

NEWS RELEASE

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Cape Girardeau Police Department Will Move to Arena Park

The future of public safety in Cape Girardeau will take a major step forward with City Council approving acceptance of a deed on Monday which is the next milestone toward a new police station in the city. Once Council accepts the deed, the City of Cape Girardeau will start designing a new police station next to Arena Park.

“To empower our officers to help keep Cape safe, we need a facility that accommodates current policing methods and the volume of work,” said Police Chief Wes Blair. “Our officers have done the most they can with what they have but it is time to move.”

The Cape Girardeau Police Department’s need for a new facility became apparent as the daytime population and calls for service grew. Though the residential population of the city is still less than 40,000, current estimates place the daytime population over 100,000.

Responding to more than 140 calls for service per day, on top of other growing commitments, the work of policing has also become increasingly more sophisticated and technical. The current building cannot effectively accommodate all of the detectives, evidence specialists, technology and other resources. The new station will also accommodate legislative changes requiring additional evidence retention and accessibility requirements.

Safety issues also top the list for reasons to move to a new station. The jail is too small and should be located on the first floor with a secure entrance. The new facility will be designed to properly separate prisoners, the public and employees.

The property at 2530 Maria Louise Lane on the edge of Arena Park has always been owned by the City. The building currently on the property was owned by the Army Reserve. The Reserve had been leasing the property from the City since 1968 until vacating the building in 2014. The City negotiated with the Army Corps of Engineers to assume ownership of the building at no cost to the City.

“We really like the location. It is in the center of the city next to Kingshighway which gives us quick access to the city from the Business Park, to downtown, or the airport,” said Chief Blair. “Our patrol and traffic officers on the streets will have easy access to headquarters, too.”

Plans for the new station will be developed over the coming months. Police and other City officials will weigh the costs of renovation or rebuilding. The City has contracted with FGM Architects to evaluate the existing building and determine what changes could be needed to meet the Police Department’s and Municipal Court’s needs.

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“This city has come a long way since the fire and police departments shared a little building at Frederick and Independence,” said Mayor Harry Rediger. “With the support of voters, staff and our City Council, we can get ready for the future.”

When voters approved the Fire Sales Tax and Public Safety Trust Fund in November 2014, they approved a plan to pay for a new police station from a combination of sales, restaurant gross receipts and casino taxes. Early estimates priced the building or renovation at \$11 million. By using an existing City owned property and an existing building, more funding could be allocated to meeting the Police Department’s needs. In addition, there will likely be enough funding to move the Municipal Court into the police station project. City Hall, where the Court is currently located, does not have the proper facilities to secure prisoners and the public on court days. Transporting the prisoners to and from City Hall would no longer be necessary.

The new location announcement comes on the heels of the new budget year that starts July 1, 2015. The City Council approved adding two new police officers, three new jailers at the Police Department and one code inspector in the Inspections Division at City Hall.

Summary of Police Station Funding Sources

The following outlines how a replacement Police facility will be funded based on current estimates.

Restaurant Tax: \$4.2 million
Fire Tax: \$4.0 million
Casino Funds: \$2.8 million
Total: \$11 million

Related Resources

About the Cape Girardeau Police Department & Station History
<http://www.cityofcape.org/police>

Police Station Needs Study (To Council, FGM Architects, Nov. 2013)
<https://www.cityofcapegirardeau.org/uploads/Main/PublicSafety/Police/FGM-Police-Station-.pdf>

Open House Comments Regarding Current Police Station (March 2014)
<http://blog.cityofcapegirardeau.org/what-people-said-about-the-police-department/>

Fire Sales Tax and Public Safety Trust Fund
<http://www.cityofcape.org/firesalestax>

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