

Site approved for new Yolo County courthouse

By Special to The Enterprise

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The State Public Works Board on Friday approved the acquisition of a site in Woodland for the new Yolo County courthouse.

The new courthouse will be on the city block bounded by Main, Fifth and Sixth streets, and Lincoln Avenue. On March 1, the Woodland City Council approved the sale of the 3.75-acre property for \$3.4 million, its appraised value, to the Administrative Office of the Courts, the agency responsible for building the new courthouse.

The Woodland Redevelopment Agency has expedited the state's purchase of the land to create what officials say will be a convenient, accessible location for the new courthouse.

"This important milestone means we're another big step closer to building the much-needed new courthouse in downtown Woodland," Presiding Judge David Rosenberg said in a news release. "We've worked hard with our city and county partners and the AOC to reach this midpoint in the process. The people of Yolo County will be well served when, in due course, we open their new courthouse."

Advisers for the project include Court Executive Officer James Perry, Rosenberg, Judge Timothy L. Fall, Assistant Court Executive Officer Shawn Landry, Woodland City Manager Mark Deven, Project Manager Mike Smith from the AOC Office of Courthouse Construction and Management, and now-retired Ray Groom, the former general services department head for Yolo County.

"We look forward to designing a courthouse that will provide adequate security and access for all court users," Perry said.

The new 14-courtroom courthouse will span about 163,000 square feet, consolidating seven unsafe and overcrowded court facilities into a single building with adjacent parking.

The AOC is also finalizing negotiations with Union Pacific Railroad for a parking lot at Lincoln Avenue and Sixth Street, across the street from the future courthouse.

The State Public Works Board approval clears the way for close of escrow on the property, expected by mid-April. Meanwhile, the AOC is proceeding with architectural design by Fentress Architects in association with Dreyfuss & Blackford Architects.

Design is expected to proceed through 2012, with construction scheduled to start in early 2013. The courthouse project, with a total estimated cost of \$165.3 million, is scheduled for completion in late 2014 or early 2015.

The new Woodland courthouse is among 41 projects funded by Senate Bill 1407, which finances critically needed courthouse construction, renovation, and repair through a portion of judicial branch fees, penalties and assessments. These projects do not draw from the state's general fund.

More information about the project can be found on the California courts website at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/2793.htm>.