



**NEWS RELEASE** OC 29-11  
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## **Sacramento Railyards Preferred Site for New Criminal Courthouse**

SAN FRANCISCO—The city block bounded by H Street on the south, 5th Street on the west, G Street on the north and 6th Street on the east is now the preferred site for the new Sacramento Criminal Courthouse, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) announced today. The site, Lot 41-Railyards, was endorsed today as the preferred site by the project advisory group, which includes members of the Superior Court of Sacramento County, city and county officials, and the AOC. The block, part of which is currently a city parking lot, is at the southernmost end of the Sacramento Railyards project, near existing court facilities and key justice partners, with ready access to transportation, including Amtrak, **light rail**, and bus service.

Presiding Judge Steve White of the Superior Court of Sacramento County said, “Our present courthouse, which is almost 50 years old, is much too small and inadequate to handle the large volume of criminal cases being tried. This moves our court a step closer to providing our citizens a modern, efficient, and workable courthouse. Those using this old insecure facility have suffered too long with an inadequate, overcrowded, and badly designed courthouse.”

The Railyards site has received strong support from community leaders, including a June 2010 resolution by the Sacramento City Council and the County of Sacramento in favor of the site for the new courthouse, because it would jump-start vertical development and provide an opportunity for a landmark building in the area. The city is working with the Railyards owner, Inland American, to relocate railroad tracks that currently run through the site.

“I am pleased to hear that the Sacramento Railyards has been identified as the preferred site for the new courthouse,” said Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson. “This site will truly benefit both the city and the court. The project will represent a major investment in Sacramento and serve as a catalyst for future development, as well as provide the court with an ideal location to operate effectively and efficiently.”

“We are extremely pleased that the Railyards site has been chosen and look forward to helping move the project forward in any way that we can,” said Roberta MacGlashan, chair of the county board of supervisors. “This project will undoubtedly be a landmark structure in the new Railyards project and will help stimulate economic recovery in the region.”

“The Railyards is the most appropriate site for the new state criminal courthouse due to its close proximity to the county jail, sheriff’s department, District Attorney’s Office, and the Public Defender’s Office, as well as transit services, bail bond, and law offices,” said Supervisor Susan Peters.

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The AOC recently published its draft environmental impact report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which includes two sites: the Railyards site and 301 Capitol Mall. The AOC will accept public comments on the draft EIR through May 24, 2011; a public meeting on the draft EIR is planned for May 4, 2011. The AOC must conclude its environmental review, complete due diligence and acquisition negotiations, and secure approval by the State Public Works Board before site acquisition can be completed and architectural design can proceed. The local architecture firm of Nacht & Lewis and the global firm of HOK already have been selected to design the proposed new courthouse.

The new courthouse, 405,000 square feet and up to 16 stories tall, would provide 44 courtrooms (35 to be relocated from the Gordon D. Schaber Courthouse and 9 for new judicial positions), would consolidate most of the court's criminal operations, and would centralize court operations from other downtown leased facilities. The proposed project includes a renovation of the Schaber Courthouse, and the AOC is also making plans for public parking options as a part of the project.

The proposed project is funded by Senate Bill 1407, enacted by the state Legislature in 2008 to authorize up to \$5 billion for 41 new and renovated court facilities using court user fees, without impact on the state's General Fund. This project was ranked as an "immediate need" in the judicial branch's capital-outlay plan, making it among the branch's highest-priority infrastructure projects. The project is expected to generate economic benefit in the form of thousands of jobs, both those directly related to the construction effort and others indirectly affected by it. Construction is scheduled to start in early 2013 and be completed in 2015.

More about the project is on the California Courts website: [www.courts.ca.gov/2761.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/2761.htm).

For media interviews with Judge Robert C. Hight, who chairs the new courthouse committee of the Superior Court of Sacramento County, please contact Gerald Root, Public Information Office, 916-591-0050.

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