

New Kansas City crime lab gets downsized due to budget cuts

Posted: 06/27/2013



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KANSAS CITY, Mo. - For the last 18 months of anticipating Kansas City's brand new East Patrol police station and a state-of-the-art crime lab, city leaders say they do not have enough money and will have to downsize.

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An entire neighborhood of homes is being wiped out to make space for the \$74 million facility on a 17 acre lot near 27th Street and Prospect Avenue, but acquiring that land has cost the city way more than expected.

"More than 60 homes had to be bought," city spokesman Danny Rotert said. "Then we had to pay to move those families. None of that was in the original budget."

Rotert also said some of the soft costs like architectural fees and utility fees were not accounted for.

As a result, the budget is being reduced by about \$7 million, which will shrink the size of the facility from 71,000 square feet to 51,000 square feet.

"It still has all the great state-of-art technologies that we need to really be able to help police solve crimes," Rotert said.

Linda Netzel is the director of the existing crime lab and disagrees completely. She said cutting the budget will eliminate the space that would be used to add about 25 new positions, and adding to the facility in the future wouldn't be practical.

"We have specialized water sources, we have gas lines that need to come in, we have certain electrical needs we have to make sure that the instrumentation doesn't shutdown," Netzel said.

Lisa Pelofsky is the president of the Board of Police Commissioners and claimed for years the crime lab has had a backlog of DNA tests, and cutting the budget for the new lab will make it difficult for those cases to be solved.

"These aren't just cases," Pelofsky said. "They are representative of families that are suffering , and we want to give them closure."

Pelofsky said she is looking for additional funding through grants and private donations.

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