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FACT SHEET

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Improving Trial Court Facilities: Fiscal Year 2007–2008 Funding Requests

Madera—New Madera Courthouse

Calaveras—New San Andreas Courthouse
Lassen—New Susanville Courthouse
Los Angeles—New Long Beach Courthouse
Riverside—New Riverside Mid-County Region Courthouse
San Benito—New Hollister Courthouse
San Bernardino—New San Bernardino Courthouse
San Joaquin—New Stockton Courthouse
Tulare—New Porterville Courthouse

In April 2007 the Judicial Council adopted an updated Trial Court Capital Outlay Plan that includes 175 new construction, major renovation, and expansion projects estimated to cost \$9.8 billion (January 2007 dollars). In August 2006 the Judicial Council directed staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to submit, as part of the fiscal year 2007–2008 budget process, funding requests for nine new trial court facilities. The initial funding request for these nine urgently needed projects is \$31.2 million in 2007–2008 with total project costs estimated to be \$1.2 billion, which would be funded by State Court Facilities Construction Funds. If approved, these projects mark important progress toward implementing needed projects for courts across California. As noted below, the judicial branch will additionally pursue alternative revenue sources over the next several years to support the full implementation of the statewide capital plan.

New Madera Courthouse

A new Madera courthouse is proposed for initial funding of \$3.4 million for fiscal year 2007–2008. The new facility will house 10 courtrooms. The estimated total cost for this 100,000-gross-square-foot courthouse is \$97.0 million. A site has not been selected for the new courthouse. This project—ranked in the Immediate Need priority group of the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan—is one of the highest priority capital outlay projects for the judicial branch.

No Security, Severe Overcrowding, Poor Physical Conditions, and Reduced Access to Court Services

The Superior Court of California, County of Madera operates in one court facility—the Madera Courthouse—which was originally constructed as a school and has been awkwardly expanded to meet the needs of the court by adding on modular buildings

over the years.¹ This facility is functionally deficient, unsafe, in poor physical condition, overcrowded, and, by all measures, one among the worst courthouses in the state of California. The existing facilities will remain incapable of meeting the region's growing demand for court services. The deplorable conditions of the existing facilities and the public's hindered access to court services are among the reasons why the proposed new Madera courthouse is urgently needed.



The Madera Courthouse has no jury assembly room and potential jurors must sit—sometimes for an entire day—in a small hallway or outside the building (as shown above) until they are called into a courtroom. On raining or cold days the jurors are all jammed into a small hallway.

Local Government Collaboration on Project

The Madera County Board of Supervisors, the City of Madera, and the City of Chowchilla adopted resolutions in November in support of the need to replace the existing Madera courthouse with a new facility in Madera. The AOC will work collaboratively with the county and the City of Madera to select a site for the new facility and develop a project that meets the goals of the local community.

¹ The court will be consolidating its Borden and Chowchilla facilities into the main courthouse in early 2007 pending its transfer from the county to the state.

Long-term Funding Needs

The California judicial branch is exploring additional, alternative means to fund the state's sizable need for courthouse infrastructure improvements. Options include pursuing bond funding—consideration will be given to both revenue and general obligation bonds. Another potential consideration involves increasing criminal penalties and other filing fees to be contributed to the State Court Facilities Construction Fund for the sole purpose of funding court construction projects. While these initiatives evolve, the Judicial Council will pursue annual funding requests to begin to address the most critical deficiencies in the state's courthouses.

More Information

A project feasibility report for the New Madera courthouse, dated September 8, 2006, was prepared by AOC staff to document the poor functional and physical conditions of the existing court facilities in Madera County, explore options for how best to meet the need for improved facilities, and estimate the cost to construct a new facility. This document can be downloaded from

http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/documents/final_madera_pfr_06_09_06.pdf.

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