

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEW COUNTY CAMPUS TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY, INCREASE EFFICIENCY

County officials are preparing to move forward with the purchase of a 22.9-acre site in Columbus, on the County's west side, on which to co-locate the Franklin County jail, (currently located at 370 S. Front Street in Downtown Columbus) and the County's Morgue facility (located on the Ohio State University's campus at 520 King Avenue).

Last year, Commissioners announced plans to begin the process to replace the downtown jail in order to address the expense of operating and staffing the antiquated facility and to improve safety for the law enforcement personnel employed at the jail as well as the inmates and the community. The current downtown jail was built in 1968, has 600 beds and costs an estimated \$60 million a year to operate.

Commissioners also acknowledged last year that the County's Morgue must move before 2018 in order to make way for a planned expansion of OSU's medical campus.

As a result, Franklin County Commissioners, with the support of both the County Sheriff and Coroner, initiated the process of identifying possible alternative sites for a new jail, future potential consolidation of both County jail facilities and the relocation of the morgue, evaluating both private and publically-owned sites throughout the County.

The 22.9 acre site located at 2551 Fisher Road was identified as the best location for a new Franklin County Public Safety Campus because of its large size, and it being a clean, clear and undeveloped site - formerly a dairy farm - with utilities, which is zoned M-3, Manufacturing District, and surrounded by other county and city law enforcement facilities.

The location is also attractive because of its close proximity to Interstate I-70, the Downtown Government Campus, and a main COTA bus line which is located on McKinley Avenue.

Next Tuesday, during the Commissioners' regularly scheduled weekly General Session meeting, the Board is expected to discuss a purchase agreement in the amount of \$1.26 million for the site. Acquiring the site now provides the County the ability to begin the necessary planning for the new complex.

Next steps include program development and determining the functional requirements of the facility which are expected to take two years, followed by design and construction with the goal of opening the facility in Spring, 2018.

Total construction costs are estimated to be approximately \$150 million for the jail and \$50 million for a new morgue.