



NEWS RELEASE OC 78-11
Contact: Teresa Ruano, 415-865-7447

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 10, 2011

First of Two Potential Sites Approved for New Riverside Courthouse *Site Selection in Menifee; Alternate Site in Hemet to Follow*

SAN FRANCISCO—The State Public Works Board (SPWB) today approved one of two potential sites under consideration for a proposed new courthouse to replace the current courthouse in Hemet for the Superior Court of Riverside County. The potential site is approximately five acres in the Menifee Town Center, which is being developed near Newport and Haun Roads, approximately two blocks from Interstate 215. The potential courthouse site on Sherman Road is in an area envisioned as a future government center. The site was chosen for its proximity to the freeway and its location central to the vast area to be served by the future courthouse.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which is managing the project, expects to submit a second potential site, in Hemet, for approval by SPWB early next year. The second site is approximately nine acres adjoining the Hemet Civic Center, accessed by Devonshire Avenue or Buena Vista Street.

Approval of two potential sites is a standard part of the state's site selection process for courthouse projects. SPWB approval allows the AOC to undertake further due diligence, an environmental assessment under the California Environmental Quality Act, and negotiations with sellers 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 completed before architectural design of the new courthouse can begin. Site acquisition is scheduled to be completed in early 2013. The current schedules call for construction to begin in mid-2015 and be completed approximately two years later, subject to change.

The planned, new nine-courtroom courthouse is being planned as a full-service facility replacing the current Hemet courthouse, which is overcrowded, substandard in size, and physically deficient. The new courthouse will also provide space for four new judgeships.

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, which finances critically needed courthouse construction, renovation, and repair through a portion of judicial branch fees, penalties, and assessments, without impact on 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 in particular. 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 is available on the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/facilities-riverside-hemet.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.

