

Construction of Livingston \$30 million municipal complex enters new phase

Posted by [LCraven](#) July 16, 2009 20:47PM

LIVINGSTON -- Contractors are almost done building the shell of Livingston's new, \$30 million municipal complex, the latest sign of the township's reinvention from a once-rural town to a bustling suburb.

The exterior construction at the Livingston Avenue site should all but end within two weeks, according to township manager Michele Meade. Workers will then begin preparing the inside of the 60,000-square-foot edifice, a phase expected to take about nine months.



Photo by David Gard/ New Jersey Local News Service Livingston's new municipal complex is scheduled to be complete in May.

"We expect the move-in date to be in the vicinity of May 2010," Meade said.

Township officials had initially considered renovating the old town hall, at a cost of \$5 million, and building a new, \$21-million police headquarters.

But they eventually opted for the more cost-effective option of combining police and municipal functions in a new building nearly twice the size of the former municipal building. It will serve a town whose population has nearly tripled in recent decades, to 28,000.

After the groundbreaking last summer, township offices and employees relocated to other sites in Livingston.

The bulk of municipal offices are temporarily housed at the township's Senior/Community Center on Hillside Avenue. Municipal court is at the township's former recreation building, on Robert Harp Drive.

Still to come is the demolition of the police station. The headquarters will be moved inside the new complex. Parking and exterior design features will take its place.

Also awaiting completion are the three tall archways that will face South Livingston Avenue and the building's clock tower.

While remediation of toxics and other materials on the building's footprint was more extensive than expected, Meade said, the township saved money by separating toxic substances before storing it. She said the project remains within its budget and timetable.

Initial funding for the project came through the sale of short-term notes with an interest rate of less than half a percent, Meade said. Those will be repaid with money raised from a future long-term bond sale, she said.

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