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County Debuts \$107M Office Building

By *Bob Howard*

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New County Building

LOS ANGELES-Los Angeles County officials plan to debut a new \$107-million, 220,000-sf L.A. County Administration Building on Friday on a site formerly occupied by boarded up retail buildings that burned during the city's 1992 riots. The new county office building is a four-story structure that was designed by Gensler Architects and developed for the county by locally based ICO Development LLC in conjunction with the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles.

The new county facility occupies a full block on the east side of Vermont Avenue between 83rd and 84th streets in South Los Angeles. Besides the boarded-up buildings, the site was formerly occupied by apartments and unused Community Redevelopment Agency parking lots.

The new class A office building will house four county departments under a single roof, with 125,000 sf committed for Child Support Services and the Department of Children and Family Services, and an additional 13,500 sf dedicated to day care and play areas. Most of the remainder of the space will be allotted to the county's social services and mental health departments, except for 4,000 sf on the building's ground floor that is earmarked for retail and restaurant development.

According to Alexander Moradi, ICO's managing partner, the building's development represented a tightly monitored design-build contract involving the developer, general contractor McCarthy Building Cos. and Gensler. He notes that the team completed the building's design,

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construction and installation of furniture, fixtures and equipment within 24 months.

The project was financed through bonds issued by the Community Redevelopment Agency, with no public subsidies required, county officials note. ICO Development paid the CRA full market price for the land and rebuilt the existing deteriorated sewer line between 83rd and 85th streets through a combination of the bond funding and additional funds provided by the CRA, the city's Community Development Department and the Bureau of Sanitation. Additional new traffic improvements were also funded by the project both along both Vermont and Manchester.

The building will draw a daily influx of nearly 1,000 county employees as well as 1,500 visitors and is expected to provide an economic boost to an area where existing merchants and business owners have typically struggled. Officials are hoping that it will serve as a catalyst for future retail development projects in the surrounding area.

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