



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Security Concerns at Courthouse Prompt Facilities Improvement Plan *Renovation/Construction Project Presented for Commissioners' Consideration*

CHAMBERSBURG, PA (January 3, 2018) – The safety and security of county residents and staff is critical. If security at the courthouse is questionable, the quality of justice for all citizens is affected.

In 2009, security issues and space constraints in the Franklin County courthouse led to the completion of studies which justified an improvement project, but a downturn in the economy put the project on hold. Since then, Franklin County's population has continued to grow and so has the need for facilities improvements. On January 3rd, the Commissioners were presented with a proposed plan for a court facilities improvement project that was well received by the over 100 people in attendance representing various businesses, organizations, and communities from across the county.

"The safety, security and inefficiency of our courthouse and related offices is a very real problem. The information that was presented to us today is certainly a comprehensive and well thought out solution to the problem and is definitely worthy of our consideration," said Commissioner and Board Chairman, Dave Keller, in response to the presentation.

Presented plans include the renovation of existing buildings and the construction of a courthouse facility to be located downtown, adjacent to the Old Courthouse. The new courthouse facility would consolidate court operations as well as expand the downtown plaza to better highlight the historic Old Courthouse and honor our county heritage. The project calls for the demolition of the former Chambersburg Trust Building, along with two vacant commercial buildings on North Main Street. The PA Historic Commission has been involved in the planning process.

The project is strategically planned to answer the need for safety, security, and adequate space; to maximize efficiency for county employees, court staff, and the public; and to ensure the most effective use of tax payer dollars.

“There is no denying that Franklin is among the fastest growing counties in PA, and this will continue,” stated Commissioner Bob Thomas. “The demands for judicial related services have also grown dramatically. This project, if completed, will serve our county well into the future.” Commissioner Thomas also commented on building accessibility by saying, “These buildings will be convenient for those with physical disabilities and to me, that’s one thing that will be fixed here.”

By making improvements to existing county buildings and land, offices would be co-located for convenience to those visiting and working in the courthouse and would result in a cost-savings of around \$8 million over 20 years. The total proposed improvement plan would cost approximately \$67 million, and if approved, the cost to a Franklin County homeowner owning a \$150,000 home would be about \$29 per year.

Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski noted that the need for this project is well established. “The questions have been, ‘Where should it be located?’, ‘How much will it cost?’, and ‘When do we move forward?’ Today we are much closer to answering those questions.”

The Commissioners invite feedback while they consider this project proposal. Open Houses will be scheduled and dates will be posted on the county’s website and Facebook page.

Please email questions and comments to: facilityprojectinfo@franklincountypa.gov.

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