



Chief Executive Office.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES


Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-1101 ceo.lacounty.gov

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Fesia A. Davenport

September 2, 2025

To: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Janice Hahn

From: Fesia A. Davenport 
Chief Executive Officer

REPORT BACK ON PROMOTING FURTHER TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY INTO COUNTY OPERATIONAL PROPERTIES (ITEM NO. 11, AGENDA OF AUGUST 12, 2025)

On August 12, 2025, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Executive Office, Board of Supervisors, and the Chief Executive Office (CEO), as well as the Departments of Public Works (Public Works), Internal Services, and County Counsel, to report back in 60 days on the financial sources for voluntary seismic retrofit of the Gas Company Tower (GCT) and an occupancy plan that shows savings to the County of Los Angeles (County) by consolidating County department operations into the building.

In this report, we address the first directive noted above (seismic) on an expedited basis.

The County Conducted an Initial Seismic Assessment on the GCT, but the Assessment was Preliminary and More Tests are Needed to Establish the Scope and Cost of a Seismic Retrofit

To provide background and context, as part of any real property acquisition, the County conducts a thorough analysis of the site to ensure it meets the County's requirements. This due diligence includes title review, appraisal, Phase 1 environmental assessment, and property inspection, including building systems, seismic risk assessment, the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, and



hazardous materials report. A seismic risk assessment is part of the County's normal due diligence process. In addition, as part of the cost benefit analysis and business case to purchase the GCT building, your Board also wanted to understand the existing seismic condition of the GCT and compare it to the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration (HOA) building.

The County initiated a seismic risk assessment report that validated that the building is compliant with applicable City of Los Angeles and County codes but recommended a voluntary seismic retrofit (not as a condition of acquisition) but to improve the building to current engineering standards once the building was acquired, as shared with your Board prior to your approval of the purchase. However, the report's conclusions were based on preliminary evaluation performed using primarily the building's engineering plans of record and computer modeling. These conclusions must be validated with comprehensive, advanced analysis that utilizes information gathered from testing and inspection of the actual connections and welds in the building.

The County was Preparing to Establish the Cost and Scope of a Seismic Retrofit for the GCT through Various Solicitations; Funding for those Projects has not been Identified and is Subject to Board Approval

After the County purchased the GCT in December 2024, we added the potential seismic retrofit project and estimated Rough Order Magnitude (ROM) cost provided by Public Works to our list of potential, future unfunded capital projects. In order to refine the scope and ROM cost, CEO directed Public Works to develop and release solicitations for Architectural/Engineering design and project management and pre-construction services. Public Works has received the proposals, but they have not yet been opened. This process is similar to the process we followed to establish the actual cost to seismically retrofit the Hall of Administration and represents industry best practice for establishing seismic retrofit costs. This work is now on hold pursuant to your Board's August 12, 2025, motion.

If the solicitations were to move forward, Board approval would be required prior to executing a contract with the highest-ranked proposers. At that time, my office would provide your Board with a financing plan, including identifying funding sources, to pay for the contracted work. As noted above and below, however, at this time we cannot provide your Board with a cost estimate more specific than a ROM without doing some additional work to understand the actual condition of the building's connections and welds.

The CEO Will Proceed with Destructive Testing to Better Advise the Board on the Potential Cost and Scope of a Seismic Retrofit, Including Potential Funding Sources, but Additional Work will be Needed to Establish a Final Scope and Cost

To provide your Board with an estimate of the cost to conduct seismic upgrades on the GCT, we must augment the initial assessment to include short-term, limited destructive testing and inspection of various welded frame connections. This work would be performed by the same engineering firm that performed the initial seismic assessment. Because this work requires alterations to the building to expose interior connections and welds, this work was not possible prior to purchase.

The approximate cost of this additional work is \$200,000 and will be cost-neutral to the general fund by using GCT lease revenue. We estimate the work will be completed in approximately three months. This work will not delay the move-in of County employees and will augment our understanding of seismic assessment work previously performed so that we are better able to quantify the cost of a seismic retrofit and make appropriate recommendations to your Board.

Note, however, that this short-term testing and inspection work is not a substitute for the Architectural/Engineering work that will still be needed, with prior Board approval, to fully design a voluntary seismic retrofit, and determine an accurate Total Project Cost Estimate. However, we believe this short-term, cost-neutral testing and inspection is needed to develop the full report back because this work will provide the County with the known condition of the existing welded steel moment frame connections which will confirm the validity of the seismic risk assessment report, and the estimated ROM cost provided by Public Works. Unless otherwise directed by your Board, the CEO will contract to proceed with this work.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me or John Cooke at (213) 893-2477 or jcooke@ceo.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:JTC
VBM:mda:sc

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Internal Services
Public Works