

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

Demolition making way for Civic Center Development



BEFORE: Demo making way for Civic Center Development **AFTER:** The Office Tower to be adjacent the new Courthouse

Pittsburg:

The green steel of City Hall towers over all buildings in Pittsburg's administrative district. Two years from now, that may not be the case.

In the next 24 months, projects in the Pittsburg pipeline include several new buildings, among them a six-story Civic Center tower and new county courthouse.

During tonight's meeting, the City Council, acting as the city's Redevelopment Agency, is voting on amending an agreement with DK Consulting, combining accounts for the courthouse and Civic Center building for design, bidding and construction. The action is part of the groundwork to set up utilities for the future buildings.

Similar utility improvements would be required for both projects, including new water, sewer and storm-drain installation, city engineer Joe Sbranti said. The council's action would "basically get one consultant to do all improvements for both sites, rather than have two separate" entities do the same thing, he said.

Work has started on the project. Last week, an old brick administrative building on Power and Railroad avenues, which dates to the 1960s, was leveled. Plans call for the Vincent A. Davi Library to be torn down as well.

"This is all kind of the first step," Sbranti said.

The Redevelopment Agency is working with Contra Costa Superior Court to construct a new courthouse to the south of the existing building, while also cooperating on

development of a six-story mid-rise office building where the library sits.

The 133,400-square-foot Civic Center building, to be built by Garaventa Enterprises, would include a nearly 12,000-square-foot library, offices for the Pittsburg Unified School District, classrooms, and business and retail space. Plans also call for a 6,500-square-foot restaurant and two large areas for landscaping and pathways.

"There will definitely be a synergy down there, without a doubt," said Kerry Lyman, a Redevelopment Agency senior project manager.

Because of overcrowding in the courthouse, the state and county decided to build a new \$65 million, three-story facility on the corner of Power and Railroad. The new courthouse will have seven courtrooms, with the possibility of expanding to 10. The old courthouse, which had been using a trailer for overflow court cases, will be demolished once the new building is complete. Court officials estimate the courthouse could open by spring 2010.

The project also includes widening Davi Avenue from Civic Avenue to Power and adding a left-turn lane from Railroad onto Civic to accommodate increased traffic. Power would be permanently closed upon completion of the projects.

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