiring neighboring communities with our bold vision and unwavering commitment. The future is bright, and together, we will paint a picture of progress, prosperity, and unparalleled community spirit. Let's seize this moment and make history!**