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FACT SHEET

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

San Bernardino—New San Bernardino Courthouse

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

In August 2006 the Judicial Council adopted an updated Trial Court Capital Outlay Plan that includes 181 new construction, major renovation, and expansion projects estimated to cost \$9 billion (January 2006 dollars) and 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 \$94 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 San Bernardino Courthouse

A new San Bernardino courthouse is proposed for initial funding of \$4.8 million for fiscal year 2007–2008. The new facility will house 36 courtrooms. The estimated total cost for this 357,000-gross-square-foot courthouse is \$338.4 million (escalated to construction mid-point estimated as summer of 2011). The new facility will be located on a site donated to the state by the City of San Bernardino, across Third Street from the Historic Central 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 City of San Bernardino is served by nine scattered unsafe and overcrowded court facilities that are among the worst in the state in terms of physical conditions. These

facilities, in particular the main locations for the court—the historic Central Courthouse and the Courthouse Annex—cannot adequately serve the growing demand for court services due to the recent and projected explosive population growth in the County. The deplorable conditions of the existing facilities and the public’s hindered access to court services are among the reasons why the proposed new San Bernardino courthouse is urgently needed.



Prisoner escorted through public corridor.

Local Government Collaboration on Project

In August 2006 the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and the City of Bernardino both adopted resolutions to make financial contributions to the project. The county adopted a resolution to contribute approximately \$8.8 million to the construction of the project from funds budgeted for the improvement of the existing T-Wing facility. The county resolution included an equity value contribution of court-occupied space to the project, with an estimated value of about \$2.7-million. The city adopted a resolution to donate land to the state for this project and to waive all city permit and development fees associated with the project. These significant contributions from the county and city will reduce the overall cost to the state and allow the project to move more quickly into the design phase.

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 lease-revenue and general obligation bonds. Another potential consideration involves increasing civil 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 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 San Bernardino courthouse, dated September 8, 2006, was prepared by AOC staff to document the poor functional and physical conditions of the existing court facilities in San Bernardino 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_san_bernardino_pfr_06_09_06.pdf

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