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Progress Continues on New Santa Clara Family Justice Center

SAN FRANCISCO—The State Public Works Board (SPWB) today approved selection of a small second parcel that would complete the site in downtown San Jose for the new Santa Clara Family Justice Center. The overall site is 1.8 acres bounded by North First Street, West Saint James Street, North Market Street, and Devine Street, across from the Downtown Superior Court and the Historic Courthouse.

Today's approval enables the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), which is managing the project, to pursue the purchase of the small second parcel that would fill out the block fronting West Saint James Street and optimize the courthouse design. The parcel is currently owned by the Valley Transportation Authority. The AOC expects to conclude those negotiations by mid-2011.

“The approval to acquire this parcel of land from the Valley Transportation Authority marks an important milestone in the court's efforts to build a modern, state-of-the-art justice facility in downtown San Jose,” said Presiding Judge Richard J. Loftus, Jr., of the Superior Court of Santa Clara County. “The consolidation of all family law-related services into a single, central location will provide much greater efficiency, safety, and security for the citizens of Santa Clara County, as well as the attorneys, staff, and judicial officers who will work in this building every day. The court appreciates the ongoing efforts of the Administrative Office of the Courts, the County of Santa Clara, and the City of San Jose in working collaboratively to bring this plan to fruition.”

The main parcel, currently a parking lot, is being donated by the County of Santa Clara. The board of supervisors approved the donation on November 9, 2010, with state approval following on November 15, 2010.

The new 20-courtroom courthouse will occupy approximately 234,000 square feet. It will replace six leased facilities and consolidate all family-related services of the Superior Court of Santa Clara County, including family court, juvenile dependency, and drug court, into a single facility. The planned building will also include a self-help center, family court services, a child waiting area, and space for justice system partners.

Architect Zimmer Gunsul Frasca has been selected for the project, and architectural design is expected to proceed through mid-2012. The AOC recently announced its short list for construction manager at risk on the project; final selection is scheduled for later this month. Selection criteria include an evaluation of the firm's plan for outreach to local subcontractors, ensuring that qualified local firms are fully aware of the bidding opportunity, process, and timeline. Construction is expected to go to bid in fall 2012, and the project is scheduled for completion in 2014.

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The courthouse project, with a total estimated cost of \$240.7 million, is being funded primarily through Senate Bill 1407, enacted by the state Legislature in 2008 to authorize up to \$5 billion for 41 new and renovated court facilities using court user fees rather than the state's General Fund.

More information about the project is on the California Courts website at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/projects_santaclara.htm.

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