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New Stockton Courthouse Design Previewed *First Phase of Architectural Design Nears Completion*

STOCKTON—Local government leaders and the public will receive the first public preview of the design of the long-awaited New Stockton Courthouse at tonight's city council meeting, when Justice William J. Murray, Jr., appointed last month to the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, and former presiding judge of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County, will share a brief presentation on the project's progress. Current Presiding Judge Robin Appel and representatives from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which is managing the project, will also be on hand to answer questions. The city council meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

The architecture firm for the new courthouse project is NBBJ. The first design phase is nearly complete, and while construction is not scheduled to start until fall 2012, the building's architectural significance to downtown Stockton already is becoming apparent. The new courthouse will be located on what is now Hunter Square, which has been donated by the city. The 13-story building will be the tallest in Stockton. It will house 30 courtrooms, a significantly improved jury assembly area, and more space for support services and staff areas than the current courthouse, which is overcrowded and inadequate.

The front plaza, with a water feature, will face Weber Avenue. An 80-foot-long art wall is planned, illustrating historic scenes from Stockton's past. The building's exterior design, with walls clad in natural stone, will convey a sense of permanence and judicial dignity. The architecture balances both classical elements and the modern requirements and scale of a major high-rise structure. A significant roof overhang will establish a strong and dignified presence. The new courthouse will contain numerous security improvements, such as completely separate circulation for the public, staff, and in-custody defendants. Unlike the current building, the new courthouse will be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

People summoned for jury service will no longer report to a dark, windowless basement assembly area. Instead, they will congregate in the 12th floor jury assembly room. A west-facing terrace for jurors will provide a comfortable outdoor waiting space and offer unique views of the Weber Point Events Center, the Delta, and Mt. Diablo. Jurors will no longer be required to wait in public hallways; they will assemble in jury deliberation rooms behind the courtrooms, in a secure area of the new building.

The design also incorporates numerous sustainability features, enough to qualify it for a LEED Gold rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. The design emphasizes natural lighting in all courtrooms, and special window coatings will be used to reduce heat gain while letting in daylight.

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Photovoltaic panels on the roof are planned to power nighttime lighting. Water conservation measures including low-flow plumbing fixtures and drought-tolerant plantings. The design's high-efficiency heating and cooling features include a system to store ice at night, taking advantage of off-peak power to minimize energy use in the building's air-conditioning system.

The new courthouse is expected to generate hundreds of construction jobs and thousands more through its indirect benefit to the local economy. The project's construction-manager-at-risk, Turner Construction, will conduct local outreach to ensure that qualified local subcontractors and suppliers have the opportunity to participate in bidding, which is currently scheduled for summer 2012.

The project, with a total estimated cost of \$272.9 million, is being funded from the State Court Facilities Construction Fund, which comes from court fees, penalties, and assessments, rather than the state General Fund.

The city council presentation will be the first of several made to the public. More information about the project, including architectural rendering images, can be found on the California Courts website at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects_sanjoaquin.htm

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