

Courthouse plans get OK from State Public Works Board

By Special to The Enterprise

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The State Public Works Board has approved preliminary plans for the new Yolo County Courthouse in Woodland, officials with the Judicial Council of California announced Friday.

The new facility, slated for the south side of Main Street between Fifth and Sixth streets, will consolidate Yolo Superior Court operations from seven facilities into one five-story building housing 14 courtrooms.

“Thanks to the hard work of the project advisory group and our partners in the community and government, we are moving forward,” said Judge Kathleen M. White, chairwoman of the court’s design committee, said of the plan-approval milestone.

“The design committee can now move forward with the working drawings to create a safe, secure, accessible courthouse for the citizens of Yolo County, and ensure that the project is completed cost-effectively.”

Approval by the state board marks completion of the preliminary plans phase and enables the project to move into working drawings. In the meantime, Hensel Phelps Construction Co., selected in December as the project’s construction-manager-at-risk, is performing outreach to ensure that local subcontractors and suppliers have the opportunity to participate in prequalification and bidding.

All qualified subcontractors, lower-tier subcontractors and suppliers will be considered. The new courthouse is expected to generate hundreds of construction jobs and thousands more jobs through indirect benefit to the local economy.

Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2013, with mitigation measures in place for air quality, hazardous materials, noise and other environmental considerations, as specified in the project’s final study under the California Environmental Quality Act. The project is scheduled for completion in 2015.

The design, by the firm of Fentress Architects in association with Dreyfuss & Blackford Architects, features a curved façade at ground level facing Main Street, with a four-column portico at the entrance that recalls the historic courthouse.

The 163,000-square-foot building includes significant improvements in security, such as separate hallways for the public, staff and in-custody defendants, as well as better seismic safety, access and efficiency for visitors and staff.

Plans also call for numerous sustainability features, and the project is expected to qualify for a LEED Gold rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. Energy-saving features will make the courthouse more economical to operate over time.

The courthouse 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.

More information about the project can be found on the California courts website: www.courts.ca.gov/facilities-yolo.htm.