

# City takes step closer to fully funding new East Patrol crime lab

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. - Kansas City remains \$6 million short of the \$80 million it would need to build a new crime lab police have asked for, with less than a month to go before a deadline to issue bonds in September. advertisement

City Manager Troy Schulte told the city council on Thursday that coming up with an additional \$14 million dollars to add to the \$60 million already allocated to the new East Patrol station and crime lab would be "difficult," but "probably manageable."

Schulte's plan would involve issuing bonds and cutting budgets for ambulance replacement and building maintenance.

He said that finding an additional \$600,000 per year over the next decade to service debt and reach \$80 million would require public safety cuts he was not comfortable recommending.

"It's not that we don't desire to do the \$20 million additional improvements to the East Patrol crime lab, we just don't have a way to pay for it," Schulte said.

But Police Commissioner Lisa Pelofsky said the police auditor believed the \$600,000 could be shaved from KCPD's \$200 million dollar budget. Pelofsky told 41 Action News the funding could come from health plan savings or other areas.

At stake is the size and scope of the lab, which will be built alongside the new station at 27th and Prospect.

The lab's director and other proponents of the full-scale, 71,000 square-foot lab say more than doubling the size of the city's current lab is necessary to help reduce backlogs on testing that can last many months. They say the new lab could also keep pace with a growing city that continues to struggle with violent crime.

Failing to hit the \$80 million budget target means the new lab would have to shrink. It would still dwarf the city's current lab, but with less room for future growth and new technology.

Councilman John Sharp, who chairs the city's public safety committee, argued that fully funding the lab fits with the city's data-driven approach towards improvements.

"Nothing could be more related to scientific methods than a full size lab that has the space to expand in the years ahead," Sharp said.

In the absence of detail from police auditors about how they would come up with the \$600,000 per year, no vote was held today.

The city must finalize a budget for the new East Patrol campus before bonds must be issued on September 11th.

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