



NEWS RELEASE OC 79-11
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Site Selection Approved for New Santa Clarita Courthouse

SAN FRANCISCO—The State Public Works Board (SPWB) today approved selection of the preferred site in the unincorporated Castaic Junction area of the Santa Clarita Valley for a new courthouse proposed for the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. The proposed site is located near the intersection of The Old Road and Henry Mayo Drive, close to the interchange of the Interstate 5 and SR-126 freeways. The 6.1-acre privately held parcel is situated close to a new and master-planned development west of town.

Los Angeles County is working on an exchange of equity in the existing courthouse to supplement the property acquisition. Site selection approval allows the state Administrative Office of the Courts, which is managing the project, to undertake further due diligence, an environmental assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act, and negotiations that will ultimately result in finalization of the site. Site selection and environmental review, as well as site acquisition, which also requires SPWB approval, must be complete before architectural design of the new courthouse can begin. Site acquisition is currently scheduled to be completed by late 2012. The architecture firm of Moore Ruble Yudell has been selected to design the new courthouse.

The proposed project will house four courtrooms in approximately 54,000 square feet, with available space for future expansion of up to six additional courtrooms. The planned project will replace two unsafe, overcrowded, and physically deficient court facilities: the Santa Clarita Courthouse and Annex. The current schedule calls for construction to begin in fall 2014 and be completed in early 2016, subject to change.

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. It is funded by Senate Bill 1407, enacted in 2008 to provide up to \$5 billion in funding for new and renovated courthouses using court fees, penalties, and assessments rather than the state’s General Fund. The state Budget Act for fiscal year 2011–2012 contains significant cuts to the account that funds SB 1407 projects. These cuts may cause delays in SB 1407 projects and project budget reductions but are not expected to delay this project’s progress in the current fiscal year.

More information about the project may be found at the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/facilities-la-santaclarita.htm.

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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.