



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Site plan for Elkhart County's consolidated courts determined

Study shows entrance from Rieth Blvd. not a safe option

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Elkhart County, Indiana (June 15, 2021) – A site plan and physical layout for Elkhart County's new Consolidated Courts project has been selected. The site plan, designed to maximize use of the 23-acre plot of land adjacent to Reliance Road at the western edge of Goshen, is one of two site plans that were under consideration. The building itself will be 4 stories tall with 13 individual courtrooms.

Among the many decisions to be made regarding the site plan, was where to locate the main entrance. Due to findings of a traffic study commissioned by the County and the City of Goshen, the entrance will now be on Reliance Road (Old County Road 17), rather than at the intersection of County Road 17 and Rieth Boulevard. "Basically it (the Rieth Boulevard intersection) doesn't meet the criteria," said Charlie McKenzie, Manager of Transportation for Elkhart County. "The steepness of the bank – it's called super elevation – along the curve on County Road 17, is too steep to build an additional leg as an access road. It would create a situation where there'd be a bump, per se. It would be unsafe for the public."

"A lot of tough decisions like where to locate the main entrance have now been made," commented Suzie Weirick, President of the Elkhart County Commissioners. "This has only been possible through the collective work of our county leadership – especially our courts and law enforcement leaders who will use this new facility for generations to come."

"After three decades of talk about a more efficient, conveniently located courts campus, we're finally making big progress," added Brad Rogers, County Commissioner, District 2. "This is a win for everyone in Elkhart County whether they live in one of our large cities, or any of our smaller towns."

“You only do something like this once in a lifetime,” commented Frank Lucchese, Vice President, Elkhart County Commissioners. “So, while we’re moving at a good pace, we’re also making sure that the right people are participating in the visioning and planning sessions. As a result, this will be the best conceived and constructed court system we’ve ever had.”

On November 14, 2021, the Elkhart County Council approved a request from the Elkhart County Commissioners to purchase 32 acres of land along Reliance Road in Goshen. This location, which is central to every city and town in Elkhart County, is where the estimated \$80 million Elkhart County consolidated courts campus will be built.”

“We still have a lot to do,” added Weirick. “But we’re finally getting close to the point where we can start considering the architectural design – or, what the building will look like. And it’s still our intent to break ground sometime this fall.”

THE PUBLIC PROCESS

Elkhart County Government is committed to keeping constituents informed as the project moves forward. A website with frequently asked questions, key facts and an evolving timeline has been created as part of the process. The address is www.SmartCourtsProject.com.

ABOUT THE ELKHART COUNTY SMART COURTS PROJECT

The genesis of a consolidated Elkhart County Courthouse system goes back to 1992. The project has been discussed as a necessary improvement since that time.

Beginning in January 2018 and concluding in July of 2020, more than two dozen locations were studied by Elkhart County government as potential sites for the consolidated campus. The studies included sites in downtown Goshen and downtown Elkhart.

On September 12, 2020 an initial bond agreement was approved in the amount of \$35 million for the first phase in financing to purchase land, design and build the new courthouse.

On November 14, 2020, the Elkhart County Council unanimously approved the purchase of 32 acres of vacant property at 1905 Reliance Road in Goshen as the location for the new consolidated courts campus.

On December 9/10, 2020, the TRC interviewed 8 design/build teams. On December 15, 2020, the TRC narrowed the field of design/build teams down to three. The three finalists were interviewed a second time on January 12, 2021.

On January 12, 2021, the TRC interviewed three finalists for the project and assigned 16 Qualitative Scores to each design/build team. The TRC’s Qualitative Scores were submitted to the County Commissioners on the same day, and the Commissioners approved the submission unanimously at that time.

On January 19, 2021, Elkhart County Commissioners voted unanimously to hire Indianapolis-based design firm Performance Services and their partner Goshen-based Ancon Construction to

design and build the new Consolidated Courts project on 32 acres at 1905 Reliance Road in Goshen.

On January 26, 2021, Elkhart County Commissioners hosted the first of several visioning sessions with participants who use the current county courts system on a daily basis. The three-hour session was designed to provide input on core values and objectives that will be used in the design process for the new consolidated courts system.

From February through May, 2021, visioning sessions and workshops with court and law enforcement personnel, countywide leaders, contractors and planners have continued. Dozens of sessions have been held to determine as many of the basic facets of the new consolidated courts campus as possible. The next phase of the process, expected to begin within 45 days, will be the design process.

ABOUT ELKHART COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Elkhart County is governed by a board of three County Commissioners. The board of Commissioners constitutes the legislative body of the county for ordinance purposes and also serves as the executive branch for Elkhart County government.

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