

Building Safety and Stewardship in Concord

A Community Statement in Support of a New Police Headquarters

Dear Mayor, City Councilors, City Manager, Chief of Police, Officer Dana Dexter, Incoming Councilors, and City Staff,

I am grateful for the time and energy you give to leading our city. I write to you today as a resident, an advocate, and a young community leader to share my perspective on the new police headquarters and to ask for your thoughtful support in moving this project forward.

My name is Fisto Ndayishimiye. I am a resident of Concord, a refugee who has made this city my home, and a young Black leader who has seen both the harm and the hope that come with our systems of law and public safety. I am writing today to say clearly: I support building a new police headquarters in Concord, and I believe our city must move forward with this project now, with discipline, transparency, and a larger vision of safety that includes everyone.

For a long time, I was not in this place. I worried about the price tag and the tax burden. Like many residents, I looked at the number of big projects on the horizon and wondered whether we were doing too much at once. I heard people say, “We can’t afford this,” and I understood exactly why they felt that way.

But caution can’t turn into paralysis. It cannot become a way of pretending that doing nothing is free. After walking through the current police station at 35 Green Street, studying the facts, and listening to many voices, I realized that “doing nothing” is not actually the responsible choice. It is simply choosing a more expensive and less safe future.

The building at 35 Green Street has served our city for nearly fifty years. It was built for a smaller city, a smaller department, and a very different era of policing. Today, officers, staff, and community members are navigating cramped hallways, improvised storage, outdated booking routes, undersized spaces for women, and a lobby that does not reflect what victims and families deserve when they come for help. The building has no realistic path to becoming what we need for the next thirty to fifty years. It is not a matter of comfort; it is a matter of safety, evidence integrity, dignity, and long-term cost.

I say this as someone who knows what it feels like to be vulnerable around police. As a Black refugee who has experienced fear and injustice, I do not use the word “safety” casually. I know many people in our city, especially people of color, immigrants, youth, and those with lived

experience of trauma, who hear “new police station” and feel worry, not comfort. I understand that. I carry those stories in my own body.

But that is exactly why I believe this project matters. A modern, well-designed headquarters is not a gift to the institution; it is an investment in doing the job the right way. It is a chance to make sure evidence is protected, victims are treated with dignity, officers are safer and better trained, and community space is designed for partnership instead of fear. It is a chance to connect policing to a broader community safety strategy that includes youth programs, mental health, housing stability, and neighborhood supports, not to replace them.

For those who are most worried about taxes, I want to be honest. This project will increase our tax bills. There is no honest way to deny that. But there is also no honest way to deny that waiting will increase them even more. Construction costs for specialized public buildings have risen sharply in recent years and are still rising. Every year we delay, we are not avoiding a cost; we are choosing to pay more later for the same or a weaker facility. We are also choosing to keep officers and the public in a building that everyone knows is past its useful life.

We must also remember that the city has already invested in this project. The site at 4 Bouton Street has been purchased. The design process has started. Millions have already been spent to develop a plan that meets modern standards for safety, evidence handling, and long-term growth. At this point, the real choice is not between “build” and “don’t build.” It is between building now with strong cost controls, or building later at a higher price, with more risk and more pressure on future budgets.

Supporting this project does not mean ignoring our other needs. Our children need a safe, modern middle school. Our families need fields, parks, and public spaces that are worthy of their energy and dreams. Our seniors need stability. Our local businesses need predictable taxes and clear communication. I do not pretend that it is easy to hold all of these needs together. But I believe we can be honest about the tradeoffs and still act with courage.

The way forward is not to put these priorities against each other, but to weave them into a single, honest story about who we are and what we are building. That is why, in my proposal, I call for more than just a building. I call for integrating the new headquarters into a broader Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan that commits our city to prevention, outreach, youth leadership, mental health partnerships, and neighborhood involvement.

In simple terms, this means:

A police headquarters that is designed for community-oriented policing, with spaces where residents, youth, service providers, and officers can meet, problem-solve, and build trust.

A commitment from city leaders to pursue cost reductions and value engineering, cutting what is not essential while protecting core safety, evidence handling, and victim services.

A transparent plan for how this project, the middle school, and other major investments fit together over time, so residents can see the full picture instead of feeling blindsided in pieces.

Clear, plain-language communication about what the tax impacts will be for a typical home, how long those impacts will last, and what steps the city will take to protect the most vulnerable households.

Regular reporting on how the new facility is being used: not just how many calls officers answer, but how often the space is used for community meetings, youth gatherings, victim support, and partnership with schools, nonprofits, and faith communities.

When I think about the Concord I want to help build, I think about a city that refuses to choose between safety and justice, between fiscal discipline and moral courage, between bricks and people. I think about a city that is honest about its past, including mistakes and injustices, and still brave enough to make the investments that a hopeful future requires.

I support this headquarters because I want our officers to be held to the highest standard in a facility that makes that standard possible. I support it because I want victims to walk into a space that respects their trauma and their dignity. I support it because I want young people, including those who have every reason to mistrust the system, to see a building that feels open, accountable, and connected to real opportunities and support.

I also support it because I believe in the responsibility that comes with citizenship. I came to this country as a refugee, with no guarantee that I would ever have a voice. Now I have one, and I want to use it to say: our city is strong enough to face hard truths, strong enough to make tough investments, and strong enough to hold our leaders and institutions accountable. We can demand transparency, cost control, equity, and a broader vision of safety—and still say yes when the time comes to make a decision.

This is that time.

To the Mayor and City Council: I urge you to move this project forward, with clear language about cost discipline, community engagement, and long-term planning.

To the residents who are struggling: I ask you to look beyond the fear of a single number and see the larger picture of what doing nothing really costs.

To those who have suffered negative experiences with law enforcement: I stand with you. I carry that pain with you. And I still believe that building a better home for public safety, paired with a deeper commitment to justice and prevention, is our best path to real change.

We cannot rewrite the mistakes of the past. But we can decide what kind of city we will be for the next generation. I believe that saying yes to this project, wisely, critically, and strongly, is part of that decision.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your willingness to consider this perspective. I respectfully ask that this letter and the attached proposal be circulated to the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, Chief of Police, Officer Dana Dexter, incoming councilors, and other relevant city staff, and that it be read in the spirit in which it is offered: not as a demand, but as a sincere call for safety, stewardship, and shared responsibility in the city we all love.

I also respectfully ask that this letter and proposal be made public so the community can access it in full.

Best regards,

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