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Oakley, county agree to land swap for fire station

By Paul Burgarino
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 02/02/2010 06:21:14 PM PST

Updated: 02/03/2010 02:25:28 PM PST

OAKLEY — A growing population, along with an inadequate existing facility, has prompted city and county leaders to ignite plans for a new fire station.

Last week, the county board of supervisors approved a trade that would allow development of the property at 530 O'Hara Ave. to build a roughly \$3 million fire station. Oakley's redevelopment agency would be responsible for construction of the new Fire Station 93.

In exchange, Oakley would receive the existing fire station property at 215 Second St., a one-acre vacant parcel at Live Oak Avenue and \$850,000 from the East Contra Costa Fire District from developer fees meant to provide new facilities.

Oakley would use the Second Street property in the short-term for storage and later raze it for a parking lot, City Manager Bryan Montgomery said. The Live Oak parcel could be sold, he said.

The new station — though just a half-mile south — would drastically change the radius around the station and provide better response, Montgomery said. Much of the existing radius is in marsh land, he said.

The agreement comes after close to two years of

discussion between city and county to address the needs of Oakley's increased population to the south and the poor condition of the existing station.

In anticipation of Oakley's continued growth, it's important to strategically place fire stations where they can have adequate response time, said county supervisor Federal Glover, whose district includes Oakley.

The fire station is an example of the city and county to work together on long-time issues that may have been overlooked when Oakley was incorporated in 1999, Glover said.

The existing station was built in the 1950s and was designed for volunteer and paid-on-call firefighters, said Hugh Henderson, East Contra Costa Fire's acting chief.

The new stations "would almost mirror" the layout of two new stations in the process of being built in Pittsburg and include new ventilation systems and living space comfortable for three firefighters among other features, Montgomery said.

The station, which has no sleeping quarters and isn't ADA-compliant among other deficiencies, is used as a 24-hour operation, thus "the upgrades are real important," he said.

"Just having a modern place for crews to work out of; everybody's excited about it getting started and that it's all falling into place," Henderson said.

The facility will include an emergency operation center.

The hope is that the project could go out to bid for construction in the next couple months and be

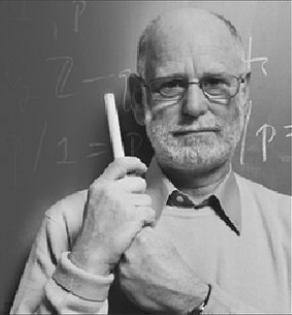
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completed by the end of the year or early 2011, Montgomery said.

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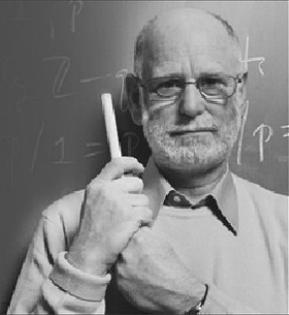
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