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Contact: Christina Villacorte, 213-447-1277
Email: cvillacorte@bos.lacounty.gov
Contact: Sharita Moon, 213-974-2222
Email: smoon@bos.lacounty.gov

Serving Seniors in Compton

What used to be a vacant lot in Compton has been transformed into desperately needed affordable housing for seniors, demonstrating the type of initiative necessary to alleviate the crisis of homelessness in Los Angeles County.

Costing $20.3-million in public and private funds, Metro @ Compton Senior Apartments recently opened 75 units for low and very low-income seniors ages 55 and older.

Rent is $430-$750 for a one-bedroom unit and $515-$900 for a two-bedroom unit at 302 N. Tamarind Ave, conveniently located next to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Blue Line.

"Metro @ Compton is the gold standard," said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, who chairs the Metro Board of Directors. "It's transit-oriented, sustainably built, uplifts the community and makes a great home."

Amid studies showing more than 44,000 people are homeless in the County on any given night, and more 1.1 million seniors throughout California are living in poverty, the County's Community Development Commission invested more than $2.5 million towards Metro @ Compton.

Meta Housing Corporation, Western Community Housing Optimus Construction, YM Architects and KKG Inc. comprised the development team for the 61,000 sq. ft. project, which includes a large community room and an outdoor living room with a fountain, barbecue and gym.

Being across the street from Dollarhide Community Center allows seniors to sign up for classes, assistance, and opportunities for socializing, enabling them to stay active and independent. Metro @ Compton is also within walking distance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Transit Center, as well as a park, grocery, bank, restaurants and shopping center.

CDC Executive Director Sean Rogan said residential and retail developments anchored around public transit are "particularly important for seniors whose independence may be affected due to limited mobility."

On assuming the chairmanship at Metro in July, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas emphasized that public transit should be seen as a vehicle for economic development. He endorsed projects that "meet a triple bottom line: putting people to work, greening the environment, and getting people where they need to go."

Aside from providing affordable housing to seniors, Metro @ Compton created about 160 construction jobs. Designed sustainably, it uses solar power and a photovoltaic system to capture sunlight for heating water and generating electricity, and recycles water from resident's washing machines to irrigate the landscaping.

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