

Cost Of New Courthouse May Reach \$2.5 Million

By John Wheeler

Cost of the new county courthouse will approach the \$2.5 million mark even under present building and minimum land requirements, it was disclosed yesterday.

The figure came out of a joint meeting of supervisors and urban redevelopment agency officials to firm up final needs by the county in the San Lorenzo park redevelopment project.

By holding the site to a minimum land figure, a built-in hitch may be thrown into plans for future expansion of the courthouse when the new building becomes too small to carry the load of county activities in later years.

The figures added weight to speculation that the county ultimately could bring up the courthouse site question for reconsideration because of land and other costs in the proposed URA site.

In discussing the package cost, Supervisor Lewis Nelson emphasized figures are not firm. The supervisor is co-chairman of the county's building committee and head of the courthouse plans.

He, Board Chairman Francis Silliman and the other building committee co-chairman Supervisor Vincent Locatelli met with URA officials yesterday in the city agency's office. When the meeting broke up, Nelson said he would incorporate firm land needs (183,000 square feet more than the county presently has) plus other details of county business in a letter to URA Director Olin Carl White.

White will take the letter to federal URA officials in San Francisco tomorrow to prepare the way for approval of the amended redevelopment plan for San Lorenzo park. The amendment, in part, was necessitated by the addition of the courthouse to the area.

Federal officials have said final agreements are needed if the project is not to be delayed.

The \$2.5 million figure was reached using both city and county figures. It includes \$1.6 million for the courthouse building plus \$190,000 because of increased cost of construction and \$650,000 total cost for land.

Final figures will not be known until final URA land figures are available and the county's architect reports with preliminary plans late next month.

The possible built-in hitch is centered in the planned 44,000-square-foot wing to be added in later years (possibly 20 or so) for expansion which all members of the board agree must come sooner or later.

Because the building would knock out an overwhelming portion of employee parking for the courthouse, Nelson said the first floor of the new structure probably would be given over to parking.

Added cost because of providing for parking could hike the price of the new building by some \$500,000 at present day costs. The land to provide for building as well as parking in the future developments would increase the present cost by only about \$110,000, according to URA land estimates.

Nelson said if URA figures and agreements are confirmed and settled by federal officials soon, he will have a courthouse package ready to present to the full board of supervisors by late November.

In consideration of the site supervisors have consistently pointed out that the URA land is a compromise which had to be made to gain public approval of the new center and reach agreement between the supervisors themselves.

Nelson has pointed out that strong influence from city hall has been used to push for keeping the courthouse in the center of town. Many merchants are known to want the same thing since the high traffic flow of persons in and out of the courthouse makes it a big business which generates other business by putting people in the downtown area.

Also, there is known to be sentiment among some URA board members for keeping the site where it is, now that planning has gone this far.

Despite the past furor of city-county feuding over the property, many persons have now begun to consider the impact of a giant shopping center on the central downtown area.

The shopping center was planned before the courthouse moved into the area. Persons on both sides of the question now ask if the city can support so ambitious an increase to commercial property when there is currently something of an oversupply of store frontage.

Supervisors, and especially Mrs. Hulda McLean question if the site were moved, whether another suitable site with the required acreage could be found which would fit both the county's budget and needs for the future. Mrs. McLean has said she seriously doubts it.

Federal Judge Upholds Alabama Negro Vote Law

Montgomery, Ala. (AP) — A federal judge today upheld the controversial legislative act which all but eliminated Negro voting in Tuskegee, Ala.

U. S. Dist. Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. threw out a complaint filed by a group of Tuskegee Negroes challenging the constitutionality of the 1957 law which rearranged city boundaries of Tuskegee.

The legislative act virtually halted Negro voting in Tuskegee by excluding all predominantly Negro residential areas from the city limits.

As a result, only 10 registered Negro voters were left inside the city in contrast to the 420 who voted there before the act was passed. The 600 white voters in the city were left undisturbed.

Man Dies As Car Hits, Kills Mule

Yreka (AP). — One man was killed and another injured gravely as their automobile struck and killed a mule Tuesday night on the highway south of Fort Jones.

Dwight E. Salvador, 26, of Yreka died as he was thrown from the car. James D. Hudson, of Yreka, was reported in critical condition today at Siskiyou county hospital.

Radio Station Loses Records

Fretful circumstances were reported at Radio Station KOMY in Watsonville. This station, which