



NEWS RELEASE OC 39-10
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New Porterville Courthouse Design Receives Approval

SAN FRANCISCO—The State Public Works Board (SPWB) today approved preliminary plans for the new Porterville Courthouse. The new facility, to be located at 300 East Olive Avenue in Porterville, will become the South Justice Center for the Superior Court of Tulare County, consolidating court operations from the existing Porterville Courthouse and one courtroom from the Tulare-Pixley Court.

“This building is critical to our being able to function as a court,” said Judge Glade Roper of the Superior Court of Tulare County. “We have struggled under the burden of trying to keep afloat for so long in a facility that was designed for about a tenth of the people that we currently serve. At the same time, we expect it to revitalize the downtown area of the city. We are excited that the project is moving along. It cannot be built soon enough for us.”

The new three-story building will house 9 courtrooms in 90,000 square feet. The design, by CO Architects, features an expansive covered courtyard facing Olive Avenue that serves as a grand public gathering space. This three-story open space unites two wings of the building and serves as a focal point from the major public spaces. The first floor includes security screening, public service counters, a self-help center, a family mediation area with children’s waiting room, and two courtrooms. A jury assembly room on the second floor includes an outdoor rooftop gathering space and views of the courtyard and a living roof. Courtrooms and related spaces occupy the rest of the second floor and the third floor. One of the building’s major design features is use of natural daylight in all courtrooms.

The building is being designed with sustainability in mind, and is expected to receive LEED Silver certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. Sustainability features include careful choice of building materials, practices to minimize construction waste, energy-efficiency measures including solar water heating, ample use of natural light, and high-efficiency heating and cooling systems, as well as drought-tolerant landscaping using native plants and a high-efficiency irrigation system.

The approval by SPWB marks completion of the preliminary plans phase and enables the project to move into working drawings. Construction is scheduled to begin in summer 2011, but before that, Sundt Construction, Inc., the project’s construction-manager-at-risk, is performing local outreach to ensure that local subcontractors and local suppliers have the opportunity to participate in prequalification and bidding. Prequalification will take place beginning in late 2010 or early 2011, and Sundt is scheduled to solicit bids for construction in spring 2011. Construction is scheduled to be completed in January 2013.

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The \$91.2 million project, managed by the Administrative Office of the Courts, is funded from the State Court Facilities Construction Fund, rather than drawing on the state's General Fund.

Project information can be found on the California Courts Web site at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects_tulare.htm.

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