

Addressing service concerns

I know many Livonia residents are concerned about how long it sometimes takes for city services to be rendered, from road repairs to park maintenance to property upkeep. Our Department of Public Works does an incredible job, but like many city departments, they are stretched thin and facing increasing demands.

As a candidate for Livonia City Council, I have created a schematic plan that could potentially help not only our residents, but also the Department of Public Works. This plan brings together three groups: our colleges, our residents, and our city government, to create partnerships that expand capacity, beautify our community, and keep costs low for taxpayers.

***Note: This proposal does not remove the city's responsibility to its residents. Instead, it creates a potential temporary or long-term support system that can complement city services and ease the burden on DPW while maintaining accountability.**

Livonia Community Works Partnership Plan

1. Supporting the Department of Public Works (DPW)

- **Volunteer & Internship Pipeline:** Partner with Schoolcraft College and Madonna University to place students as interns or volunteers in DPW projects (GIS mapping, storm drain stenciling, recycling education, park cleanups).
- **Skill-Based Placements:** Align student majors (environmental science, IT, construction management, and public administration) with practical city projects.
- **Workforce Development Link:** Provide pathways for students to consider DPW careers, addressing future staffing needs.

2. Connecting Students to the City

- **Livonia Civic Internship Program:** Students earn volunteer hours, credit, or resume experience by supporting city operations.
- **DPW Ambassadors:** Students act as connectors between campus and city, helping promote city services and sustainability.
- **Community Service Recognition:** Partner with local businesses and alumni groups to provide scholarships, stipends, or certificates to standout volunteers (privately funded).

3. Coalition of Resident Volunteers

- **“Livonia Neighbors in Action” Program:** Establish a coalition of residents who want to volunteer time for city property upkeep of libraries, parks, senior centers, and community

gateways. (While we pay taxes for these services, there are those who are willing to lend a hand.)

- **Expand Adopt-a-Park & Take Pride in Livonia Day:** Build on these successful programs by extending the same model to libraries, community gateways, and city-owned facilities.
- **Intergenerational Service:** Pair college students with resident volunteers and Livonia Service Corps members to foster mentorship and build stronger ties across the community.

4. Low-Cost Approach (Plan does not replace existing programs, but enhances where applicable)

- **Leverage What Already Exists:** Strengthen collaboration with:
 - **Livonia Service Corps** (yard cleanup, snow shoveling, minor home repairs)
 - **Parks & Recreation Volunteer Programs** (event staffing, ambassadors)
 - **Student Volunteer Program** (polling places, civic duties)
 - **Neighborhood Grants Program** (fund resident-led beautification efforts)
- **Minimal City Cost:** No new staff required - coordination handled through school career centers, Livonia Service Corps, and a single city point of contact.
- **Grant/Donation Support:** Seek funding from civic groups, state/federal grants, and local sponsors. (There are out there, if Livonia would apply)

5. Building on Programs & New Ideas

- **Civic Tech Projects:** Students assist with digitizing city records, mapping city services, and improving communication tools.
- **Green Livonia:** Residents, Service Corps volunteers, and students collaborate on tree planting, recycling audits, and beautification projects.
- **Community Works Day:** Expand Take Pride in Livonia into a larger annual event that brings students, residents, and DPW together for citywide service.
- **Business & Industry Partnerships:** Explore opportunities to work with the **I-275 Industrial Council** and other business groups to:
 - Sponsor community beautification projects.
 - Provide professional expertise or equipment support for DPW projects.
 - Offer internship pipelines into trade and technical jobs within Livonia.

Pros and Cons of the Plan

Pros

1. **Supports DPW Without New Taxes** - Expands capacity through volunteers and interns instead of adding payroll costs.

2. **Engages Students & Builds Workforce Pipeline** - Gives Schoolcraft and Madonna students practical experience while introducing them to careers in public service.
3. **Mobilizes Community Spirit** - Resident volunteer coalition strengthens neighborhood pride and ownership of city spaces.
4. **Beautifies Public Spaces** - Libraries, parks, and other city properties benefit from upkeep and improvements.
5. **Strengthens Town-Gown Relations** - Builds lasting ties between Livonia and its colleges, encouraging students to stay and invest locally.
6. **Adds Business Involvement** - Industrial council and local employers contribute resources and professional expertise.
7. **Integrates Existing Programs** - Service Corps, Adopt-a-Park, Take Pride in Livonia, Student Volunteers, and Neighborhood Grants are bolstered, not replaced.
8. **Flexible & Scalable** - Can start small with a few pilot projects, and then expand as more residents, students, and businesses join.
9. **Low-Cost & Sustainable** - Uses existing programs, leverages donations/grants, and minimizes administrative costs.

Cons / Challenges

1. **Coordination Needed** - Volunteers require scheduling, oversight, and clear expectations to ensure projects are done correctly.
 2. **Consistency of Participation** - Student volunteers may have limited availability due to semester schedules; resident volunteers may fluctuate.
 3. **Scope of Work Limitations** - Volunteers can't handle highly technical or hazardous tasks, so DPW staff must remain the backbone of operations.
 4. **Liability & Safety Concerns** - City must ensure proper waivers, insurance, and safety training for all participants.
 5. **Initial Buy-In Required** - Success depends on DPW, colleges, residents, Service Corps, and business partners being willing to collaborate and commit.
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Measuring Outcome of the Program

1. Participation Metrics (Inputs)

- **Number of student interns/volunteers placed** from Schoolcraft, Madonna, or other programs.
- **Number of resident volunteers** engaged through Service Corps, Adopt-a-Park, or the new coalition.
- **Number of businesses/organizations** (like the I-275 Industrial Council) that commit resources or sponsorships.
- **Growth of programs over time** (year-over-year increase in participants).

2. Impact Metrics (Outputs)

- **Projects completed** (e.g., libraries maintained, park cleanups, gateway beautifications, storm drains marked).
 - **City service response times improved** (measure whether DPW was able to complete more tasks faster due to volunteer support).
 - **Cost savings to the city** (estimate labor/equipment value contributed by volunteers vs. what it would have cost DPW).
 - **Grant or donation dollars leveraged** (how much outside funding/sponsorships were secured).
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3. Resident & Partner Satisfaction (Outcomes)

- **Resident feedback surveys:** ask if they've noticed improvements in city spaces or service times.
 - **Volunteer satisfaction surveys:** whether students/residents felt the experience was valuable and would participate again.
 - **DPW staff feedback:** whether the program helped ease workload and allowed staff to focus on higher-priority technical tasks.
 - **Retention rates:** how many student interns or volunteers return for a second term/year.
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4. Long-Term Success Indicators

- **Workforce pipeline created:** number of student interns who later pursue DPW or city-related careers.
- **Neighborhood pride/engagement:** increase in residents participating in events like *Take Pride in Livonia Day*.
- **Sustainability of the program:** whether partnerships continue without major increases in city costs.
- **Recognition:** City of Livonia could receive state or regional recognition for innovative civic engagement.

Conclusion

This is only an idea, and I welcome input on your thoughts. Livonia is fortunate to have people with varying experiences and professional backgrounds that could help make this plan even better. City Council is not a one person operation, it is a team effort. If elected, I will be reaching out for your input on topics regarding Livonia, because the best solutions come when we work together as a community.