

# As crime lab budget balloons, list reveals KCMO paid about \$3.5 million to buy homes

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By: Ryan Kath

KANSAS CITY, Mo. - Questions remain about why Kansas City officials misfired so badly on the cost to build a new crime lab and police station on the city's east side.

Once proposed as a \$57 million state-of-the-art project, the latest figures have soared to \$74 million. The higher price tag has forced talk of scaling down the lab's blueprint and finding other funding mechanisms .

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City officials acknowledge the original estimate fell short of specifics and they should have formulated a line-by-line budget earlier in the planning process. As a result, the cost to acquire land, design the building and purchase furnishings were higher than anticipated.

To make way for the new East Patrol campus, the city needed to purchase 128 parcels in a four square-block area near 27th and Prospect Avenue. A list obtained by 41 Action News shows the total cost to buy all the properties was about \$3.5 million.

That number could change slightly based on recent appeals from homeowners, but 41 Action News is still awaiting the updated figures. Prices of the homes varied significantly. Some properties fetched a six-figure sale price. Others were acquired for just a few thousand dollars.

When asked how the \$3.5 million amount compared to the original estimate, city spokesman Chris Hernandez said no such figure existed. Hernandez said the \$57 million estimate was put together through a rough formula that did not drill down to individual costs like land acquisition and relocating residents.

The rough estimate also based some of its information on crime lab projects like the new one recently constructed in Johnson County. However, that project would have vastly different land acquisition costs since it was built on vacant land.

To negotiate sales prices, Kansas City offered the highest of three appraisals to property owners. If the home was owner-occupied, an extra 25 percent was included in the price. An even higher offer accompanied a home that had been in a family for more than 50 years.

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PaulPotter

Its not just a crime lab..it is a Police campus..the Crime lab is not the only piece of the puzzle. BTW...if you did not want to build it in the urban core...it would have been MUCH cheaper....but oh...let's try to renew the area and make it safe..how is that working?

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