



Two Sites Approved for Sacramento Criminal Courthouse

SAN FRANCISCO—The State Public Works Board today approved selection of two sites for a proposed new courthouse in downtown Sacramento for the Superior Court of Sacramento County. The two sites include:

- A vacant lot on the Capitol Mall
- A site in the Sacramento Railyards across the street from the Federal Courthouse

Steve White, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Sacramento County, said, “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 proposed new courthouse would provide 44 courtrooms, 35 of which will be relocated from the Gordon D. Schaber Courthouse and 9 for new judicial positions, and would consolidate most of the court’s criminal operations as well as centralize court operations from other downtown leased facilities. The Schaber Courthouse was built in 1965 with only 22 courtrooms and is now operating at double that capacity, making it very overcrowded. The Schaber Courthouse also lacks security features that are critical for the safe operation of criminal caseloads.

The two site candidates are the result of an extensive site selection process conducted by the AOC with assistance and input from a project advisory group composed of local government representatives and judges of the Superior Court. Site selection approval will enable the AOC to begin negotiations and further due diligence that will ultimately help it determine a preferred site. The AOC expects to complete site acquisition in one year and complete the project in early 2015. The local architecture firm of Nacht & Lewis and the global firm of HOK have already been selected to design the proposed new 405,000-square-foot courthouse.

The new courthouse project, with an estimated total cost of \$439.1 million, is among 41 projects to be funded by Senate Bill 1407, which finances critically needed courthouse construction, renovation, and repair through a portion of judicial branch fees, penalties, and assessments and does not impose a burden on the state’s general fund. This project, which will also include a renovation of the Schaber Courthouse, was ranked as an “Immediate Need” in the judicial branch’s capital-outlay plan, making it among the branch’s highest-priority infrastructure projects.

More about the project can be found on the California Courts Web site at http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects_sacramento_crim.htm

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.