Macomb Township
CHRONICLE

Chippewa Valley safety, infrastructure millage wins

Macomb Township residents vote in record-breaking turnout

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By Dean Vaglia



Early voting at the Macomb Township Recreation Center ran for nine days. Voters from around Macomb Township could have a ballot printed on demand, fill it out and tabulate it like they would on election day. Clerk Kristi Pozzi says early in-person voting is becoming more popular with 9,375 residents opting to do so in the 2026 general election.
Photo by Dean Vaglia

MACOMB TOWNSHIP — Chippewa Valley Schools will be able to start an ambitious infrastructure and technology upgrade campaign thanks to voters approving its bond proposal on Nov. 3.

Voters approved Chippewa Valley's school safety and improvement bond proposal with 28,291 votes in favor (60.74%) to 18,285 votes against (39.26%). The district is authorized to borrow $288 million and levy a millage to refund the borrowed amount. Proposal language allows for the millage to be set as high as 8.64 mills ($8.64 per $1,000 of taxable value), though the millage will begin at zero mills in 2026 and be set at 2.47 mills for the next 25 years.

What that millage will provide the district is a significant investment in its facilities in the name of safety, with Superintendent Adam Blanchard saying some projects will be underway soon.

"One of the biggest projects that we're going to tackle right away is the turf at Dakota's football field," Blanchard said. "It's beyond repair. While people would say, 'That's not a safety issue,' it is a safety issue. The turf is ripping and it is beyond repair. We can't seam it together anymore, so we'll be replacing that this summer. We'll be bidding that out."

While field turf addresses the safety of students at play, the safety of students in class is being addressed by the construction of district-wide security command center and upgrades to all Chippewa Valley Schools building safety systems to make them compatible with the command center.

"We'll have two full-time staff members actively monitoring a lot of our systems regarding school safety," Blanchard said. "For example, fire alarms, blue (emergency) pole stations, even door card swipe access, security cameras and all of that will be centrally monitored now, and we've not had that before. We've not had a system where everything communicates into one area, so this bond passing will allow us to provide that."

Blanchard stressed that the cameras involved with the safety improvements would not be Flock — a controversial license plate tracking network of cameras used by law enforcement agencies — but would be an internal system with all feeds streaming back to the command center, which is likely to be built at the district administration site at Cass Avenue in Clinton Township. Between $22 million and $23 million of the borrowed funds has been set aside for the security upgrades, which includes fire alarms, cameras, the command center, medical fobs for teachers and more. Personnel for the command center is not covered by the bond, and Blanchard expects three people will be hired. Two will monitor the facility across overlapping shifts for 12 hours, while the third will serve as backup.

Along with the command center and technology upgrades, $55 million of the funds have been budgeted for a three-year project to build a new Ottawa Elementary School. The new school will be located on the same property as the old Ottawa Elementary, with the old building getting demolished once construction is finished.

Other projects covered by the bond and millage include upgrading media centers in the elementary and middle schools, performing renovations to the elementary schools and replacing parking lots and boilers. The use of funds can be tracked at the Chippewa Valley Schools website under the "Our District" and "Budget Transparency" tabs.

Along with the proposal's approval, voters elected school board trustees to full and partial terms. Renee Kraft and Victoria Zucca won full six-year terms with 19,376 (30.37%) and 16,820 (26.37%) votes respectively, while incumbents Denise Aquino and Kenneth Pearl won partial terms ending Dec. 31, 2028, with 20,955 (33.44%) and 15,998 (25.53%) votes respectively.

New Haven Community Schools, a district which reaches into Macomb Township, had an uncontested school board race to fill three six-year terms. Incumbent Board President Tanya France and Board Secretary Regina Patton maintained their seats while Shana Mayer was voted onto the board.

As for the voting itself, Macomb Township Clerk Kristi Pozzi says the turnout was "electrifying" with a record-breaking midterm election turnout of 48,914 voters. The previous record was around 44,000 voters in 2022. Not only did more voters take part in the election compared to 2022, but there were more ways to vote; 1,914 voters opted to vote absentee while 9,375 utilized early in-person voting at the Macomb Township Recreation Center. Turnout on Election Day saw 20,525 people cast their ballots at precincts around the township.

"We've made some adjustments, and we always make some improvements after every election," Pozzi said. "The adjustments and improvements we made from August (primary election) and the previous years really played out in this election … I saw this election as a victory for Macomb Township, and that is due to all of the hard work by our election workers, the staff here in the Clerk's Office and the Macomb Township employees that participate in helping us."

Pozzi described Dlection Day as the Clerk's Office's "Super Bowl," with team members training ahead of time and planning for anything to happen. That training for contingencies came in handy as there were a few hiccups at precincts with electronic poll book laptops at four precincts needing to be rebooted due to error messages and a jammed tabulator at one precinct needing to be swapped out.

"All of our equipment is at end of life. We anticipate having to get new equipment in 2027," Pozzi said. "We definitely ran into some technical problems, but all manageable problems and issues that we're accustomed to."

Along with plans to get newer equipment, Pozzi says what the township will need for the next major election is more people.

"When you have that type of a turnout, it's incredible how many people you have to rely on to keep things running smoothly," Pozzi said. "I definitely plan on increasing the number of people I have out there to simply run things to precincts or training those that can address technical problems. The number that we have had in the past just isn't enough, so I'm going to increase that."

Pozzi encourages township residents to utilize whichever method of voting is most accommodating to them, putting particular emphasis on the nine early-voting days at the recreation center gym. Voters from all over the township can vote, allowing them to skip long lines on election day by getting their voice heard in advance. Absentee voting is also available for those who would rather vote from their home and have a ballot delivered to the township, either by the post office or directly by using one of the township's ballot drop-off boxes.

For more information about voting in Macomb Township, go to mtvoter.org or contact the Clerk's Office at (586) 992-0710-3 or elections@macomb-mi.gov.