



Department of  
**General  
Services**



Department of Forensic  
Science and Chief  
Medical Examiner Office  
Facility Update

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# Department of Forensic Science (DFS) Laboratory

## Facility Purpose of DFS:

- Provide a space to conduct laboratory testing services in criminal matters in the Commonwealth of Virginia
- Provide training space to advance the understanding of forensic science in order to promote public safety



# Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) Facility

## Facility Purpose of OCME

- Provide a space to perform autopsies to certify cause and manner of death
- Provide training space to educate peers and professionals on subjects related to death investigation





# Existing DFS and OCME Facility

- Located at 700 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street, BioTech 2 Building in the Virginia BioTech Park
- 134,106 sq. ft. located on 2.35 acres with 112 parking spaces
- Constructed as a build-to-suit by Biotech Authority
- DFS and OCME moved into the facility in 1998
- Facility does not provide adequate space for:
  - Growing state-of-the-art equipment needs
  - Staff numbers that have doubled in size



# General Assembly Actions to Address Facility Deficiencies

- 2014—Chapter 2: Begin design to expand the existing facility
- 2016—Chapter 759: \$127,027,000 in funding to complete design and construct the expansion
- 2018—Chapter 2: Authorized expansion or construct a new facility at the current site or another site, no additional funding authorized



# Design Expansion Limitations

Design expansion limitations prohibited DGS from meeting the DFS and OCME operational needs, resulting in the 2018 decision to authorize the option of a new facility

- Significant upgrades of existing building were required to meet fire and hazardous material building code
- Fire ratings required extensive firewall construction or the new building to be separated by 30 ft. from the existing building with connecting bridge corridors



# Design Expansion Limitations

- Expanding OCME space created a multiple floor layout that was not acceptable for conducting autopsies
- Underground parking was not fiscally feasible or practical due to very high water table and toxic soil levels
- Inadequate fire department access

# Plan for New Facility

DGS and DFS began planning a new facility, as authorized in 2018

- 2019—DGS conducted a competitive process to purchase land for the new facility
- 2020—Schematic design complete
- 2021—1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2021, preliminary design complete and cost estimate for the new facility obtained



# New Facility Description

- Address: Times Dispatch Boulevard, located in Hanover, VA
- 281,295 sq. ft. on 21.8 acres
- New facility provisions:
  - Adequate space and parking
  - Land for future expansion
  - Incorporates state-of-the-art technology for equipment and building systems
  - Enhanced security and monitoring systems





# New Facility Funding

- Estimated design and construction cost: \$201,520,150
- Funding authorized from Chapter 759: \$127,027,000
- Supplemental funding needed: \$74,493,150
- Funding needed by Jan. 2022 to keep project on schedule
- In 2020 Special Session 1 (Ch. 56), the General Assembly authorized a supplemental funding pool of \$170,700,000
  - \$25,000,000 specifically authorized for the GAB tunnel to the Capitol
  - Balance of \$145,700,000 authorized to supplement previously approved capital projects
- Funds intended to be transferred between capital project pools and specific projects, including the DFS/OCME facility



# New Facility Funding

- DGS briefed the DFS/OCME facility funding need to the Capital Outlay Advisory Committee established by the General Assembly in 2008
  - Committee agreed the funding and authority exists to transfer the Chapter 56 funds to the DFS/OCME facility project
  - Committee agreed the General Assembly money committees should be informed
- Funds will be transferred to fund the project and maintain the current schedule, unless otherwise directed, to avoid an additional annual escalation of \$8 million