



**PUBLIC REQUEST TO ADDRESS
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

HILDA L. SOLIS
HOLLY J. MITCHELL
LINDSEY P. HORVATH
JANICE HAHN
KATHRYN BARGER

Correspondence Received

The following individuals submitted comments on agenda item:				
Agenda #	Relate To	Position	Name	Comments
25.		Favor	Harout Nazarian	I am in favor of the acquisition of this building. It's at a bargain price, it can breath life into the area by moving county operations there, and it would be a significant upgrade from the current hall which is due for renovations and retrofitting anyway. Even if this new building requires work, it's going be a lot nicer and safer seismically than the current office.
		Oppose	Clay Moore	<p>My Bridge partner shared the news that the Hahn Hall of Administration is no longer going to be renovated but instead the County will be moving its operations to Gas Company Tower. In doing some research online, I stumbled upon the County's appraisal firm, VPA Advisors.</p> <p>They wrote: "The building is being held in limbo through a deed in lieu of foreclosure, so the seller (lender) can avoid paying a new tax imposed by the City of Los Angeles to help battle homelessness. The new tax rate is 4% on sales of properties valued over \$5 million and 5.5% for properties worth over \$10 million."</p> <p>This is unacceptable. The County supporting this kind of tax treatment - on top of spending \$200 million and removing this building off the tax roll - is going to cost LA County residents much more.</p> <p>Source: valbridge.com/resource/gas-company/</p>



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25.		Oppose	Daniel White	<p>Cross Posting my Comments for Closed Session Item #2, also on this very subject:</p> <p>Please see all the comments on agenda #25, which outline all the concerns for this \$200M deal (at minimum).</p> <p>While this proposal to buy a luxury skyscraper has been on the agenda many times, it has been in closed session 4 of 5 times. The first time it was publicly discussed was on October 8th, and the Board of Supervisors was promised a comprehensive "plan" that would address Supervisor Hahn and Supervisor Solis' concerns about the historical significance of the Hahn Hall of Administration and the commitment to seismic retrofits. Supervisor Mitchell asked for confirmation, and CEO Ms. Davenport indicated that this plan was almost done at that point, but it wasn't posted for the two following meetings. We are seeing this "plan" for the first time, and it is an egregiously neglectful as it addresses none of the concerns posed by the Supervisors during the October 8th hearing.</p> <p>I urge the Board to table this vote and to truly study and ask the CEO to present a comprehensive plan that outlines all the alternatives, such as retrofitting Hahn Hall of Administration, leasing space with an option to buy, and purchasing buildings (do a side by side of the 3 buildings they toured, according to this posting).</p> <p>I also urge the Board to remember that there are some intangibles that need to be weighed as a government body. Government has the power to help build up communities and be stewards of public funds. Please do not forget your communities when you examine this very expensive purchase.</p>
			Daniel White	<p>There are 33 county-owned office buildings and Men's County Jail that require significant seismic retrofits.</p> <p>What message is the County sending by abandoning seismic retrofits at one its most iconic public halls to purchase a \$200 million skyscraper and parking garage with its own seismic retrofit needs? (All of which are still only known because of enterprising reporters at the Los Angeles Times).</p> <p>I urge our esteemed Board of Supervisors to push back on this approach, and recommit to leadership on seismic safety.</p>



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25.		Oppose	Ellen Chatsworth	<p>What is the percentage of county workers who are working remotely? What is the county's policy on hybrid work? How does this fit into the plan to purchase additional real estate for office space? There is nothing about this in the supporting documents for this vote. How can the Board responsibly vote to spend \$200 million without knowing all of these components?</p> <p>I hope the Board of Supervisors can take a step back and truly study the impact of its real estate purchases and renovations in the broader spending portfolio. Every dollar in real estate is a dollar not spent on much-needed programs to uplift our communities.</p>
			Eric Schmidt	<p>Can you share the seismic report for Gas Company Tower and the parking garage? There is nothing in this plan about the state of the parking garage. According to previous public document regarding the parking garage at 350 S. Figueroa/333 S. Flower, there are significant seismic retrofits that need to be done. This submittal is negligent in not publicly disclosing this.</p>
			Felix Hernandez	<p>This whole deal smells. Multiple meetings in closed session, no RFP, a buried agenda item, and a final vote the day after the national election. You would need to be from another planet to not know this is all by design.</p> <p>Why is this all being jammed through? I recently leased 1,000 sq ft for my business and my broker sent me a survey for about 40 properties and we toured 3 of them. I can't believe that the county officials think the same is acceptable for purchasing a skyscraper.</p> <p>Also, it's clear details are being withheld. This will not cost \$200 million, it's going cost the public at least \$600 million ... \$200 million (purchase price) + \$250 million (\$175/sq ft for interior improvements) + \$75M (lost property tax revenue over 10 years) + \$50 million (deferred maintenance) + \$25 million (garage retrofit at \$20K/stall).</p> <p>The board should put a stop to this and require a process that includes a RFP that the board has a chance to review and approve before it's released. The process should also be developed as part of a larger plan/vision for the Civic Center and existing county building retrofits.</p>
			Jackie Bosco	<p>This plan doesn't tell the public what is going to happen to the Hahn Hall of Administration? It just asks the Board to take all the money allocated to retrofit this historic building designed by Paul R. Williams and says only "back office" activities will be moved to Gas Company Tower.</p> <p>Something isn't adding up??? Where are all the public-facing activities that occur at Hahn Hall of Administration going to go?</p>



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25.		Oppose	Jackson Meist	<p>Which services and offices are moving to Gas Company Tower? This is not a detailed plan at all.</p> <p>What about a cost benefit analysis that shows what the cost of retrofitting Hahn Hall of Administration and consolidating offices into existing buildings? Instead of telling us it's expensive and cumbersome, why not give us numbers and timelines?</p> <p>A true plan would also provide anticipated ongoing costs of maintaining a Class-A skyscraper and quantifying the lost property tax income.</p> <p>This is an incomplete plan. Please table this vote and provide for more information.</p>
			Jasmine Bates	<p>I have been following this item for months thanks to the reporting by the LA Times and LA Daily News. As a citizen, I and many others have plenty of concerns. I urge the board to slow this pursuit, demand additional facts, and gather public opinion on what our Civic Center should look like in 10, 50 and 100 years. The future of LA's Civic Center is a conversation worth having.</p>
			Larry Molina	<p>Is this the best deal the County could get for the property? Looking at recent comps, the County would be paying more per square foot than any other recent sale:</p> <p>Union Bank Plaza: \$114/square foot 777 S. Figueroa: \$115/square foot</p> <p>At the \$200M price tag Gas Company Tower would be a whopping \$137/square foot.</p>



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25.		Oppose	Maria Salazar	<p>In early October the LA County CEO, Fesia Davenport responded to Supervisor Mitchell's question about whether a full plan would be presented to the Board in advance of a vote, but the board documentation submitted for this Tuesday's vote is an insult to the public. This is not a PLAN but instead just a siloed request for a misguided appropriation of \$200M, of which there is no mention of the approx. \$50M in deferred maintenance that the LA Times referred to in an article published on 10/8/224.</p> <p>What happened to maintaining the history of Hahn Hall? What about the historic significance of having a master planned Civic Center that black renowned architect Paul Williams was responsible for shattering racial limitations of the era to build this publicly-focused building?</p> <p>This proposal is SILENT about the future of what this means for creating a place for community to gather. This proposal is SILENT about the history of the Hahn Hall of Administration and how it will be maintained. This proposal is SILENT about the future of seismic retrofits of the HOA - it just STEALS money from the project to put towards this building. This proposal is SILENT about including the public in its decision making.</p> <p>We must have a government that is responsive to its people - but also one that is RESPECTFUL of its people. Rushing this through with legalese and budgetary numbers without understanding the meaning and history behind public buildings is insulting and shows how misguided this plan is.</p> <p>Is this the precedent the Board of Supervisors wants to set on seismic retrofits in the future? ABANDON the commitment to seismic retrofits? If the wealthy Board of Supervisors cannot afford seismic retrofits, how can you expect private landowners to invest the same kind of money into creating safe buildings?</p> <p>Please take a step back and take a holistic approach to this depressed commercial market. Yes, we understand cost savings are important, but please do not do it a short-sighted way that sets the wrong example for the market on safety and community-building.</p> <p>We are more divided than ever, and we NEED our leaders to invest in our community - not siloed skyscrapers that destroy the social tapestry of our Civic Center.</p>



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25.		Oppose	Mario Belloni	<p>This is NOT a plan that Fesia Davenport pledged to the Board at the October 8th meeting. There is nothing about the future of Civic Center. There is nothing about preserving the City's history. There is nothing about creating a public process. There is nothing about accessibility. There is nothing about the rationale of moving county business out of Civic Center into Bunker Hill.</p> <p>There are also so many generalizations here that are not quantified. For example:</p> <p>1) On page 3 this document associated with this item says that the County will save costs by reducing its footprint. Okay. By how much? What services? Beyond the generalizations, give the Board of Supervisors details.</p> <p>2) On page 3 it also states that the County will save time and money by avoiding the need for short term space; how so? Won't Gas Company Tower require County-specific improvements? That costs time and money. Can you provide more color here?</p> <p>And what happens to the Hahn Hall of Administration? This plan does not say anything about its future except that it is robbing the public's master planned, Civic Center-centered Hall of Administration to the tune of \$70M in retrofits.</p> <p>The Board of Supervisors deserves more than these unquantified generalizations when asked to spend hundreds of millions of dollars.</p>
			Martin Gonzalez	<p>I would like to respectfully ask that the Board of Supervisors designate the Hahn Hall of Administration a landmark. According to the LA Conservancy it is eligible for the CA Register and National Register given its significant history and notable architects, Paul R. Williams, Austin, Field & Fry, Stanton & Stockwell, and Adrian Wilson.</p> <p>Do not siphon money from this important landmark - it must be saved and retrofitted.</p> <p>Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration / Los Angeles County Hall of Administration Conceived as part of the 1947 Civic Center Master Plan, the Los Angeles County Hall of Administration, along with the adjacent Los Angeles County Courthouse, were designed simultaneously by a team of noted, local architects and artists of the period.</p>
			MICHAEL J POLK	<p>From the taxpayers' perspective, there are several counterarguments to the purchase of the Gas Company Tower:</p> <p>1. Financial Burden:</p>



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The \$200 million purchase price, plus up to \$5 million in closing costs, represents a significant expenditure. Taxpayers might argue that these funds could be better allocated to more immediate needs such as public services, infrastructure improvements, or social programs.

2. Seismic Risk:

Los Angeles is a known seismic area, and while the Gas Company Tower has undergone a seismic review, the risk of future earthquakes remains. The potential costs associated with earthquake damage, including repairs and retrofitting, could be substantial and unpredictable, posing a financial risk to taxpayers.

3. Uncertain Market Conditions:

The downtown Los Angeles office market is experiencing a decline in real estate prices and an increase in vacancies. Taxpayers might question the wisdom of investing in commercial real estate during such uncertain market conditions, fearing that the property could further depreciate in value.

4. Operational Costs:

Beyond the initial purchase, the ongoing costs of operating and maintaining the building, including potential renovations and upgrades, could be significant. These expenses might outweigh the projected savings from consolidating office space and reducing leased space.

5. Opportunity Cost:

The funds used for this acquisition could potentially be invested in other projects or initiatives that might offer more immediate or tangible benefits to the community, such as affordable housing, education, or healthcare services.

6. As-Is Condition:

The property is being sold on an "As-Is, Where-Is" basis, which means the County will inherit any existing issues with the building. This could lead to unforeseen expenses and complications, further burdening taxpayers.

Additionally, there are significant concerns about diverting funds from seismic retrofit projects of existing County buildings:

7. Critical Safety Concerns:

Seismic retrofitting of existing County buildings is essential for ensuring the safety and structural integrity of these facilities. Diverting funds from these projects could delay necessary upgrades, potentially putting occupants at risk during an earthquake. Ensuring the safety of existing buildings should be a



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priority before acquiring new properties that may also require seismic evaluations and retrofits.

8. Deferred Maintenance: Many of the County's existing buildings are in poor condition and require significant investment to extend their useful lives. By reallocating funds from these essential projects, the County may face higher costs in the future due to further deterioration and increased repair needs. Addressing the seismic retrofit of existing buildings is a proactive measure to avoid more substantial expenses down the line.

9. Regulatory Compliance:

Seismic retrofitting is often mandated by building codes and regulations to ensure public safety. Failing to comply with these requirements could result in legal liabilities and penalties for the County. Prioritizing compliance with seismic retrofit mandates is crucial to avoid potential legal and financial repercussions.

10. Public Trust and Accountability:

Taxpayers expect their funds to be used responsibly, particularly for projects that directly impact public safety. Diverting money from seismic retrofitting projects to acquire a new building may erode public trust, especially if the new building also requires seismic upgrades. Demonstrating a commitment to maintaining and improving existing infrastructure can help build and maintain public confidence in the County's fiscal management.

11. Risk Management: Investing in the seismic retrofit of existing buildings is a form of risk management. It reduces the potential for catastrophic damage and loss of life during an earthquake. Acquiring a new building without first addressing the seismic vulnerabilities of current assets could increase the County's overall risk exposure.

12. Long-Term Planning:

While the acquisition of the Gas Company Tower may offer long-term benefits, it is essential to balance this with the immediate need to ensure the safety and functionality of existing County buildings. A comprehensive long-term plan should prioritize seismic retrofitting as a foundational step before expanding the County's real estate portfolio.

13. Impact on Remaining Tenants:

The acquisition of the Gas Company Tower by the County will result in the remaining non-County tenants being responsible for a new payment due to the tax bill being proportionately payable by them. This could lead to increased costs for these tenants, potentially causing financial strain or prompting them to seek alternative office space. The County must consider the impact on these tenants and the potential for increased vacancies, which



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		<p>could affect the building's overall financial viability.</p> <p>In summary, while the acquisition of the Gas Company Tower may present an opportunity, it is crucial to address the seismic retrofit needs of existing County buildings first.</p> <p>Ensuring the safety and compliance of current facilities should take precedence to protect public safety, manage risks, and maintain public trust.</p>
	Ruth Goodstein	<p>The Board of Supervisors should know that Gas Company Tower - the future home of the Board of Supervisors offices, conceivably - is also where one of the County's largest lobbyist firms has office space. Latham & Watkins is a tenant of Gas Company Tower, but the LA County CEO's plan does not share this very important piece of information.</p> <p>You can confirm Latham and Watkins' position as one of the top lobbying firms in LA County Here: americanregistry.com/recognition/20-biggest-lobbying-firms-in-los-angeles-county/155721</p> <p>And you can confirm their address and the biographies of many of their lobbyists who you would share office space with here: lw.com/en/offices/losangeles-gso</p>
	Stephanie Simon	<p>Is the County Board of Supervisors aware that the parking garage at 350 S. Figueroa and 333 S. Flower is a NON DUCTILE concrete building that is seismically unsafe, and needs significant retrofits?</p> <p>This is not included in the report, but review LA City permits that were pulled when this area was considered for apartment housing and you'll see that information.</p>
	Steve Smith	<p>The \$200 million the County Executive is asking for the Board of Supervisors to approve does not include 1) the \$47.5M in deferred maintenance costs outlined by the property condition report, 2) the unpublished costs of doing tenant improvements to accommodate county business, and 3) the ongoing cost of maintaining a skyscraper.</p> <p>Where is the list of the 42 buildings the County identified, and why isn't that a part of this public process? A properly run RFP would have been the right way to address this significant cost expenditure.</p> <p>Where is this money coming from, especially since this property will be taken off the property tax roll?</p>
	Thomas Woolsey	
	Item Total	19

Grand Total			19	
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Stephanie Mardesich
Deborah Mardesich
2205 W. 25th Street, Unit 3 ~ San Pedro, California 90732
Telephone: 310/519-0756

October 7, 2024

Los Angeles County (LAC) Board of Supervisors
Kathryn Barger, District 5
Janice Hahn, District 4
Lindsay Horvath, District 3
Holly J. Mitchell, District 2
Hilda Solis, District 1

Via email to staff representatives

Re: Opposition /Protest Agenda item 35 October 8 board meeting Approval of the Publication of a Notice of Intention for County to Purchase Properties Located in Los Angeles Item 35.

Recommendation: Approve a Notice of Intention to purchase approximately a 1,500,000 sq ft, 54-story commercial office building located at 555 West 5th Street in Los Angeles, and airspace parcels located at 335 South Flower Street in Los Angeles (Property), from Wilmington Trust, National Association, as Trustee for the Benefit of the Registered Holders of GCT Commercial Mortgage Trust 2021-GCT, Commercial Mortgage Pass-Through Certificates, Series 2021-GCT (Seller), for a purchase price not to exceed \$200,000,000, including \$100 as independent consideration, and identifies the Property and the Seller; advertise and set November 6, 2024 to receive comments and consummate the proposed acquisition of the Property; and find that the proposed actions are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act. (24-4494)

To the LAC Board of Supervisors:

We are not able to attend the meeting October 8 nor telephone so we are submitting comments in writing.

It came to our attention only yesterday, Sunday, October 6, that the future of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration (HOA) is in jeopardy. Apparently there is allegedly some potential real estate “deal” that could cost the LAC tax payers \$56 million and the historic esteemed HOA with all Supervisors and staff possibly moved from the venerable building. This is a heinous notion and totally disrespects the history of the building, the dauntless efforts of staff over the decades, the public access to the beautifully designed (Paul A. Williams, architect) building that is deeply entrenched in Los Angeles history and culture; and location with regard to City Hall and all of the surrounding public buildings is inherent .

The Item 35 description from the agenda is deceptive and the opposite of the buzz word of the day “transparent”. Who has fostered and promoted this idea, some real estate agent who will earn a very large commission? Why have the people not been informed.

This is an act of heresy and should absolutely not be approved. There needs to be a through vetting and reveal of what is intended and a “cease and desist” for any action until then.

Cordially.

Stephanie Mardesich
Deborah Mardesich

Constituents and property owners District 4