

**Department of Veterans**  
**Veteran Community Oversight and Engagement Board (VCOEB)**  
**Federal Advisory Committee (FAC)**  
**23rd Meeting – June 26, 2024**

**VCOEB Board Members:**

Robert Begland (Chair)  
BG (Ret) Loree Sutton (Vice Chair)  
Christine Barrie  
Keith Boylan  
Nicole Branca (virtual)  
Aimee Bravo (virtual)  
Michael Canfield  
Samuel Holmes  
Sarah Hunter  
Dr. Patricia Nwajuaku  
Beth Sandor  
Dylan Tete (virtual)  
Dave Weiner  
Dr. Mark Wellisch  
Jim Zenner (virtual)

**VCOEB Board Members Absent:**

Stephanie Cohen  
Jennifer Marshall  
Dennis Tucker  
Shawn VanDiver

**Employees and Staff Present:**

Eugene Skinner (DFO)  
Chihung Szeto (Alternative DFO)  
John Boerstler  
Meg Kabat  
Ed Amador  
Audrey Bhullar  
Chelsea Black  
Mathew Buckley  
David Giacomo  
Kristin Grotecloss  
Keith Harris  
Sally Hammitt  
Linda Icodan  
John Kuhn

Keith Lamb  
Zart Lo  
Roberto Marshall  
Alphonso McCree  
Robert Merchant  
Dan Ortiz  
Brett Simms  
Andrew Strain  
Cyndee Costello (contractor)  
Nathalie Chavez (contractor)  
Alfred Flores (contractor)  
Margaret Walsh (contractor)

**Public Attendees:**

Luciano Aguilar  
John Alford  
Anthony Allman  
Tess Banko  
Brenda Bartolo  
Jim Blair  
Riley Cagle  
Ally Cimino  
Ron Costella  
Brian D'Andrea  
Tony DeFrancesco  
Elise Epps  
Maria Figueroa  
John Follmer  
Marion Gurn  
Clare Haggarty  
Ye Rim Hong  
Keon Maluia  
Cara Mun  
John Oppenheim  
Jerry Orlemann  
Kyle Orlemann  
Steve Peck  
Andrea Serafin  
Dick Southern  
Zoe Taleporos  
Janet Turner  
Hamilton Underwood  
Rob Reynolds  
Melanie Winns  
Brayden Yoder

Zipporah Yamamoto

### **Call to Order Pledge of Allegiance Opening Remarks:**

**Mr. Robert Begland, Chair; BG (Ret) Loree Sutton, Vice Chair; Mr. Eugene W. Skinner Jr., Designated Federal Officer (DFO)**

DFO welcomed members and reviewed the Rules of Engagement.

- To the greatest extent possible please hold all questions until the presentations are complete.
- The Chair will ask for questions and/or comments throughout the meeting.
- Turn your name card on its end to signify to the Chair your desire to provide a comment or ask a question.
- Allow DFO/VCOEB Chair to yield the floor to you prior to speaking.
- Please identify yourself prior to speaking.
- Allow the DFO support team to provide a microphone to you prior to speaking. (This meeting is being broadcast via WebEx).
- There will be virtual participation.

This meeting will be recorded.

There is a requirement that the Secretary, Deputy Secretary or the Chief of Staff address each federal advisory committee at least once per year. They were unable to do that in person, so the Secretary has provided a video for this group

### **Top Three Invitation or Top Three video**

Secretary McDonough, Secretary of Veterans Affairs video.

- The Secretary thanked the committee members for their work on the FAC.
- Explained the important job of the committee members in providing advice and recommendations that help ensure that the VA delivers for Veterans.
- The focus and commitment from the FAC as we work together to improve VA benefits and services to produce a stronger, better VA.
- They need specific actionable items and critiques of what the VA is currently doing and advice on how they can do better.
- When members' time on the committee ends, they need their best recommendations for qualified diverse individuals for replacements.
- The VA needs the FAC to help ensure that everything they do at the VA lives up to the ICARE values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence.
- Expanding on these values:
  - The VA will always deal with Veterans, Veteran advocates, and all Veteran organizations with integrity.
  - We must commit to ensuring everything we do best serves Veterans and

that they have timely access to VA resources. It's always about Veterans, their issues, and their needs. Veteran outcomes will drive everything we do because Veterans are the ultimate judges of our success.

- The VA will be the leading advocate for Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors in everything we do.
  - We will always provide all Veterans with the respect and professionalism that they deserve. All Veterans must feel safe and welcome in every VA facility, (women, Veterans of color, LGBTQ+), and make sure every person entering a VA facility feels safe, free from harassment, and free from discrimination.
  - We will seek excellence in everything we do. Leveraging the strength of diversity that defines Veterans, our VA workforce, volunteers, committee members, and our country. Diversity is also a strength of these advisory committees. We want and need caring members that look like our diverse Veteran and American population.
- These are fundamental values we need to live up to and the Secretary will be looking to the committees to help them do that.
- Committees such as this FAC, have done lifesaving, life-changing work for generations providing recommendations.
- For example:
  - Led VA to discover that the risk of heart attack and death can be decreased by taking aspirin daily.
  - Developed experimental and innovative treatments for Post- Traumatic Stress (PTS).
  - Finding that Gulf War Veterans are at a higher risk of developing ALS, which resulted in a new VA decision about service connection.
  - Established an Office of Health Equity.
- All these successes have translated into results that matter most, Veterans' lives saved, and Veterans' lives improved by the work we do.
- They need critical guidance and results from the FAC, and he is proud to count on those committee members

### **Opening Remarks Committee Leadership:**

**Mr. Robert Begland, Chair; BG (Ret) Loree Sutton, Vice Chair**

Mr. Begland:

- As an advisory committee, our work is to make recommendations about how work ought to be accomplished within the agency and how decisions ought to be thought about. We are not here to make decisions.
- One of the benefits of the committee is they can bring people together to share ideas.
- Their best use is to focus on recommendations they responded to in writing, and that forces the agency to think about things as carefully and as thoroughly as possible.

- This FAC is unique in that the work they are doing here is very much focused on this particular campus and the effort to redevelop it.

They received a response from the agency and Secretary regarding the last set of recommendations that were offered in October 2023. He encouraged the members to read those recommendations. They received support in some areas, some comments in other areas, and in a few areas the agency did not concur.

Two items of note:

- The committee had pushed on the AMI issue. The Secretary responded that he wasn't prepared to send a letter or insist on a working group, but he did inform them that there was some White House leadership working on this issue. Subsequently, they've seen Brad Sherman's office proactively involved.
- They encouraged the agency to rethink the current parcel release schedule because they were concerned that there was an effort to push residential development south of Nimitz Avenue and leave some buildings north of Nimitz in their current condition. One of the explanations they offered was that there was no reason to build on empty parking lots when there were old buildings and a funding source available to adaptively reuse them. The response was that the agency had to balance things such as tenants in those existing buildings. However, Mr. Begland would like to continue focusing on this issue because one disadvantage of continuing to push south is that it doesn't seem like the concept of the town center has been adequately studied.

There is a pending federal lawsuit happening here in Los Angeles, about the redevelopment of the campus. Both the VA and HUD are named as defendants in that lawsuit which is scheduled for some time in August. It's estimated that the trial will last two or three weeks. Mr. Begland believes the judge is probably going to decide that there are areas in which he believes the agency has performed ineffectively on redevelopment according to that master plan. It will be a federal decision that is likely to have a significant impact on how we go about our work and how the VA officials go about their work.

Mr. Begland announced the presentations for the day:

- Office of Asset Management
- Principle Developer
- West L.A. campus redevelopment plans – responsible for the long-term planning of the north campus.
- L.A. Metro – this committee had made a recommendation that the artwork in the station reflect the historic identity of this campus

BG (Ret) Sutton expressed the important work this committee has been doing and will continue to do in support of the VA. She thanked the two sub- committees for all the work that has been done and continues to do. After speaking with a Veteran earlier this morning she was reminded of who we are working for. A thank you to Kyle and Jerry Orlemann for providing a copy of the March/April edition of the Vietnam Veterans

American Journal which highlights the progress being made at the West L.A. Medical Center and she highly recommended copies be made of the article for circulation. She thanked Rob and Eugene for all their work in moving things forward.

### **VA Leadership Welcome and Opening Remarks/Q&A:**

#### **Ms. Margaret Kabat, Principal Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs**

Ms. Kabat said she has recently talked with Secretary McDonough regarding the town center and the AMI issue and the importance of the continued work in L.A. to end homelessness, even by small percentage points, as it will impact Veteran homelessness around the country.

- Keith Harris is part of her team, and his role is to focus solely on what is happening here, he is incredibly knowledgeable about the policy work, funding, and our limitations around how we fund things and also around the AMI issue.
- She recently visited Dallas and the City of Dallas has functionally ended Veteran homelessness, it doesn't mean that there are not any homeless Veterans, but the federal definition for the end of homelessness for Veterans includes:
- Rapid access to temporary housing
- Going from temporary housing to permanent housing within a certain amount of time.

Dallas has met those goals because of the collaboration between the VA and the Mayor's office and many advocates who worked hard to get to this point. This has instilled a sense of hope across the country that even in big cities where homelessness may seem overwhelming, we can make things happen to end functional homelessness.

### **Opening Remarks Executive Sponsor**

#### **Mr. John Boerstler, Chief Veterans Experience Officer**

Mr. Boerstler thanked Eugene and Chi and the team for supporting this great work with the FAC.

Some announcements focusing on membership:

- There are a few spots that will be coming open this fall,
- Application/recommendation window is open on the federal register,
- Looking for people with diverse backgrounds, (professional, military, non-military, etc.),
- They are happy to talk to interested candidates.

Secretary McDonough and the team have a collective vision looking forward to what the campus will be not only for the immediate future but also for the long-term making sure that we have a place for Veterans to call home.

## **VISN Director:**

### **Dave Giocoma, Acting Network Director**

Mr. Giocoma: Thanked the group, on behalf of Dr. Braverman, for having him and the opportunity to listen to what the group has to say and recommend.

### **Opening Remarks GLA Leadership**

#### **Mr. Robert Merchant, Medical Center Director, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System**

Mr. Merchant: Discussed some of the projects completed since the previous FAC:

- In April, they opened the new kitchen south of Building 500.
- They also opened a new kitchen at Long Beach, which means they are no longer serving Long Beach meals out of the facility here.
- They are focused on serving Veterans here in their inpatient facilities, and at their community living centers and domiciliaries.
- The former kitchen location, building 300, is in the process of being turned over for construction and housing which will happen in August this year.
- They are well along in the planning for the new critical care center. It is in the President's proposed budget.
  - They will have full-size mock-ups of the med surg rooms so that people can walk through and provide feedback to the architects as to what works and what doesn't work.
- He thanked Ms. Kabat for coming out to the groundbreaking of buildings 158 and 210. Building 210 will be dedicated to women Veterans.

Later today they will be discussing survey results that focus on what Veterans are telling them they need to be happy, healthy, and well on the campus so they can build a community. They also had a visit from VA senior leaders, including the CEO and COO of the Veterans Canteen Service to see what role they may play in providing the services to meet those Veterans' needs expressed in the survey.

He thanked the committee for their partnership in improving the lives of Veterans.

### **Opening Remarks Special Advisor AMI Overview/Status:**

#### **Dr. Keith Harris, Senior Executive Homelessness Agent (Greater Los Angeles), Office of the Secretary**

Dr. Harris: Pleased to see the progress here both on the housing and services side. Explained the challenge with the AMI issue; because of the amount severely disabled Veterans receive in benefits, this exceeds the income limits for some of the project-based housing which disqualifies them from the housing they need and deserve. There are a couple of different pathways to solving this issue:

- The Sherman Bill which would exclude VA disability benefits from the statutory definition of income that HUD uses.
  - The State of California reviewed the Sherman Bill and the challenge is that most funders at the state, county, and city levels and others use the HUD's regulatory definition of income and not the statutory definition of income.
  - The Sherman Bill makes a very specific exclusion by limiting that to Veterans in HUD-VASH.
  - HUD would still need to change its regulatory definition otherwise it won't impact things.
  - One of the TA they provided was to remove the limitations strictly to HUD-VASH. Make the income definition exclude VA disability benefits across the board which would then require HUD to make that change to its regulatory definition.
- Provide flexibility to landlords and property managers to raise the AMI % for units. For example, if they have a 30% AMI unit, they can raise that. California's AB 1386 allows for a petition process where if a developer can't fill a unit at 30%, they can raise the AMI limit on that unit to 50% and even 60%.
  - This bill took effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The state has not issued the implementation guidance yet.
  - The proposed process would allow developers to make batch petitions, asking for a certain number of their 30% units to be increased.

Dr. Harris went on to explain:

- Veterans Homelessness Act HR 8560 would make some changes to HUD-VASH.
  - It would create essentially a voucher-only pathway in HUD- VASH for Veterans who don't have a significant need for case management but have the financial need for the subsidy.
  - Allow HUD-VASH vouchers to be issued to Veterans who are at risk of homelessness, not only those who are homeless.
  - A pathway for Veterans on another subsidy to transfer over to a HUD-VASH subsidy, which is currently not allowed because the Veteran is technically housed. It is a better use of resources to put the Veteran on a VASH voucher which would then free up another voucher for a non-veteran.
- Project-Based Voucher (PBV) cap. This is the percentage of vouchers that PHA can commit to project-based vs. tenant-based. The cap is 20% there are some exceptions HUD-VASH among them that allow the PHA to go to 30%, of their total voucher allocation, which can be project- based.
  - The LACDA is projecting they will hit their cap sometime next year and before they have committed all the vouchers here on campus.
  - The cap is a moving target, it is a function of both the numerator and denominator. So, if PHA receives more vouchers their denominator goes up, that percentage comes down, projects come online and go offline, and they fall through commitments that were made but aren't completed.



It's not definite that LACDA will hit their cap but it is a potential problem that needs resolution.

- Possible solutions:
  - Vouchers that are issued from headquarters as project- based vouchers do not count among the cap. HUD headquarters could issue a certain number of additional PBVs to LACDA for purposes of development here on campus.
  - HUD could also change the rules as it applies to HUD- VASH vouchers and exempt those vouchers from the cap.
  - Using prior competition to award vouchers. To be discussed with PHA.

Ms. Kabat said VA as a Federal agency cannot just say to HUD "We want you to change this law", what we can do is provide technical assistance which are recommendations.

- There is a specific process for changing the law and it is not a simple process. We provide our expertise to these pieces of legislation, but they don't necessarily do exactly what we want or need them to do.
- Mr. Begland stated that in housing, HUD has the lead on many of these issues, and the agency, even though it must address one of the largest homeless populations in the country as a distinct subgroup, HUD still has a lot of control over the definition of AMI and the use of project- based voucher caps.
- It's hard to predict if HUD will accept and implement recommendations. HUD has also been named in the upcoming lawsuit. During the February meeting, they heard from LACDA that they were going to hit their cap.
- There was the belief that the project-based vouchers exist to build 1200 units and now they know that assumption is not correct. He believes that the board ought to figure out what operational significance that has and what recommendations might arise from it.

Ms. Hunter asked how many units do we expect to be built here that would be over the PBV cap? Is it feasible to ask HUD headquarters to issue a number of PBVs to meet that? And do we know what that number is?

Dr. Harris said is a moving target, but it's in the ballpark of about 200.

Ms. Sandor said in discussions with HUD and others on raising the cap, what assurance is there that some of those additional PBVs would be secured for Veterans vs. other voucher types?

Dr. Harris: It's been more of a brainstorming session with me and others on the VA side trying to convince HUD headquarters of this approach.

- There is a requirement that PBVs must be completed, if the principal developer or other developers had to compete with others for the vouchers they have not yet received and lost that competition, then they don't get vouchers for that building.

- The workaround is that the PHA can use a prior competition and award PBVs based on a prior competition and that is what they've done here. However, the use of the prior competition expires after three years.
- They used the master EUL competition for three years; we are now outside that three-year window.
- There are ongoing discussions with the PHA, the principal development team, and HUD headquarters trying to figure out how to use that competition for the entirety of the project. There is not going to be any more competitions.
- It is a ten-year project, it is unique, and there has been no other situation like this.
- They are still waiting for the letter from HUD headquarters with the resolution discussed. This could have the same impact as the cap where they don't get vouchers. He is confident this will be resolved.

Ms. Sandor said discussions have been about the implications of the cap on this campus, but what are the implications of not raising the cap for the broader effort of ending Veteran homelessness in L.A. County?

Dr. Harris: There doesn't seem to be a scenario where the cap is raised, the cap is statutory. So, the types of things discussed are:

- Issuing vouchers as PBVs which do not count against the cap.
- Exempting VASH vouchers altogether.

This has implications beyond the campus.

- PBVs are an effective way to address Veteran homelessness the occupancy rate for PBVs is significantly higher than it is for TBVs.
- There are supportive services in the building.
- There's a cohort of Veterans together that can support each other.
- Anything that keeps us from doing as many PBVs as we can is problematic.

Mr. Kuhn said they have anticipated a shortage of PBVs and started the master leasing process.

- Between now and January, they have up to 532 units of master lease housing coming online in the community that were previously TBVs.
- In conjunction with their partners, they just opened two buildings and are already working on an affordable housing plan, which could be recompeted on this campus. So, they are exploring other options.
- They anticipate the L.A. PIT count to come out Friday, and he expects it will demonstrate that their plan has been successful.
- Everything that is being done on campus is complimentary to the mission. The mission is ending homelessness. It's building housing here in a way that complements the overall mission to end homelessness.

Mr. Begland said based on the cap for PBVs the housing developer would only be able to deliver 1000 units without the cap being removed or they're being directly issued. This is significant because if there are approximately 1000 units that can be built north

of Nimitz using existing buildings should the agency focus its efforts on adaptively reusing these old buildings before moving south and into vacant parking lots?

## **EUL Funding:**

**Brett Simms, Executive Director, Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM)**  
**Mr. Simms was there to address the VCOEB Questions and Requests. Topic 1:**

Appropriations for Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) Activities.

Has VA sought EUL monies for its facilities, including West LA in the last decade and, if so, for what purposes?

### Federal Budget:

- No specific line item for VA EUL projects
- EUL capital contributions can only be made using minor construction appropriations.
  - Minor construction funds are not appropriated on a project- specific basis rather they are appropriated in a lump sum amount.
    - It comes as part of the minor construction appropriation and then it is divvied up between the administrations, so not just VHA, but other administrations also have minor construction projects.
    - Then within each of those administrations, it's then divvied up into individual projects.
    - There is flexibility. Once they receive the lump sum of minor construction funding, they look at executable projects, and what they need money for during that given year. These funds are good for five years.
- Funding for other EUL activities, such as non-reoccurring maintenance projects and planning support services, are sourced from multiple accounts, which are not EUL specific and fund various capital projects.
  - Other activities related to the EUL, preparation for the sites, site cleanup, environmental work, and things that the VA can do, which can be done through different accounts, predominantly in VHA, the non-recurring maintenance (NRM) account. NRM is not allocated on a project-by-project basis, it is appropriated as part of the medical facilities. So, there is flexibility in doing NRM projects if there's money available for any particular year.

Uniqueness of PACT Act: This is an appropriation specifically for entering into EULs.

- Congress expanded VA's EUL authority and appropriated \$922M for "entering into EULs" via Section 705 of the PACT Act.
- VA did not request this funding. It was provided by Congress and covers multiple appropriations accounts but was specific in its intended EUL use.

Topic 2: Overview of West L.A. PACT Act EUL Funding. Overview of the EUL monies allocated for the West LA campus (categories, purpose, allocation, level of

definitiveness, etc.).

#### Categorization & Purpose of PACT Act EUL Funds:

The \$922M could not be distributed until VA came up with a way to spend that money.

- VA drafted, and OMB approved, a 15-year Spend Plan for the \$922M
- The Spend Plan allocates PACT Act EUL funds for all sites across four separate appropriates with specific dollar amounts for each:
  - General Administrative – Salaries and travel for FTE, (people, contracts, travel), things that support entering into EULs.
  - Minor Construction: Capital contributions for EUL projects (including West LA and other EUL sites).
  - Major Construction: Incremental additional contractor support for the EUL program.
  - Medical Facilities specific to VHA:
    - Non-Recurring Maintenance (NRM) projects (includes infrastructure improvements, deactivation, remediation, renovation required for relocation, etc. at West L.A. and other EUL sites.).
    - West LA EUL Planning Services Support (includes facility engineering and other support, facility operating and maintenance costs associated with EUL projects/infrastructure, etc.).
- Funds will be expended following authorities for each account. Each of these is no-year money, which means the \$922M does not expire, but their Spend Plan looked at about a 15-year term to use all of the \$922M.
- VA reports to Congress on obligations and expenditures against the Plan and anticipates updating the Plan periodically. It is possible that at some point Congress looks at the \$922M and sees that perhaps only \$300M of it has been spent, Congress then can rescind and pull back the rest of the money. This is certainly within Congress's ability to do and they do have visibility into the spending of this money as they report to them regularly.

Within each of these pieces, they have allocated specific amounts to West L.A. Some of this is non-flexible, meaning the money cannot be moved from the General Administration appropriation to minor construction. But within any of those given appropriations, they do have flexibility.

#### Allocations & Definitiveness:

- Allocation of PACT Act EUL funding across financial accounts is final.
- However, the use of the PACT Act EUL funding for specific projects and sites (i.e., West LA) is not definitive and is subject to change. *(Please see the slide deck for a breakdown of the current projected use of PACT Act funds for West LA.).*

Topic 3: Drawdown of EUL Capital Contribution Funds. How are the EUL monies drawn upon and under what schedule? This includes EUL monies that VA obtained under the PACT Act funding and how VA seeks appropriations under the EUL authority in typical years. And, if so, how those monies are used?

The NRM and General Administration monies are VA direct spend meaning the VA staff are the ones doing the work, the ones spending that money. But for Capital Contributions, that minor construction money is included as part of the EUL. When they do that, they can use the PACT Act funding, which is the primary source, and they can also use traditional minor construction funds if they are available.

Authority and Approval:

- 38 U.S.C. §8162(b)(4) authorizes the use of minor construction funds for VA capital contributions to EUL projects.
- These monies include but are not limited to PACT Act funds allocated to minor construction funds.
- EUL capital contributions are approved by the Designated VA Representative (Executive Director, OAEM).
  - When this is approved it is documented in a “Commitment Agreement” which is the actual document and is an appendix to the EUL that outlines the amount of money and the use of that money for that particular project or sub-lease.

Schedule of Funds:

- VA establishes drawdown schedules following the obligation of funds for each project.
- Project-specific EUL capital contributions are:
  - Documented in a Commitment Agreement that includes scope of work, milestones/drawdown schedule, reimbursement, etc.
  - Coordinate with the applicable VA Administration or staff office.
  - Paid in arrears (on a reimbursable basis).

Mr. Begland wanted to clarify the breakdown of the funding that was discussed:

- Capital Contributions minor construction account projection is \$115M.
- NRM projection is \$263M.

Chairman Begland asked regarding the redevelopment of the north campus, the area north of Wilshire, is that redevelopment effort only financed through the minor construction account, or does it also have funds in the NRM planning account.

- Mr. Simms answered they will have both. For example, on the NRM side, it would be the water distribution system this infrastructure is needed to support the redevelopment of the north campus, but it is included in the NRM line item because VA is the one that is executing that since it's a more campus-wide impact.

Mr. Begland asked are there any other major expenses on the north campus that are in the NRM account.

- Mr. Simms answered most of the core infrastructure systems, (stormwater, sewer, etc.), are part of that NRM line item.

Mr. Begland asked if the minor construction account primarily the parcel turnover costs.

- Mr. Simms said not necessarily, but it can be. They've done some capital contributions prior to the PACT Act, such as environmental remediation, that aren't captured in the expense table.
- It can be part of the parcel turnover it can also be part of the expense and financing stack that the developer is putting together to do the rehab and development of these buildings.

Mr. Begland asked How much would you estimate the agency is committing in terms of financial resources to the redevelopment of the north campus for housing purposes.

- Mr. Simms answered all the \$115M and the \$263M could be considered for housing purposes. It may not be limited to just housing, but it would be for the north campus redevelopment to support housing.

Mr. Begland asked what the state of the Commitment Letter as it relates to the housing developer selected here.

- Mr. Simms said this is done on a parcel-by-parcel basis. There are pre- packed commitments that are done and complete such as the trunk line that they did with building 207, which was about \$13M to do the initial trunk line and this is an example of that. They do potentially have commitment agreements with each of the parcels being developed. Such as 210 is going into financial closing in the near term and has its own Commitment Agreement, and there could be one for the next parcel, etc.

Mr. Begland asked if there has been a Commitment Letter for lot 408.

- Mr. Simms answered not for 408, they are working on it, and it will get finalized as they are getting closer to executing the sub-lease for that parcel.

### **Update on construction progress since the last meeting:**

**OAEM/Veterans Collaborative: Brian D'Andrea, Senior Vice President Century Housing; Teresa Banko, Director of Community Development for the Veterans Collective, U.S. Vets; Stephen Peck, President U.S. Vets**

Mr. D'Andrea provided some history of their team selection by the VA. Areas of discussion:

- Report out on progress on their EULS.
- Master Plan progress
- Regulatory challenges
- Update on their capital campaign
- Possible process for naming this emerging community.

He expressed his appreciation for the partnership from the VA, the local GLA team, and OEM office.

*(please see slide deck for more details)*

Buildings under construction:

- Building 404, new construction, 73 units, there is no specific set aside other than Veterans experiencing homelessness.
  - Construction progress on the exterior of the building, roofing and window installation and stucco is complete. Interior they are making progress on the common areas and finishes with those being installed.
  - Completion is slated for late this year, and they are beginning to prepare for lease-up. They've had an initial kick-off meeting with their fellow developers who will also be leasing concurrently with them and the VA.
- Buildings 156 & 157, adaptive reuse of the old tuberculosis and neuropsychiatric hospital on the north campus, 112 units, a mix of studio and one-bedroom apartments. Thirty-five of the units are set aside for Veterans experiencing homelessness who present with mental illness.
  - Construction update, all the interior demolition and abatement have been completed, and the structural retrofits have been completed, framing is underway.
  - Completion is slated for late spring 2025.
- Building 158, adaptive reuse, 49 units, set aside for Veterans experiencing homelessness.
  - Construction update, all demolition and abatement have been completed and they are in the middle of the seismic retrofit.
  - Completion is slated for summer 2025.
- Building 402, modular new construction, 120+ units (118 Veterans, 2 Managers), a mix of studios and two bedrooms, 50 of the units are set aside for Veterans with mental illness.
  - Construction update, finishing touches are being completed on the modular unit interiors and exteriors including roofs and walkways, and building out the community space. Underground utilities are also in progress, landscaping and poured concrete will begin soon.

Mr. Peck said the Building 210 is in predevelopment and they expect to close on July 17<sup>th</sup> and begin construction on August 5<sup>th</sup>.

- Building 210, adaptive reuse, 38 units (37 PSH, 1 Manager), designated women Veterans particularly women with children. This is a three-story building and is across the street from building 300, which will be their service center for the U.S. Vets homeless prevention programs and their Women Vets on Point Program which provides counseling and other services specifically for woman Veterans.
  - Expected completion April 2026.
- Building 300, adaptive reuse, 43 units (42 PSH, 1 Manager), set aside for Veterans experiencing homelessness.
  - This building was previously the kitchen building for the north campus for the L.A. area since the kitchen on the south campus has been completed, they were able to vacate building 300.

- In addition to the 43 permanent housing units there will be 15,000 sq. ft. of support services space. In the support services space, there will be a hub of services:
  - Food Bank
  - Legal Clinic
  - Peer support
  - U.S. Vets staff that will be running the site
  - Partners who will be contributing to the benefit of Veterans on campus

Mr. D'Andrea said in May they surpassed the midway point of the goal of delivering 1200 homes on the north campus.

*(please see slide deck for details)*

- Between the units completed and the phase zero developments, the units that are actively under construction have closed and the building 210 development, which is in the process of closing, they are at 778 homes, nearly 65% of the goal of 1200 units.
- Factoring in those developments that are in active pre-development, which have a tangible closing date, they are closer to 85% with only 188 homes to go.
- They have been able to make this type of progress largely due to the funding commitments from all segments of society, from the public sector, city, county, state, and federal government including philanthropic gifts.

#### Lease-Up/Move in Status

- Anticipated Lease-Up Status
  - Building 404: Q4 2024
  - Buildings 156/157 Q2 2025
  - Building 402: Q1 2025
- Lease-Up Constraints
  - PB VASH serves tenants up to 80% AMI.
  - NO Place Like Home serves tenants at or below 30% AMI
  - AB 1386: Coordination with TCAC on the Process to fill 30% AMI units with up to 60%.
  - Funding sources with varying AMI layering requirements; some with deeper targeting, others with less.
- Congressman, Brad Sherman, is working on legislation, The Housing Unhoused and Disabled Veterans Act, that would help resolve some of these inherent conflicts between the funding source requirements. A solution would be to disregard Veteran disability income when completing the income certifications for these various funding programs.
  - He provided the funding criteria for all their projects built, projects under construction, and planned projects. They are using a variety of different funding sources which are competitive whether it's city, state, county, or federal government.
  - They must compete with other affordable housing developers. The funding sources dictate the AMIs and don't always align and the more



restrictive requirement prevails as long as those are touching the same units.

*(please see slide deck for details)*

- Building 207 – They went through TCAC, CDLAC, the county, and the City of Los Angeles to modify their regulatory agreements to allow for more 60% AMI households and to provide more flexibility.
- Building 402 – currently under construction, 50% of these units are No Place Like Home (NPLH) funds to serve tenants at or below 30% AMI.
- State Law AB 1386, passed last October, allows some of the lower AMI Veteran units to be filled with higher AMI households if certain requirements are met; if those lower AMI units are not being leased within a certain time, the developer or owner can move up the AMI and serve higher income Veterans.
- Building 404 – they have a mix of 30 and 50% AMI units with 33 of these units set aside for Veterans at or below 30% AMI.
- Building 156 & 157 – a mix of 30 and 50% AMI with 70 units set aside for at or below 30% of the AMI.
- Building 158 – a mix of 30, 40 and 50% AMI.

One of the commonalities between all these projects is that each of them is 100% PBV.

- Projects Planned
  - Building 408
  - Building 409
  - Building 13

These planned projects are in pre-development and anticipate vouchers, PACT Act, and philanthropic funding. They have secured significant commitments on these developments, and they expect to begin applying for credits and bonds later this year.

Mr. Begland said it looks as though most of the funding criteria revolves around the AMI funding thresholds, correct?

- Mr. D'Andrea said that is one of the primary criteria, there is also population criteria such as NPLH which has an emphasis on Veterans experiencing chronic homelessness and having severe mental illness. So, other characteristics are often woven into these requirements beyond the AMI. But AMI is the top requirement.

Mr. Begland said he only saw one building where the funding criteria specified a set aside for those who were experiencing chronic homelessness and severe mental illness. What dictates the number of units for certain criteria (age, mental illness, chronic homelessness)? He was surprised that in one of the buildings, possibly 402, that 50 of the 120 units were going to be set aside for people with mental illness, is that a best practice to have that level of acuity in one building.

- Mr. D'Andrea said they could put together a matrix that shows all the various populations, subtypes, and AMIs. Their thought is that a mix of acuities is a good thing and that 50 out of 120 units they feel is a healthy mix. There is the

need to serve the most vulnerable and most chronically homeless and he felt that they are doing this with much of the housing that has been created. The overarching requirement is the Leasing Act that these housing units be supportive housing, which requires a homelessness requirement but doesn't necessarily require a chronic homelessness requirement or a severe mental illness requirement. To provide a more complete answer, they would need to go back and create a matrix that would lay out the various criteria across these EULs.

- Mr. Begland requested that they have that matrix for their next information exchange.

Dr. Harris said there are two layers to the conversation regarding the mix of Veterans and the demographics. He wanted to address the demographics themselves.

- They did look at this question of what the kinds of prevalence rates of Veterans 62 and older are, Veterans under the 30% AMI or over the 30% AMI, serious mental illness, and chronic homelessness and this was done specifically for building 207.
- In L.A. about three-quarters of Veterans on the homeless By Name List (BNL) a year ago were under 30% AMI. About 50% were chronically homeless, double the rate of the national number for chronic homelessness, serious mental illness is approximately 20-25% of the Veterans that were assessed here in L.A.
- When layer those together it is only a viable pool of about 3% of Veterans on the BNL who can meet all the most restrictive criteria; 62 years or older, under 30% AMI, chronically homeless, and seriously mentally ill.
- Drastically shrink the pool of Veterans who will qualify for the most restrictive units with every new eligibility criterion that is introduced.

Ms. Sandor is glad there will be a matrix created for them to review because not only does it matter what the healthy mix is within the building, but it also matters as a community. How are the referrals being prioritized?

- Mr. D'Andrea answered they are generally subject to the coordinated entry system for referrals into this housing and the VA is the manager of that system. The VA team would be best suited to answer that question.
- Mr. Kuhn said many of the rules were put in place for the general population. There are not enough resources to house the general homeless population, so they have created a priority matrix to try to serve the neediest individuals.
  - For the VA and Veterans, we do not have to prioritize the same way, theoretically, we have enough resources to house everyone. So, while they have to meet these criteria they need to think about what are the specific choices Veterans have and we're able to offer Veterans choices, whether it's a campus unit, or something in the community, depending on their needs and preferences.
  - They also want to understand who is on their BNL and how they can match them to all available housing resources. The BNL is the list of Veterans entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), much of the data is entered by our staff, which is a collection of

all the data that HUD has mandated the COCs maintain.

- Their BNL is drawn from the HMIS data,
- They then assign everyone they identify, or the community identifies as homeless to a particular Single Point of Access (SPA),
- Each SPA team works with the VA's One Team, which is VA community providers and such, to get assigned to care and then on track to housing.
- So, the prioritization does not happen in the traditional sense, the idea is they want everyone into housing, and Veterans choice drives much of this.

Ms. Hammitt said currently, they look at Veterans 55 and older, they then go to Veterans' households with minor children, Veterans fleeing domestic violence or intimate partner violence, and they also look at those clinical case transfers from SSVF where individuals need a higher level of case management.

- Prioritization may be moot if they have enough resources to support everyone. Depending on capacity and all the agencies throughout, they've got to have a mechanism by which people are reaching out to Veterans.

Mr. Begland asked Mr. Kuhn for clarification on the number of names on the BNL, it is 1,365?

- Mr. Kuhn said it varies and changes every week and possibly every day, but latest that was the correct number.

Mr. Boylan stated there is a process when these guidelines are put together. Initially, the program itself is based on VA data, data throughout the state from a variety of state agencies, and federal agencies, to get an understanding of that population and perhaps to a specific area. Therefore, you may see the requirements from L.A. City and L.A. County and things here locally in some cases being much stronger than those state requirements because locally they are the ones who are checking the "pulse" on their local environment.

- When the funding goes out, you develop guidelines based on that population and you try to look at what the current target is while remaining flexible.
- Early on AMI was identified as the first marker to start doing something, ideally, we would be able to look back and really start being more targeted in the approach. Has there been any pull back of funds that were issued?
- When looking at behavioral health SUDs should also be included, moving forward how mental health services is defined part of it should be defined more inclusively as behavioral health services.

Dr. Nwajuaku said Dallas has been successful in housing much of their homeless population. To what extent can we use their success to guide us.

- Dr. Harris said he had worked with Dallas and is happy to share that. He also acknowledged the work Brian and his team have done particularly on building 207 with raising the AMI caps, and in some cases, they had to relinquish funding and get private philanthropic funding to go above the 50-60% AMI. He also asked for clarification regarding VASH and non-VASH units.
- Mr. D'Andrea said there are three buildings with VHHP and those require 10%

of the units to be set aside for OTH Veterans. Historically, those Veterans needed to be served with a section 8 voucher, but the interpretation now is that those Veterans can qualify for a VASH voucher but be ineligible for VA healthcare. So, those section 8 vouchers are being converted to VASH vouchers.

- Dr. Harris said VHHP requirement predated the statutory change that expanded the definition of eligibility and HUD-VASH.

BG (Ret) Sutton said from a strategic level, looking at the VA as an enterprise, this campus represents an opportunity to show how to deal with the problems of today, which include homelessness, a suicide epidemic, better PTSD treatments, with an increase in blast injuries since Iraq and Afghanistan, we will have an increased proportion of our Veteran aging population that will have early dementia, seizure issues, brain injury related sequela and we need to factor all that in.

- The U.S. Surgeon General has discussed how social isolation and mental health are a crisis of our time. So, the VA really ought to be the lead for this. She would also like to hear about things like service dog facilities, dog parks, maybe a veterinarian here, training facilities, bike lanes, bus lanes, band transportation in addition to metro, golf carts, park spaces, a possible amphitheater, and a community garden. And perhaps looking to the seriously mentally ill and bringing in a proven model, the Clubhouse International Model.
- It's important to understand the population mix, those who will thrive in a supportive housing environment and those who are economically homeless, they are working full-time but can't make the market rate rent, we want to get them into job training and skills that ought to be available here on site so they can increase their market wage income, episodically homeless, at-risk Veterans.
- Our nation is desperate for examples of what it can mean to build community.

Mr. Begland said this work started to address a problem; how do we realize the opportunity? This is a chance for people from across the political spectrum from different backgrounds to come together and affirm a message about how we treat Veterans and how civilians should understand the treatment of Veterans. For building 402, the plans for 120 units of which 50 units are set-aside for those with mental illness. The 50 set-aside units are a function of the funding sources having dictated.

- Mr. D'Andrea said the 50 units were dictated by funding sources, the NPLH funding that was awarded through the county of Los Angeles to this project.

Mr. Begland said a point was made earlier that in the future we ought to think about defining the way in which we're serving people with mental illness, substance abuse disorders should qualify for behavioral health treatment. The definition of mental illness was offered by the funders, and what is that definition? And when the state funding dictates that 50 units are set-aside for Veterans with mental illness; is that a permanent covenant for the operation of that property?

- Mr. D'Andrea said the definition was offered by the state NPLH. He would need to follow up on the actual definition offered by the funder. A 55-year regulatory agreement is recorded against the Leasehold of the state and governs what can

happen in these buildings unless it's subsequently modified or superseded by some state law or federal law.

Mr. Begland said there's a funding criterion that's often imposed for Veterans over 65, correct?

- Mr. D'Andrea answered to the extent the development is conceived, planned, and funded as a senior housing development, ages 60-65.

Mr. Begland these are choices that will be locked in for 55 years unless they're changed. The funding authorities seem to have been working with us regarding the AMI issue, but we should question whether or not these other funding criteria will be modified in the future.

- Mr. D'Andrea answered it is one of the reasons why we seek to incorporate maximum flexibility in our project unit types.
- A one-bedroom is more flexible than a studio in that it can serve households between one and three family members. You see a collection of two-bedroom units.
- They are also seeking funding from competitive sources and are forced to compete and structure the deal in a way that can get funded. It's this balance and reconciliation of doing what you can to access the funding and ending up with a product that meets current local needs but can also speak to future needs. For the latest projects in progress, buildings 158, 408, 409, and 13, you'll see increased flexibility as it relates to some of the funding sources.

Mr. Begland ask how many two-bedrooms are identified for construction. He was curious because it's meant to serve women in a dependent care role.

- Mr. D'Andrea answered he does not have those numbers at this time but can provide them afterward. He estimated that presently less than 50 units.

Mr. D'Andrea resumed the discussion on the predevelopment expenses.

*(please see slides for details)*

- All four projects, (buildings 408, 409, 300 & 13), have been invested to prepare these buildings for additional funding applications including bond and credit applications.
- General costs per unit for the north campus. These ten projects have been built at different times and have other funding sources and requirements; some are adaptive reuse, and some are new construction.

Mr. Begland ask why is adaptive reuse not more expensive?

- Mr. D'Andrea said in many cases for the adaptive reuse projects we are utilizing concrete structures that were well built.
- They needed to be seismically upgraded, there's been some interior demolition and abatement.
- They are historic structures that have various requirements they must comply with, and these have been incremental costs but not of the magnitude greater than the cost of new construction.

Ms. Sandor said multiple things are driving the tenant mix and funding criteria, correct? How is the prioritization for referrals handled through the coordinated entry and through One Team? How much VA and HUD guidance on how to prioritize HUD-VASH vouchers is also driving the tenant mix? The bill that creates pathways for voucher utilization for individuals who do not need services, how will that flexibility impact the tenant mix on campus?

- Dr. Harris said in terms of being guidance on prioritization, the HUD- VASH program its primary push is on a need for case management. It's generally designed and implemented based on levels of clinical acuity, but it's not a score on a certain test or a set of disorders that qualify a person or not.
- The program began prioritizing chronically homeless Veterans and that prioritization has been pulled back. A bill has been introduced but not passed through Congress, which would create a voucher-only pathway in that Veterans can receive a HUD-VASH voucher and not need a case manager assigned to them.
- It does have major implications on the tenant mix and the degree of services in a building, it would allow for the focus on Veterans who need that more intensive case management, but it would free up HUD- VASH vouchers for Veterans who don't have many of these clinical needs to be part of the tenant mix.

Ms. Sandor asked Brian to include on the matrix; covenants and how long those eligibility criteria will be in place based on the funding as well as age, and income eligibility.

- Mr. D'Andrea said they will include that additional information on the matrix and clarified that there is only one senior housing development on campus, building 207. All other buildings are age unrestrictive.

Referencing Mr. Begland's earlier question they confirmed that to date there are 31 two-bedrooms between MacArthur Field A and B, buildings 402 and 300. Building 210 does not have any two-bedroom units.

Dr. Harris confirmed that NPLH mental illness requirements do require serious mental illness, it's a very restrictive set of disorders (psychotic disorders, schizophrenia, major affective disorders, Bipolar disorders, etc.).

Mr. Canfield: What is included in the \$600,00 per door cost? Is there any land acquisition component to this?

Mr. D'Andrea said they have taken out any land improvement cost, the VA basically donated the land and buildings lease so there are no land or building values included. It does include:

- Demolition
- Abatement
- Architecture
- Engineering
- Civil engineering landscape architecture

- Geotechnical engineering
- Soft costs

None of the developers here self-perform as general contractors, so all of these are 3<sup>rd</sup> party GCs which include:

- GC's overhead and profit as regulated by the state TCAC, the tax allocation committee.
- Financing costs
- Bond issuance costs
- Construction interest
- Developer fees regulated by the various funding sources.

These include all the typical costs of delivering affordable housing. There are elements of the adaptive reuse that require parts of the structure to be preserved, (windows, doors, roofing, flooring, etc.).

- These can sometimes be incremental to a development cost structure. As it relates to offsites, the VA has generally been responsible for the streets, curbs, and gutters on campus. In some cases, the developments are picking up certain contiguous offsite improvements to each development, but in these costs, there are none.

Mr. Kuhn stated to revisit the BNL and prioritization to put the units that are being developed here in context to the overall effort. There are approximately 1,365 on the BNL, between now and January they may have over 1,100 new units of Veteran dedicated housing.

- That does not include anything we're doing in the community for TBVs, that are independent SSVF, and of the 1,100 only about 270 are on campus. The VA does not need to prioritize in the way the general population has to be prioritized, we let Veterans choose.
- They have a Housing Choice Form; they inform Veterans where there are different projects they can choose from. As these projects open with the housing inventory, they will have available there will be no need to filter. It means they will need to accelerate to push Veterans to go into housing because they will have all these units available. The goal is to get Veterans out of temporary housing and into permanent housing. Campus housing is a fraction of the inventory they will be opening between now and January. Veterans want to live in beautiful communities not on skid row. Prioritization is less of an emphasis for them, they want to create quality living environments where Veterans want to move into.

Mr. Begland ask what the funding commitments were for parcel 408 and Building 13.

- Mr. D'Andrea said project planning funding criteria slide.
- Building 408
  - 100 Project Based VASH vouchers awarded by LACDA.
  - \$7.6M project-specific philanthropic contribution
  - PACT Act funding
- Building 13

- PACT Act funding
- \$7.0M project-specific philanthropic contribution

Mr. Begland asked if there was a written letter that states the PBV awarded by LACDA.

- Mr. D'Andrea said yes, an application was made, and they would receive a commitment letter from LACDA for those vouchers. That commitment letter is then leveraged into an Agreement to Enter into a Housing Assistant Payment (AHAP) contract that is executed before the construction and partnership closing.

Mr. Begland stated the board has expressed concerns and perhaps opposition to the idea of turning over 408 to housing. So, if we were to again express the view that turning over 408 to housing should not happen and if the agency agreed with the board, could you go back to LACDA and ask if those 100 vouchers could be assigned to a different project.

- Mr. D'Andrea said our client is the VA and the VA has authorized us to move forward with these buildings, we've proceeded and spent a significant amount of capital preparing these developments, secured financing commitments, and we are proceeding in that manner.

Mr. Begland ask if they were ever able to go back to housing authorities and ask them to redirect housing vouchers to a different project?

- Mr. D'Andrea said this project was awarded vouchers if there were a different project it would have to be separately applied for, but TSA does commit these 100 PB VASH vouchers in building 408. Buildings 408, 409, 300, and 13 are part of master plan 2022 or part of the community plan that was incorporated into master plan 2022, which was accepted by the VA and the Secretary, and all these parcels are also contemplated in the 99-year principal developer EUL that was executed with the VA several years ago. So, none of this is a departure from what was already planned and authorized.

Mr. Canfield asked how difficult it would be to move the philanthropic contributions if there was a change in direction on those buildings.

- Mr. D'Andrea said this philanthropic source made commitments to these projects as contemplated in the master plan 2022, in the community plan, as part of the PDE. I can't speak to the transferability of those awards. It is unique to have this type of philanthropic support in an affordable housing transaction.

Mr. Canfield asked if there was something unique about these buildings that generated these philanthropic contributions or if it is people who want to be part of solving Veterans homelessness.

- Mr. Peck said he believes it is the latter, they recently secured a donation of 2.5M for building 13, which they anticipate being the town center.
- They were specific about donating to that specific use in that building and that funding would go away if not utilized for that specific use.
- The other one they would need to negotiate with the funders to see if they



would still give support to the buildings if they were moved to another part of the campus.

Ms. Sandor asked if they are able to share the sources of the philanthropic funding?

Mr. Peck said Veterans Promise Campaign, *(please see slide for details)*, it's been a wide variety of resources. The plan that has been presented to them is the plan that has been approved by the VA and the Secretary, so we're moving forward on that basis.

Mr. Begland ask if any of these fundraising efforts apply to the rehabilitation of the Wadsworth Chapel.

- Mr. Peck said yes, there is a \$28M tab on that, we are \$26M into it so they will need to raise \$2M more.

Mr. Begland asked why they cannot undertake the work with \$26M of the \$28M funded.

- Mr. Peck stated it is dependent on having 100% of the funding.
- some of the funding is dependent on having full funding to move forward.

Mr. Begland asked if they had any sense as to when the funding will be complete.

- Mr. Peck said they have a meeting scheduled in July that they hope will wrap it up. It is challenging in that it is not housing.
- While there may be multiple sources available to build housing for those experiencing homelessness, none of that is available for the chapel, so they are cobbling together a variety of resources for funding.

Ms. Banko: Community Dispatch, *(please see slides for details)*. The Backbone Community-Building Progress annual impact report was released and distributed to the board members.

- The Veterans Collective (501c3) Backbone, with VA continues its mission of bridging gaps and bringing Veterans and macro community partners together.
- Community Partner & Provider Alliance launched in April, (38 partners collaborating).
- Joint events, trainings and initiatives with the VA and community partners in service to the community are ongoing in the SC outside B210:
  - Storytelling & Creative Arts
  - Financial Literacy
  - Literacy
  - Workforce
- Continuous feedback loop and communications-building, feedback collection is ongoing.
  - They had previously discussed the healthy communities and therapeutic community model.
  - They implemented a survey to determine what the Veterans needed and wanted on campus as well as what the Veterans would like as a community name.

Mr. Peck confirmed they are well on their way to fulfilling their commitment to:

- Build 900 units of permanent supportive housing contributing to the 1200 units for Veterans and their families call for in the master plan.
- Create a vibrant community that contributes to the well-being of the Veterans who choose to live on campus.
- Full transparency, ensuring they operate within their authority and bringing the VA in the Veterans community into their planning at every step.
- Amenities and services requested by the Veterans have been included in these plans.
- The majority of the plan for the campus is also congruent with the ULI study with one notable exception, none of the Veterans in the survey mentioned the need for a hotel.
- There has been some opposition to the proposed housing in the mixed- use town center.
- They understand that there will be differences of opinion on how they develop this property but to put the financing in jeopardy is unconscionable.

Mr. Begland said he appreciates the comments from Mr. Peck. However, they do not only want to solve a problem they want to realize an opportunity. Reasonable people may disagree about whether mixed-use development means permanent supportive housing, whether mixed-use development should include people with acute needs, or whether there should be a distinction between public and private space. He agreed with Ms. Banko on the importance of naming the community.

- There was a recommendation (17-3) to the Secretary to revert to the historic name of the Pacific Branch. At the time, the agency's response was to task the Office of General Council (OGC) with exploring the ability to do that.
- Similar issue to the Metro which was originally named Westwood/VA Hospital and the Secretary informed them they would work with Metro to determine the right name.
- The OGC informed the board that there is a statute in place that says only Congress can name VA land.

He emphasized the importance of having congressional leadership attend these board meetings. He emphasized the point Ms. Banko had made regarding the naming of the buildings and neighborhoods as well and it is an important part of establishing an identity beyond that of a hospital.

### **Public Comments Session:**

The DFO explained the rules of engagement.

Jerry Orlemann – Declined his original registration.

Kyle Orlemann – She discussed:

- Naming rights and asked the board to give serious consideration to Harry Corre who recently turned 101 years old and a ceremony was held for him on

Memorial Day. He is a Baton Death March survivor, fought in the Battle of Corregidor, was a POW, and worked in the mines in Japan. In honor of his dedication to the country and other Veterans.

- AMI issue and the problems Veterans that are 100% disabled are facing due to the AMI % cap.
- The importance of service dogs and the need for services to support this effort (Veterinary clinics, dog training facility, dog parks, etc.).

Sarah Serrano (virtual) – Support of hotel lodging on the campus.

- A hotel on campus would be superior and more affordable than those off campus.
- May decrease the cost of a rental car once the Metro's Purple D Line is up and running.
- The location is ideal close to LAX.
- A Veteran discount rate for the hotel would be ideal.
- Profits from the hotel could go towards Veteran services or subsidies for other Veteran hotel guests. Many people would be fine with paying more for the hotel room if they knew the profits would be going to support local Veterans.

She shared her and her sister's experience of homelessness and the obstacles they faced.

- At one facility she was not eligible because it was for men only.
- Another program would have accepted her but not her sister.
- Being a caregiver is common for many women Veterans, but it was precisely the reason that excluded her from receiving services.
- She was not facing chronic homelessness at the time, she was newly unhoused but she believes that no having a short term emergency solution available for her delayed her progress to getting back on her feet.
- If campus hotel lodging offered some emergency solution for Veterans, she would gladly pay more so that another Veteran could have a bed and a shower.

Brayden Yoder – He has been receiving care at the West L.A. VA and in 2015/2016 he was part of a Veterans working group for the redesign of the VA Master Plan in hopes that these estimated 400 acres could be used for Veteran services as was originally in the deed to this property. As a result, the VCOB was established.

- He endorsed the ULI plan for a Veteran Commons on the north side of the campus.
- In 2016 the intent was to ensure the court decision to return this property to the Veterans was upheld.
- A crucial part of this was the VA Commons, this was the idea of a Veterans Marketplace.
- One way to keep the Veterans engaged is to have a Veteran Commons and this was part of the ULI plan. It would provide a space for Veterans to interact with each other.
- They want to have a place to grab some coffee, go to the farmers market, or craft market, and avail themselves of Veteran services, and recreational

services.

Dreau Robbins – He is in favor of the ULI plan, he feels it adds more functionality.

- He likes that in the plan there is an orientation to the beginning of the campus, so you know you are entering the campus.
- He likes how they kept the established landmarks within the campus and then how they added the town center and common areas in the center of the campus.
- The Town Center is a homerun idea offering retail and services as such, job training or Veteran-owned businesses is a great idea.
- Provides an opportunity for people who work on campus to visit the town center for lunch or to shop as well. This adds more life to the campus.
- The hotel is another great idea. San Francisco has a very popular Marine Corps hotel. New York City has a Veteran hotel, so having one in Los Angeles at this campus would be a great idea.

Luciano Aguilar –He is an Air Force Veteran and the president of the Dogs Project a non-profit and the founder of Presidential of K-9, a dog training, grooming, and boarding facility. As discussed earlier, there are many Veterans who have service animals but no one to take care of them and that is where the Dogs Project and Presidential K-9 can help, the only thing these organizations do not have is a Veterinarian clinic.

The Dogs Project:

- Provides service dogs for Veterans in need.
- They've taught high school students how to train service dogs.
- If a service dog training facility is created on campus, then Veterans could be taught how to train these dogs, and this could be a job for those Veterans.

He felt this was a great opportunity for Veterans and asked the board to consider his proposal.

John Oppenheim (virtual) – An Air Force Veteran and advocate for senior Veterans.

- What are we doing in taking care of our seniors? He explained the plight of one 84-year-old Veteran who was turned down multiple times for advanced care because he was not over 70% service-connected.
- Many senior issues are not clinical mental health problems but they're situational ones of isolation and loneliness which can manifest as mental health issues.
- Peer support can help eliminate isolation and loneliness.
- What's the solution? Have a specialty clinic for seniors. VA Long Beach has a geriatric clinic with a small staff, so why not create a larger effort and assess and assign our seniors?
- There are a myriad of agencies and non-profits that could help but it seems the VA considers itself the last word and only refers out to their chosen agencies which appears to be very limited.
- Not all VA social workers are familiar with the rules of the VA perhaps a massive

training effort could improve this.

- He is the caregiver for his wife who struggles with memory and other aging issues. He had asked about a support group for himself and was told that the support groups were only for spouses and not the Veterans themselves.
- With the majority of Veterans over the age of 65 it would be beneficial to determine how many are caregivers themselves and as part of the geriatric care we could acknowledge the needs of these caregivers as well.
- As a patient at the VA he is very satisfied with his medical care but is concerned about the care for seniors.
- The VA is more than a medical facility and needs to do more in the local community.

Hamilton Underwood (virtual) - A Veteran and former VCOEB Committee member.

- He was very pleased with the progress towards Veteran housing on campus.
- He also endorsed the ULI technical panel report which would reimagine the town center as described in the 2016 and 2022 master plan.
  - Integrating the quad, parade grounds, chapel square and the Wadsworth theater.
  - Adaptively reuse building 13 as a Veteran's hotel would provide training opportunities and employment for Veterans and lodging for their visiting family members.

Abe Bradshaw – No show

Anthony Allman – Former VCOEB member and Executive Director of Vets Advocacy, which monitors the VA's performance on the master plan since 2015.

- From 2016 to the present, all permanent supportive housing development on campus was premised on the assumed availability of project-based vouchers (PBV) issued by a local public housing authority.
- The VCOEB February meeting marked the first-time limitations on PBVs were raised in a public forum.
  - Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) is projecting they will reach their current PBV cap of 7837 vouchers within two years.
  - Given LACDA's current total allocation of vouchers and the statutory limit on PBVs established by Congress further supportive housing development on campus may run its course by 2026.
  - His preliminary analysis suggests that the cap on PBVs could limit the number of units on campus to approximately 1013. He reached this conclusion by pushing two years out for the most recent parcel release building 210. He stressed this was an approximation based on the February release schedule for Q1 2024 because VA has not released its Q2 2024 release schedule.
  - In the current parcel release schedule, there are four buildings set to be released within LACDA's estimated two-year window.
    - Buildings 300 and 256 are excellent choices in the North Village area consistent with prior planning efforts.

- Buildings 408 and 409 are set for release within the two- year window remain problematic as they occupy space on campus preserved for the contested town center concept presented in master plan 2022. Executing on these EULs now seems reckless when it is not clear that future vouchers will become available to continue development efforts.
- Permanent supportive housing was never a focus of the original 2016 draft master plan town concept. In the master plan 2022 changes were made to the town center's scope and design which caught the attention of the VCOEB. Secretary McDonough's concurred with the VCOEB's request for technical assistance from an objective third party.
- ULI does recommend building housing capacity around the perimeter of the quad but does not qualify that housing as permanent supportive housing.
- September 2023, VCOEB updated recommendation 2104, which provided feedback on the long-term consequences of VA's current parcel selection to achieve 1215 supportive housing units on campus. The recommendation observed that two of the buildings identified in the North Village and one of the buildings identified in the town center press beyond the 1200-unit target and therefore may not be developed.
- He estimates that four EUL buildings in the North Village are at risk because they sit beyond the PBV cap as well as three of the five EULs in the town center.
- The number of undeveloped buildings may increase although VA anticipates releasing buildings 256 and 409 within the two-year window, no voucher commitments exist today for either project.
- Without the availability to commit PBVs the odds of falling short on land use concepts offered in master plan 2022 are overwhelming.
- VA must choose to either finish the completion of the North Village or risk a diluted version of its strategic vision for the campus.

Marvin Gunn – Vietnam Veteran living in building 209 on campus since 2020.

- Brentwood School has been providing shuttle services for the Veterans to the athletic field and gym and they're going to start a shuttle service for shopping every week.
- They are providing summer camp for the children of Veterans.
- They provided Christmas and Thanksgiving meals for all the Veterans and their families.
- Both Brentwood School and UCLA do a lot for those Veterans on campus.

Travis P. Stanley – No Show

Melanie A. Winns – The former VCR Coordinator for Brentwood Schools she is still very interested in the work the VCOEB is doing on behalf of the Veterans.

- She thanked the committee for all they have done and are doing for Veterans, and she plans on attending more of the live committee meetings.

Rob Reynolds – He believes it would be beneficial for this board to rescind the naming rights for Brentwood Schools and UCLA before the upcoming trial in August where the legality of those leases is going to be addressed.

- Concern regarding the AMI issue and that 100% disabled Veterans cannot qualify for those buildings on campus.
- Congressman Brad Sherman has put forth a bill to address this AMI issue. As of right now those 100% disabled Veterans are allowed to be on the property for 90 days and if they do not choose a housing location off campus there are then asked to leave.
- Many Veterans would benefit living on the West LA campus with a support network vice in the community where many Veterans fall back into homelessness because of the lack of a support network.
- VA needs to work to ensure the most disabled Veterans have the opportunity to live on the VA property.
- One of the recommendations cited in the current lawsuit is to have more temporary housing units on the VA land to where Veterans can have a place to stay until the new apartment buildings open up.
- He suggested some of the social workers may benefit from training in order to work better with the Veterans they serve.
- He was identified as a stakeholder in the ULI report but he did not feel they did a proper job in speaking to Veterans that actually live on campus.
- He feels that the public should come to these meetings to advocate on how they can get homeless Veterans off the streets and end Veteran homelessness in Los Angeles.

Dan Ortiz – He has been active in the community for 30 years and is glad to see all the work that is currently being done.

- He spoke with the ULI, while they toured the campus, and they spoke about what the Veterans envisioned for the community.
- He supports the ULI presentation.
- He is a 100% disabled, combat Veteran who is being priced out of L.A. and lives in the Veterans home on campus.
- Very supportive of the proposed hotel on campus. It would have multiple benefits; it can train Veterans and create jobs in the hospitality industry.
- The parade grounds and park space would be beneficial.
- He also expressed his concern regarding the artwork that was originally presented by Metro.

John Fulmer – Combat, Infantry Veteran served from 2005 to 2008.

- He is a volunteer on campus and hopes to provide valuable information consistent with building a positive community.
- After a recent music concert in the area of buildings 205, 208 and 209 he believed the overall experience of the event would be positive, however, after speaking with several Veteran peers residing in these buildings some residents voiced concerns about noise disruption.
- He believes the 2022 master plan has been implemented with little public

engagement with fewer than half the comments received from Veterans. The plan proposes mixed-use residential buildings, the noise ordinance should be a consideration, and this should be a consideration as to the impact on the neighborhoods filled with Veterans.

- It may be challenging to seek serenity with events and businesses operating right outside one's front door.

**Campus redevelopment plans (campus plans for the remainder of the campus, excluding the areas identified for housing.**

**Chelsea Black/CFM Andrew Strain, Roberto Marshall Ed Amador,**

- Andrew Strain thanked Veterans who provided feedback in the public comments and thanked the board for giving him the opportunity to present.
- He introduced his VA colleagues and their involvement in the funding and Master Plan
- The presentation will give a briefing of the requirements on campus in addition to housing, the strategy around moving forward with the EULs and supporting the operational requirements of the health care system in conjunction with the EULs.
- North Campus Redevelopment Goals with forecasting for the next five years
  - Compare the status that were captured in 2022 Master Plan vs. where they are today and where they forecast being in the next 5 years.
- Graphic from Master Plan 22 Vision – Map 1
  - Graphic shows holistic approach to the property with Veteran housing, a town center, community uses and NVA operations.
  - Still our guiding vision of what we want to accomplish in West LA
  - Providing healthcare on the south campus (blue on map), providing community north of the CalVet State Home through the EUL program and then providing different activity hubs like a town center
  - VA operational aspects that go with that
- Master Plan 22 Building Uses – Map 2
  - Looked at all those buildings, VA services, and the building shown in the 2016 Draft Master Plan, and what would make be easiest for VA to consolidate and move out of while advancing as much housing as possible in the parcel turnover process.
  - Since 2022, we have been doing work to better understand the functions of the buildings.
  - Worked on updated maps and campus uses to date.
  - Effectively turned over those buildings to housing and consolidated services to a more central part of campus.
- Chairman Begland asked Andrew to brief the board more on the maps and what building numbers housed what activity.
  - The reason Mr. Begland – north campus is not a blank slate, occupied for existing activities, many buildings have been neglected, not just those that the principal developer needs to have.



- Massive assessment that needs to go on beyond the Principal Developer
  - Breakdown of buildings as it stands today.
- Buildings that are open EULs (Map 3a)
  - Turned over buildings to EUL program.
- New Construction Parcels (May 3b)
  - Under construction
- Under Renovation (Map 3c)
  - Addresses instead of building numbers.
  - Building 300 has relocated to south of Wiltshire Blvd.
  - Building 210 has been difficult to transfer services to 206.
- Building 206
  - Accommodating a lot of the services
  - An important building to create swing space and relocate the research service out of 210.
  - 257 has included a lot of HUD-VASH service staff.
  - Buildings that are later, if all on the EUL turnover
  - These are not the only buildings that will accommodate the services.
- Facility Assessment Process— Map 4
  - Documentation review to determine a condition of a building and state of whether it requires improvement to be brought to standards
  - A lot of these buildings are in poor or fair condition as well as those around the town center.
  - Research buildings to the left of Map 3
  - Use the program to address building conditions and make better use of buildings.
- Research Building Quad is in poor condition.
  - Cannot consolidate research services like 206 or 210 because those research functions do not accommodate other research buildings south of campus given the state of those buildings.
- Parcel Turnovers – Map 3e
  - Parcel turnover and relocation, this slide captures the different types of projects related to the turnover process including utilities and site preps and going into new constructions.
  - Focusing on 206, 257, 220, and 218 as swing space
  - Focusing on parking lots too
- Building 256
  - Fair condition, not providing the best space for administration and clinical operations, part of move will create space for the staff as the building is turned over.
- North Campus Redevelopment Goals-B256 Services Relocation
  - Some clinical staff going to 258 and 218 and Building 402 on the south campus.
  - Healthcare Planning and space team to review adequate space elsewhere and ensure smooth transition.
  - Working with end-users to make sure they are comfortable with the process.

- GLA vs. VISN 22 Capital Funding and SCIP Process
  - Mr. Marshall put together all the accounts for GLA and wanted to compare it to the rest of the VISN.
  - Two accounts that are No Year Budgets (MRA or MF funds)
  - Leasing Act that can be used for construction projects for housing, shown as FY94.
  - Projects funded prior to the PACT act for implementation of the EUL for water, sewer lines, the infrastructure improvements that were needed were funded by VA.
  - The lines are shorter because there was an influx of PACT Act money and split evenly between 23 and 24.
  - Comparison of what was allocated to GLA vs. the rest of the VISN.
- Outyears for 25 and 26
  - 22 NRM projects
  - 7 NRM PACT Act projects
  - One minor project and one major construction project
  - SCIP cycle is a ten-year cycle two years out with the budget year being the most important year, which is FY26.
  - NRM projects are submitted three years out.
  - Minor construction plans are five years and major construction plans are ten years.
  - Facility has one large problem to address.
  - The gray bar on the graph indicates there is some condition and space gaps that are not being addressed in the actual projects but still a requirement for the facility.
  - \$2.6 Billion for GLA
  - Condition and space gap about \$22 billion dollars
  - Funding year for FY26 is 2% of that.
- Mr. Begland asked if the budget projection based on the conditions where for the entire campus or only north of campus.
  - Mr. Marshall said they were for the entire campus, and they are assessed by building.
  - Mr. Begland asked him to follow up with the committee by sending breakouts for the budget figures north of Wiltshire, north of campus, south of Wiltshire, the hospital complex, and the Sepulveda Blvd. complex.
- Mr. Begland clarified that EUL funding may or may not be included in SCIP.
  - Yes, but MF funding will be included in SCIP.
  - The only one not required is capital contributions under the minor construction projects.
  - MRN projects projected two years out in president's budget.
  - Some projects moved because of parcel release, identifying as a PACT Act project.
- Mr. Begland said in 2022, the board recommended the agency start including costs associated with parcel turnover to the developer and infrastructure costs in the Strategic Capital Investment Plan.

- The Secretary agreed and they were included. As explained, infrastructure and exact parcel turnover costs are now included.
- Are there other expenditures related to north campus redevelopment that are included in the SCIP? Or is it just partial turnover and infrastructure?
  - Mr. Marshall said that all costs over \$1 million, as a normal requirement for VA capital investment, is capturing SCIP.
  - Only ones that are put into the normal cycle will be added to the budget, everything else is capturing SCIP as an outyear.
- If the agency wanted to build a town center and build it themselves, what are the budget authorities under which the agency could do that assuming just retail space, not housing? Do you have the authority to do that?
  - It is a possibility for projects or facilities used under VCS, possibility of capital renovations for specific buildings under VA budget.
  - The challenge is there is a large need without the town center. It is how we take the funding to implement a town center from the allocation they currently have.
- Mr. Boerstler asked to clarify the 3.6-billion-dollar infrastructure deficit.
  - Mr. Marshall stated that this is still a requirement of two point six billion dollars of additional projects to
  - \$3.6 billion is a deficit in the condition and space gaps for the facility.
  - Mr. Boerstler clarified that any new funding requirements set for a VCS operation would have to come out of that existing funding.
  - Mr. Marshall said that was correct.
- Mr. Begland asked if the new acute care tower was included in that budget cycle.
  - Mr. Marshall said no, it was based on the previous SCIP cycle.
  - This is strictly what is being projected from FY25 to FY35.
- Mr. Begland asked what the most ambitious and largest projects the Veteran Canteen Services has ever done.
  - They have provided some examples.
  - VCS is on the table, examples of ambitious project.
  - Possibility of a new adventure and way of delivering services.
- Mr. Begland asked if VCS could operate a canteen out of Building 300, which will be an EUL.
  - Mr. Marshall said it was a possibility, they want to figure out how to model.
  - Mr. Amorda does not have their own capital funding. They don't have capital money so that would have to come from VHA or somewhere else.
- Mr. Strain said that questioning whether VCS can handle the services requires some further research and questioning.
- Mr. Begland said he was surprised to hear funds can go into the town center and VCS sounds like a viable idea
  - The canteen services in the building, that is the authority to provide those types of amenities.
- Major Construction Program—Seismic Program Replacement and Retrofit

- Building 300 kitchen replacement has been completed on the south campus.
  - Plans to renovate 212, construction anticipated in 2026.
- Future Planning— Minor and Major Construction Program
  - Focus on later phase buildings and potentials.
  - One of the last parcels to get to the 1,200-unit goal relies on the competition of the new VA police building and relocation of that service in Lot 17 by the Eisenhower Gate
  - New position for the police building with be central to campus.
  - Security is top of mind for the operation of the new community.
  - Some of the parcels that are contemplated beyond the 1,200 units are dependent on a long-term solution for research service.
  - New consolidated research building that is part of the major construction program, but the timing is to be determined.
- Important to note the dependencies for the later phase parcels Future Planning—South Campus Construction
  - Lot of reinvestments and increasing the functionality and utilities
  - Construction of Critical Care Center
  - Plans for a new boiler plant and parking structure.
- Mr. Amador said north of the state home, most of the EUL development is and a lot of funding to get the parcels and utilities ready. There are buildings like the nursing homes 213 and 215.
  - Major emphasis is the relocation of clinical functions to the south campus.
  - The new hospital is completing design development, goes for four years of construction, which is a big deal.
- Parking structure funded by metro.
- All the development is happening on the south campus where the concentration is for development.
- The CCT, Critical Care Tower, is approved and going forward.
- Getting funding and advance the new research building and released from the north, the project is still under review because it became too big and expensive.
- The next step is to see if the project is viable, which will free up the three research buildings that are needed for a future partial release.
- West Los Angeles had building deficiencies that are rated at worst conditions.
- The new hospital will help with new deficiencies on the south campus, a picture.
- North Campus Future Planning-Alignment with the Master Plan
  - Took a lot of time into relocating services and coming up with plans to accommodate VA services.
  - Continuing facility condition assessments and make determinations about moving space.
  - Some challenges are swing space (trailers or refurbishment buildings in the middle band) to accommodate services.
  - Want to come up with a long-term solution to research service.
  - Balancing requirements of all three locations
  - Space inventories and working with developers to make sure turnover

timeline is accurate and parcels are being turned over to housing as fast as possible.

- VA hospitals in VHA are about 60 years old, there is one VA hospital, only project like that in the budget for next year, dependent on Congressional appropriation.
- If VHA, we would be replacing four hospitals every year, it is an enormous investment but across the entire country and
- 11 facilities, 8 outpatient clinics as well
- Facility condition assessment, there isn't one VA in the country that would get to zero, ultimate.
- Research building the biggest concern for seismic replacement which could be another discussion.

### **LA Metro Art:**

**Claire Haggarty, LA metro Director, Public Arts and Design Arts and Community Enrichment**

**Zoë Taleporos, LA Metro, Senior Manager, Construction Arts and Community Enrichment**

Los Angeles Metro Presentation

Zipporah Yamamoto, Deputy Executive Officer

- Zipporah Yamamoto oversees Metro Art programs, cultural programming, etc.
  - She and her team care deeply for Veterans and she believes they have shown that in the last few months with outreach and feedback.
  - The Metro team has provided periodic updates to the board in both 2018 and 2023.
  - Discuss the results of their outreach campaign to Veterans and Veteran organization.
  - How the artwork has incorporated the Veteran feedback into the artwork and how the artwork is focused on the history of West LA VA campus, the home, and many references to materials from the Banditti Foundation Archives and the West LA VA Historic Archives
- The board is most likely familiar with the Metro plan.
  - D Line extension project which includes seven new stations beyond the current terminus at Wiltshire western to create a one-seat ride to the West LA VA campus
  - Located at the intersection of Wiltshire and Bonsall and is currently under construction.
- Strategy
  - Recognized the station creates new accessibility and will serve Veterans near and far, our strategy has been to engage Veterans and Veteran organizations through LA County
  - to partner with Veteran community leadership for their guidance and expertise

- She thanked Jim Zenner who has provided feedback and connected Metro to Veterans to capture their voice.
  - Want to ensure all five of the artworks for the station reflect the diversity of the Veteran community.
- There will be five artworks at the station including monumental portraits of Veterans, artworks by Veterans, and history of National Soldiers Home
  - Five commissioned artworks reflect diversity.
- North Plaza Overview
  - Part of several improvements made in 2012 including moving station entrance 100 feet closer to main hospital entrance.
  - Refining pedestrian circulation to make it less circuitous and improve passenger connectivity, particularly for patrons with disabilities.
- Creating an ADA compliant pedestrian bridge to
  - Reduce impact to access ramps at the intersection of Wilshire Blvd./Bonsall Ave.
  - Create dedicated pick-up/drop-off zones to prevent Metro passengers who are not Veterans or VA staff from being dropped off or picked up within the VA campus.
- Construction of the north plaza and pedestrian bridge originally scheduled for 2026, is now scheduled to begin in July.
  - Does require Metro to remove a small section (less than 5%) of the existing National Veterans Mural
  - The mural is on LA County property.
  - Slide showed the impacted section of the original mural and the section that would not be impacted.
- Mitigation
  - Ongoing outreach to Veteran community since 2017 including environmental documents.
  - Mitigation plan developed with National Veterans Foundation (own rights to existing mural) and Veteran community.
  - Mosaic artwork by Veterans Legacy Art Project honors the section that will be removed.
  - Veterans developed the design for new artwork through a series of 20+ workshops with local community art organization Piece by Piece, many held on the West LA campus.
  - Feedback meetings held with Veterans and VSOs throughout LA County.
  - Plaques telling the story of the murals in development with the National Veterans Foundation
  - Positive response to the process, mitigation plan and artwork design
  - LA County will own and maintain the new artwork.
  - Slide showing artwork and design as a memorial for missing mural.
  - The main entrance to the station is across the hospital, idea of the artwork locations, Veteran feedback wanted this location
  - as a transition point between the outside world and the home. It does not project an experience on people but let's them breathe and feel calm.
  - Healing artwork, artist has taken pictures of West LA campus and

surrounding areas and filtered them through the light.

- Ticketing area
  - Local floral and fauna artwork by Veterans
  - Meant to bring peace and calm.
- Prior to Feedback: Concourse Artwork 50% Design
  - Based on Veteran feedback, there were many changes
  - Incorporated feedback, focus on VA campus history instead of UCLA/Westwood
  - Panaroma on soldiers home and work with the Bandini family archives.
  - Consider adding the national cemetery.
- Feedback Incorporated
  - Artist has been responsive and made revision which have been positively received.
  - Focused on history of National Soldiers Home
  - Worked with Bandini family and West LA VA historic archives.
  - Remove any references to Westwood or UCLA
  - Overall theme of butterflies (symbolize rebirth, migration, accurate to region
  - Included portraits of historical figures tied to the land.
  - Included more female Veterans and Veterans of color.
  - Added more buildings on campus and Heroes Golf Course
  - Referenced lives lost by added National Cemetery
  - Include more entrance gates with “Soldiers Home” sign.
  - Less “military hardware,” more Veteran imagery and history of land
  - Dinosaurs removed which were not historically accurate.
- Feedback Received: Concourse Artwork 80% Updated Design
  - Full updated of new design (100% on slide)
  - Created a panoramic artwork that reflects the history of the campus (national cemetery, Wadsworth Chapel, etc.)
- Platform
  - Monumental portraits of Veterans, research by interviewing Veterans, each portrait surrounded by items that tell their story.
  - Dog tag chain, steel panels
  - Short film about the Veterans, if interested in seeing that it is on the Metro’s website.
- 150+ Veterans and over 25+ VSOs have been engaged so far
  - Will brief Veterans on final design in LA County Veterans Advisory Commission Briefing
  - Ongoing meet the artist events, engagement, and recognition opportunities.
  - Visit [metro.net/art](http://metro.net/art) for updates.
- Dr. asked if the 5% of the mural that has to be taken down is being preserved or repurposed in any way.
  - Due to the condition of the wall, it cannot be preserved.
  - The artwork is fully documented though.
- Dr. Nwajuaku asked if all the artworks will be done when Metro is open.

- It will be completed before the station's opening.
- BG (Ret) Sutton gave kudos to the Metro art team for taking the project so seriously, talking to Veterans, and capturing their voice. She thanked the team for being open and responsive throughout the process.
- Ms. Thanked Clare and Zoe
- Mr. Begland echoed BG (Ret) Sutton's comments, visitors of metro station to show the history of the land and it will get people curious. He is also proud of the board for the recommendation for more Veteran feedback.

## **VA Office of Security & Law Enforcement**

Frederick Jackson, Executive Director, Office of Security and Law Enforcement

Keith Lamb, Special Agent, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Security and Law Enforcement

- Mr. Lamb has worked in protection detail for the Secretary as well as VACO emergency, management and staffing at the Integrated Operation Center
  - Back in 2018, VA OIG had a Report 17-01007-01, he will discuss more of that.
  - VA Police in relation to California Welfare and Institution Code 5150
  - VA Policy Duty and Domicile Policy
- Report from 2018 Findings Summary: VA Governance over the Security and Law Enforcement Program was inadequate for Effective Oversight
  - VHA and OS&LE did not track and assess police program operations and performance in a systemic and effective manner.
  - Police program requirements
  - No centralized police program management function within VHA
  - Not up to standard with other federal agencies
  - No facility-appropriate staffing models
  - Shortage of VA police officers
  - Lack of documented recruitment plans
  - New officer qualification
  - OS&LE did not conduct timely inspections and were also understaffed.
  - VA officers lacked guidance on investigating facility leaders who manage their police program and control those resources.
- Recommendation 1
  - Centralized management for VA police (reporting, etc.)
  - Difficult because they work for VA leadership but also over his office's oversight.
  - OIG has not been happy with the responses to their recommendations saying they lack clarity.
  - VA police are still managed by their facilities.
  - The recommendation did establish the VHA Office of the Senior Security Officers (OSSO)
  - 18 VISN security officers, connects dots with office and VHA in field



- operations, better flow of communication.
  - Program inspections, gap is filled in by VISN security officers.
- Recommendation 2
  - Addressed staffing models and recruitment.
  - Required staffing in emergency departments.
  - Positions were not fully funded.
- Recommendation 3
  - Recruitment plans for recruitment and salary rates.
  - Has been moved forward with the release of VA Directive 0730
  - Push to use special salary rates and incentives, lots of support from central office on this.
- Recommendations 4
  - Issue in the office with staff, understaffed, not enough inspections and reinspection.
  - Waiting budget cycles for staffing, took two years to get funding, more site visits.
- Recommendation 5
- OIG had concerns about reporting but what if there is an allegation against Medical Director, how do you report that? Criminal investigations would involve, SOP for misconduct allegations.
- Triaged by the OSSO, some go to OIG, field unit police would not conduct investigations of misconduct of their medical center.
- What is the rationale behind California Welfare & Institutions Code 5150?
  - A peace officer and what they can do, VA Police would not meet the definition of “peace officer.”
  - OGC’s opinions on the code
- What can we do? How can we get Veterans the services they need?
  - No authority to enact 5150.
  - Police a part of the healthcare care team, have to act as part of that, they are supported by the agency, minimal force possible.
  - Can use reasonable force to get Veteran in for care.
  - Encouraged to use discretion at all times, make sure mental health needs are not put in the criminal justice system.
  - Duty to Domicile Policy –being able to take their firearms out, allow for criminal investigators and supervisor to take their firearms off. If they needed to go to a clinic—allowing them to take the firearm home—not blanket police.
  - Risk of everyone taking firearm home—5,000 police officers nationwide, started allowing chiefs and deputy chiefs to take firearms home, senior director talks about it, decision may move in that direction.
- Chairman Begland asked if a person was living on campus and a property manager called saying they were a danger to themselves and others, is the officer allowed to make decisions based on what he is told or do they have to observe what is going on.
  - Mr. Lamb said the ideal scenario is for an officer to talk to a healthcare provider. If it is not a

- No immediate action, it would be great to call a doctor beforehand.
- If they don't qualify for VA medical care, can they order a 5150 hold?
- Differ to someone local but can refer someone to an emergency room, can address it
- Mr. Merchant said this is where our VMET team comes in handy, particularly in EUL facilities where there are contractors, authorized to have a hold.
- Dave Weiner: 5150 has been a pain, disagree with OIG's opinion on "peace officer." We have been talking about community and one of the needs is safety and security and diverting Veterans into a care system instead of a criminal justice system—mental illness isn't a crime. It is important to expand the VMET program, as population density grows, will have to expand resources.
- Mr. Lamb When he was ten years ago, see progress, unique campus and will have to take a look at services for those who are not eligible for VA care.
- Ms. Hammitt wanted to point out placing a hold is routine for social workers.
  - Challenge federally is that social workers in California have both a license in California and guidance from the board.
  - Federal supremacy issue, many are licensed outside of California.
  - Social workers being able to place the hold is an important issue, held to VMET.
  - Advocacy to say there is federal supremacy around this issue.
- Ms. Hunter said this that the EMT services are not sufficient on the campus. How large is the current EMT program here and has there been a needs assessment done to evaluate that need?
  - Mr. Merchant said the size is small, grow that program while sustaining our force at the medical center, recruitment a challenge.
  - Balance because still need officers to patrol.
  - What we are doing here in Los Angeles is different than any other VA Campus, requires looking into things not done before and getting approval from central office

## **Master Plan with Services and Outcome Subcommittee Recommendations Brief:**

### **Mike Canfield, Subcommittee Chair Masterplan with Services and Outcomes**

Mr. Begland gave some ground rules to the board when talking about recommendations.

- Board has 15 voting members and 5 non-voting members.
- To pass a recommendation, the board needs a simple majority.
- Five recommendations to get through today, factually based and precise with some background.
- What will recommend to the agency, and does it require funding from Congress?
- Recommendation 23-01 is an attempt to explain the history of how they reached the 1,200-unit target of permanent supportive housing on campus.
- Tackles justification used in 2016 Master Plan and 2022 Master Plan,

- commitment to revisit the correct target every three years.
- How should the agency think about supply/demand analysis, directly we have much better data on the Veterans experiencing homelessness, have a by name list.

*Mike Canfield read Recommendation 23-01 (please see Appendices)*

There was a motion to discuss.

Discussion:

Sam had a procedural question about how the recommendations were provided to the board prior to the meeting. He had not seen this recommendation prior to now.

- Other board members confirmed they did not receive this recommendation prior.
- Chairman Begland said that all board members should view the recommendations beforehand.
- Ms. Sandor said she would make sure they were forwarded to the entire board, not just the subcommittee.
- Sam: He asked about the numbers and how they were calculating the data given the changing number of Veterans in and out of campus.
- Mr. Canfield said redoing this math using the most current data can help recommend the Secretary to nail down local supply and demand. How many people on the BNL want to be in this part of the county, this campus, live here, etc.?

Sam asked is there a way to indicate the Veterans choice to be in a certain area?

Mr. Canfield said that there is a housing choice form and that BNL is not static.

- Chairman Begland said the recommendation addresses the original math in the Master Plan, which has little logic to it. The plan calls for an assessment of the math every three years.
  - Going to start to look into BNL demographics in depth (old Master Plan does not take that into account)
  - with BNL, there is a chance to have exact data.
- BG (Ret) Sutton said that 1,200 permanent supportive housing is a lot on GLA, saying their calls increased 300%.
  - Leveraging VMet and other resources to provide services to the Veterans will be needed.
  - This issue goes beyond the BNL even though that is our main database for homeless Veterans.
  - Principal Developer said there was room for philanthropic funding but also the EUL authority from the private sector.
  - Even 1,000 units would be lot to deal with, this is why it is such an important recommendation.
  - Ms. Sandor agreed and said they are now collecting enough data on homeless Veterans to inform the recommendation using a data-driven approach.

- supply outside of the campus and factor into the need, what is needed now and what is needed in the future.
- Ms. Hunter, I know we are focusing on 1200 vs. 1000 permanent supportive housing in alignment with how HUD defines it – chronic homeless plus a disability, influences who is eligible for these units.
- Had to adapt the program to do enhanced residential services, onsite nursing care. Is that something that has been given some thought?
  - Dr. Harris said the statutory language is short on definitions but is in no way as described where it's requiring each tenant to be both chronically homeless and with a verified disability.
  - Not defined that way for our purposes
- Dr. Nwajuaku had a question for BG (Ret) Sutton saying that many things we are doing have not been done yet anywhere. Is there any studies or evaluations done on the impact to the medical facility having this large of population on the campus?
  - Mr. Merchant said they do have several hundred Veterans on campus at any given time.
  - Mr. Merchant said many of these Veterans are already receiving care at VA, the intent is to move them closer, some of the care is already a part of the process, changing demand for safety and emergency management.

All board members voted “yay” and the recommended was adopted.

Mr. Canfield stated this recommendation tackles issue of the town center, claims made by the Office of Asset Management that seemed inaccurate and they were.

- Office of Asset met that contractual that PD was allowed to engage in planning of the town center.
- Office pointed out language in MOU they thought supported that position but was not what MOU said.
- Recommendation that for the time being continuing to set aside parcels and not turn them over to the housing developer. *Chairman Begland read Recommendation 23-02 (please see Appendices)*

All voting members of the board voted “yay.”

*Chairman Begland read Recommendation 23-03 (please see Appendices)*

- Tackles budgeting, promise to include a redevelopment plan for the north campus.
- Board focused on if the funding was happening.
- The agency did not commit the resources needed to redevelop the north campus.
- Outcome of lawsuit may get agency to focus on issue.
- The motion for discussion was moved forward by Mr. Wellisch and Mr. Canfield.
  - No discussion, moved to vote.
  - All voting board members voted “yay.”

*Chairman Begland read Recommendation 23-04 (please see Appendices)*

- Deals with ULI path, town center report just came back.
- Summary of review of the document
- Chairman Begland stated these recommendations came out of the ULI report.
- He believes the agency should accept all of them and if they don't want to accept, explain the rational because the agency has a lot to think about
- Our job is to figure out what is best for Veterans, not think about the recommendations as something that will be readily adopted.
- Chairman Begland read the recommendation (attached)
  - There was a motion on the floor to move to vote.
- Mr. Tete said what he liked about the recommendation is that it brings intentionality of a plan in unity – resident experience must be considered.
  - If the resident experience where to sour, there will be a mess on the hands and there will be burn out.
  - There is a way to do the town center that will meet the prime directive.
  - He is supporting the recommendations and continues to support the Secretary in his efforts to make the best decisions for the board.
- Mr. Boerstler said there needs to be some type of specificity around the term, "champion."
- BG (Ret) said also would be focused on the long-term experience of Veterans.
- Ms. Hunter said she agrees to make the definition of champion more specific, that individual has experience with the West VA campus.
- Mr. Begland suggested they describe the authority to submit budget requests with request to the town center.
  - Ask officers to participate in the discussions.
  - Report directly to Meg Kabat since she is the senior report.
  - Want someone based in Los Angeles
  - Prior experience
  - Someone who is in the room on a day-to-day basis advocating for the town center.
- Approve amendment for the champion to have that authority.
- Intention that they would honor the originate intent of the town center.
  - Can't change them with that.
  - Move for that particular change in defining "champion" to be adopted.
- Ms. Kabat said they may want to make the reporting to regs.gov more general. There are lots of regulations and rules of what we can post to this.
  - If the goal is to receive public input, may make sense to make it less specific so the appropriate office post to get input.
  - Chairman said reg.gov is useful because they automatically are signed up to get the mail.
  - Mr. Canfield said they would change the wording so that the Secretary can instruct the appropriate office to post the Urbanlance Town Center final report to regulations.gov.

Sam Holmes wanted to address how the recommendations may delay housing.

- No other organization besides USVet.
- Can they create services for Veterans on this campus?
- Need to tap into other services, grow services throughout
- Shutting them out may not be the best options, must empower Veterans to make their own decision.
- When you are not including their voice or there is no formal process, there will be issues the board is trying to mitigate.
- The champion of the town center needs to have a much broader role, think about health and safety about the whole campus.
- If their experiences are not considered for the Veterans who already live here, it may cause problem.

BG (Ret) Sutton said that the Principal Developer would submit a proposal.

- Secretary's expectation is that we think about what could.
- Unique across VA system, the community experience will be a VA- wide system.
- Gives opportunity to build community and include.

Chairman Begland said they may need to clarify public and private space.

- BG (Ret) Sutton said they spoke in strong for the ULI report, issue of noise and disruption is important to address.
- The board voted on the recommendation.
  - All the board voted "yay."

## **Outreach and Community Engagement with Services and Outcomes Subcommittee Recommendations Brief:**

### **Beth Sandor, Subcommittee Chair**

*Ms. Sandor read Recommendation 23-05 (please see Appendices)*

- Deals with the under-utilization of tenant-based vouchers and looking at solutions, especially local ones.
- Amend to the voucher cap, read as amended.
- Ms. Sandor read Recommendation 23-05 (see attached)
- Took out project-based cap.

Mr. Begland asked if everyone understood the recommendation.

- Move to discuss as amended.

Dr. Harris said to take out the word "essential" for essential HUD-VASH staff.

- The vote passed with all "yays."

### **Review/Wrap Up/Adjourn:**

### **Rob Begland, Committee Chair**

VCOEB Chair/DFO/FAC Staff

- Mr. Begland said that there is a chance we can get the agency to focus on the

right issues.

- Agency undergoing lawsuit and some of the criticisms will be merited, and some will not.
- Have seen a lot of progress on the north campus, the pace of change and quality of housing is extraordinary but will come out in lawsuit.
- Areas to improve—recommitting to Town Center
- Worker trainer areas, fallen off the radar, will require a deliberate effort from the agency.
- Ms. Kabat thanked the board, she said that the Secretary is focused from input from all stakeholders.
- Mr. Begland said they will meet with the subcommittees tomorrow.

*/s/Robert Begland*  
*VCOEB Chair*

*/s/Eugene Skinner Jr.*  
*Designated Federal Officer*

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## **Appendices**

### **VCOEB RECOMMENDATION 23-01**

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Veterans Affairs (the “Agency”) entered into an agreement on January 28, 2015 entitled “Principles for a Partnership and Framework for Settlement By and Between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Representatives of the Plaintiffs - Valentini v. McDonald”

**WHEREAS**, the Agency agreed to “coordinate to finalize a New Master Plan for VA’s West LA campus by 10/16/2015. ... The primary considerations will be: (a) the provision of appropriate levels of bridge housing and permanent supportive housing on the campus, either in renovated existing buildings or newly constructed facilities, while taking into account the parties’ assessment of available housing units available in the Greater LA community...”

**WHEREAS**, the Agency issued a draft Master Plan on January 26, 2016 calling for “approximately 1,200 units of PSH [Permanent Supporting Housing] on the GLA campus.”

**WHEREAS** the target of 1,200 units of permanent supporting housing was expressly premised on the “homeless Veteran and chronically homeless Veteran populations in GLA as of 2015 [being] 4,366 and approximately 1,300 respectively” based on the 2015 Point in Time (PIT) Count.

**WHEREAS** the 2016 Master Plan stated that “[t]his planning analysis will be refreshed at least every three years utilizing the most current community and VA data available to establish current housing needs and supply targets.”



**WHEREAS**, the Agency issued a revised Master Plan on March 18, 2022, known as Master Plan 2022, calling for 1,200 units of PSH to be built on campus: “Based on the review of Veteran housing demand in the local Service Planning Areas, available resources in the community, and VAGLAHS’ ongoing development of a by-name list of Veterans experiencing homelessness in the catchment area, ***VA projects a continued West LA Campus housing demand of 1,200 permanent supportive housing units...***” (emphasis added).

**WHEREAS**, the target of 1,200 units of permanent supporting housing was expressly premised on the 2020 PIT Count showing “3,681 Veterans experiencing homelessness” throughout the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC).

**WHEREAS**, relying on the PIT Count was not a direct measure of veteran homelessness in Los Angeles, because it relied on a series of inferences based on statistical sampling.

**WHEREAS**, on January 16, 2020, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System Community Engagement and Reintegration Services (CERS) briefed VCOEB on implementation of a “By Name List” (“BNL”) in Service Planning Area (SPA) 4 as a pilot effort to expedite the placement of homeless veterans into permanent housing.

**WHEREAS**, the Agency, in partnership with Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), is now in possession of a By Name List of veterans experiencing homelessness across Los Angeles County.

**WHEREAS**, the BNL provides a more reliable source of veterans experiencing homelessness than does the PIT Count by relying on monthly case conferencing and verification of veteran status rather than annual statistical sampling and self-identification.

**WHEREAS**, the current version of the BNL estimates the homeless veteran population of LA County to be 2,168.

**WHEREAS**, based upon the most current information from the BNL, it appears that the current number of veterans experiencing homelessness in GLA is significantly lower than what was assumed in the prior Master Plan documents which established the 1,200-unit PSH target for the West LA Campus:

- The current BNL estimate of veteran homelessness is 49% of the amount that was relied upon in the 2016 Master Plan to justify 1,200 units of PSH.
- The current BNL estimate of veteran homelessness is 59% of the amount that was relied upon in the 2022 Master Plan to justify 1,200 units of PSH.

**WHEREAS**, there is a significant downside to planning for and/or building more PSH units than appropriate. Overstating the need for PSH units at the West LA Campus results in: (a) general misallocation of public and private resources (time, energy,

capital) which could be used to benefit Veterans in other ways, and (b) specific misallocation of lands/buildings at the West LA Campus to uses which may not be needed and precludes those lands/buildings from being used for other uses (Town Center, services, future needs).

**WHEREAS**, the Principal Developer's Community Plan "North Village" Concept has created a plan for development of 1,057 permanent supportive housing units.

**WHEREAS**, in light of the current numbers of veterans experiencing homelessness identified by the current By Name List, the production of 1,057 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans in the "North Village" is an appropriate target and these buildings and parcels should form the basis for the Agency's and the Principal Developer's current planning.

8th VCOEB CERS Gap Analysis Presentation: <https://youtu.be/15lwXiUDqrU?si=jTRpPsLXbLfmgMi&t=1071>.

**NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RECOMMENDED ON JUNE 26, 2024:**

**RECOMMENDATION 23-01(A):** the Secretary of Veteran Affairs direct the responsible offices within the Agency that a comprehensive supply and demand analysis be prepared and presented to the VCOEB as soon as possible – and certainly before any publication or adoption of the 2025 Master Plan – so that the Board can fulfill its Congressionally-specified role to advise the Secretary on implementation of the draft Master Plan and successive master plans.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-01(B):** the Secretary of Veteran Affairs direct the responsible offices within the Agency that the By Name List become the preferred method for measuring veteran homelessness in Los Angeles County and reflected in the monthly "WLA Campus Homeless Veteran Bed Capacity Summary" status report available on the Master Plan website.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-01(C):** the Secretary of Veteran Affairs direct the appropriate offices within the VA that for current planning purposes, the permanent supportive housing count for the campus shall be 1,057 units concentrated north of Nimitz Avenue in the North Village concept identified by the Principal Developer.

**VCOEB RECOMMENDATION 23-02**

**WHEREAS** part of the role of the Veterans Community Oversight and Engagement Board ("VCOEB") is "oversight"; and as an all-volunteer Board with no economic interest in any activities at the West LA Campus the VCOEB is uniquely positioned to provide unbiased and objective perspective and recommendations on the implementation of the Master Plan.

**WHEREAS**, there have been very few instances where the VCOEB has felt the need to be critical of the scope or performance of the Principal Developer when it comes to their role of developing supportive housing. However, the VCOEB has repeatedly raised concerns about ensuring the integrity of the Town Center component of the Master Plan

and ensuring that the Principal Developer's role does not creep into the planning and development of the Town Center.

**WHEREAS**, the Town Center is an essential component of the Master Plan in that it will provide the key central gathering area for resident and non-resident Veterans, a safe environment for socialization and other basic activities.

**WHEREAS**, there are four key components to the Town Center: Location, Programing, Financing Plan, and Developer. The Programing, Financing Plan, and Developer have not yet been determined and may take some time to become fully settled. However, the preferred central Location has been determined by the Agency with reasonable specificity and includes Buildings 13/306/407/408/409/410. This Location needs to be protected from other uses – including housing - which may conflict with or limit the full potential of the Town Center.

**WHEREAS**, during a briefing to the federal advisory committee on February 1, 2024, the Department's Office of Asset and Enterprise Management ("OAEM") made the following statements [as part of the attached PowerPoint presentation, Exhibit A] regarding the master planning process and the contractual relationship that exists between the Agency and the Principal Developer ("PD") who was chosen to provide at least 900 units of supportive housing:

- First, that the March 21, 2019, *Memorandum of Understanding* negotiated between the Agency and the Principal Developer "direct[s] the principal developer to *plan* but does not direct the principal developer to *execute* a 'Town Center'";<sup>1</sup>
- Second, that "[t]here is not a standard definition of 'Town Center'".<sup>2</sup>
- Third, that "[t]he Principal Developer (PD) shall provide on-site community based support services as part of the PD EUL, ***which potentially overlaps with what is referenced as the Town Center area in 2022 Master Plan.*** (emphasis added)"

1 22nd VCOEB. VA OAEM Presentation. Slide 5.

2 22nd VCOEB. VA OAEM Presentation. Slide 6.

3 Id.

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB believes these statements are inaccurate because (a) they overstate the contractual role of the Principal Developer with respect to the Town Center, and (b) the "Town Center" is defined in the Master Plan.

**WHEREAS**, VCOEB has repeatedly raised concerns regarding the propriety of the Principal Developer's planning the Town Center because it is not among the Principal Developer's scope of work or demonstrated expertise. Notably, on June 22, 2022, the VCOEB recommended that "[t]he Secretary of Veterans Affairs direct the Office of General Counsel to determine whether the operation of the Town Center by the Principal Developer is something that was contemplated by the VA-Principal Developer MOU."

**WHEREAS**, on October 3, 2022, the Secretary’s response [attached as Exhibit B] was as follows: “The MOU has since been superseded by the Principal Developer EUL executed on June 29, 2022. Pursuant to the terms of the Principal Developer EUL, the Principal Developer ‘may use the Property during the Term **only for the Project’ which is defined as** the financing, design, development, construction, operation and maintenance of **supportive housing for homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families...** (emphasis added)”

**WHEREAS**, based on the statutory definition of supportive housing,<sup>4</sup> the VCOEB took the Agency’s response to reaffirm that the Principal Developer’s only use of the property is for the development of supportive housing.

**WHEREAS**, with respect to the first statement made on February 1, 2024, an OAEM representative based his assertion on a claim that the *MOU* supposedly states that “[Principal Developer] shall conduct the necessary due diligence to prepare a comprehensive community and neighborhood plan.”

**WHEREAS**, the OAEM representative’s understanding was incomplete and inaccurate because Section 5 of the MOU, read in its entirety [attached as Exhibit C], states that the Principal Developer’s planning responsibility is solely for supportive housing: “WLAVC shall conduct the necessary due diligence to prepare a comprehensive community and neighborhood plan (‘Plan’) consistent with the final PEIS **for supportive housing for Veterans and their families on the Campus.**” (emphasis added).

**WHEREAS**, OAEM’s position that the Principal Developer was selected to plan anything beyond activities set forth in the Draft Master Plan’s “Zone 3 – Veteran Housing” including a “Neighborhood Center” “is inaccurate because it is not enumerated in either the 438 U.S. Code § 8161 – Definitions “(3) The term “supportive housing” means housing that engages tenants in onsite and community-based support services for veterans or their families that are at risk of homelessness or are homeless. Such term may include the following: (A) Transitional housing. (B) Single-room occupancy. (C) Permanent housing. (D) Congregate living housing. (E) Independent living housing. (F) Assisted living housing. (G) Other modalities of housing.”

The Principal Developer MOU was superseded by the Principal Developer *Enhanced Use Lease* executed on June 29, 2022. But the *Enhanced Use Lease* does not direct WLAVC to engage in planning and/or execution of a Town Center, either *MOU* or the *Enhanced Use Lease*. More importantly, at the time in which the MOU was executed, the 2016 Draft Master Plan was still the operative vision for the campus.

**WHEREAS**, the term “Neighborhood Center” should not be mistaken with “Town Center.” The Draft Master Plan envisioned five unique “Neighborhood Centers” in 2016. One Neighborhood Center, “Zone 3 – Veteran Housing,” was intended to provide “focused supportive services and amenities that are **limited to use of the residents [or tenants] of that neighborhood**” (emphasis added). [Exhibit D].

**WHEREAS**, Master Plan 2022's plan to convert Building 300 into the "Wellness Center" (providing 44 permanent supportive housing units and 15,000 square feet for supportive services for tenants of the North Village) satisfies the original goal of creating a Neighborhood Center for the exclusive use of campus residents. VCOEB applauds VA and the Principal Developer team for executing on this concept.

**WHEREAS**, with respect to the second claim made by OAEM ("[t]here is not a standard definition of 'Town Center'"), that statement is not correct either because the Draft Master Plan provided a glossary of "Use Definitions". And from the outset, the Town Center was defined in a manner to serve both resident and non-resident veterans: "*Town Center*. Central services and amenities for **all (resident and non- resident) Veterans**. Café, shops with Veteran employment opportunities, a "multipurpose union(library/media center, fitness center, 'Town Hall' for Veteran organization meeting space.) museum, legal services, job counseling." (emphasis added).

**WHEREAS**, both the Draft Master Plan and Master Plan 2022 created distinct planning zones around the Town Center that were identically defined as: 2016 Draft Master Plan: "This zone, at the center of the north campus, is an area of focus for resident and nonresident Veterans from across the campus and the region. It connects with each of the principal neighborhoods and functions as a "downtown" for the site, where, for example, Veterans can socialize at a fitness center or café, participate in events in a public square, attend outdoor concerts, coordinate a volunteer effort, develop employment opportunities, visit a library, grab a bike to ride around the property or make plans for going to a movie at one of the campus theaters."

2022 Master Plan: "This zone, at the center of the North Campus, is an area of focus for resident and nonresident Veterans from across the Campus and the region. It connects with each of the principal neighborhoods and functions as a 'downtown' for the site, where Veterans can socialize at a fitness center or café, participate in events in a public square, attend outdoor concerts, coordinate a volunteer effort, develop employment opportunities, visit a library, grab a bike to ride around the property or make plans for going to a movie at one of the campus theatres."

6 Ex E: Draft Master Plan Section V.21.

7 Draft Master Plan Section V.12

**WHEREAS**, the Neighborhood Center envisioned for "Zone 3 – Veteran Housing" in the Draft Master Plan -- also referred to as the "North Village" in Master Plan 2022 -- is plainly different than what was proposed for the Town Center.

**WHEREAS**, allowing the housing developer to insert permanent supportive housing units into the Town Center area is likely to adversely affect residents with acute needs (were they to be placed in such an environment) and also likely to diminish the overall potential of the Town Center.

**WHEREAS**, the Town Center's emphasis on creating a communal space for the Greater Los Angeles veterans community -- ***regardless of residency on campus or need for supportive services*** -- falls outside the Principal Developer's contractual relationship with the Agency.

**WHEREAS**, notwithstanding the fact that the Principal Developer's responsibility was limited to supportive housing, the Agency appears to have deferred to the Principal Developer's vision of a Town Center in Master Plan 2022's redesign of the Town Center concept.

**WHEREAS**, it is the opinion of VCOEB that this reflects a failure of the Agency to maintain responsibility for master planning the redevelopment of the campus, including the Town Center, and not defer to the private, commercial interests of housing developers.

**WHEREAS**, the West Los Angeles VA Campus has a long and complicated history of improper land use. As a result, any action taken by the Agency to engage in leasing that principally benefit veterans, must be performed in a fair and transparent manner to avoid any doubt of mismanagement on behalf of the Agency or impropriety on behalf of lessees.

**WHEREAS**, the choices that the Agency will face over implementation of the Master Plan will have consequences that last a century or more, so the choices must reflect the highest and best use of the land on the West Los Angeles and not be dictated by exigent circumstances,

**WHEREAS**, the Enhanced Use Lease authority would allow the Principal Developer to obtain leases of up to 99 years, locking in these locations, configurations, and uses for literally decades. Accordingly, any attempt to have the Principal Developer undertake any development activities outside of the Agency's promise that it will deliver at least 900 units of permanent supportive housing must be closely scrutinized.

8 Master Plan 2022, pp. 166-167.

9 Master Plan 2022 "Town Center" was a derivative of the "Town Square" outlined in the Principal Developer's Draft Community Plan including Buildings 13/306/407/408/409/410. Within Exhibit G, compare VA's *Master Plan 2022 Town Center* with PD's *Draft Community Plan* (August 2021).

**NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RECOMMENDED ON JUNE 26, 2024:**

**RECOMMENDATION 23-02(A):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs confirm for the benefit of the OAEM, the Principal Developer, and the VCOEB that the Principal Developer is not authorized to conduct any further planning or execution of a "Town Center" outlined in Master Plan 2022, including Buildings 13/306/407/408/409/410, as it extends beyond the scope of their contractual relationship with the Agency.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-02(B):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct OAEM to abandon conversion of Building 13 into an Enhanced Use Lease. Instead, VCOEB recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct OAEM to transition planning from Building 13 to Building 21110 (Brentwood Theatre) for the creation of a “Town Hall” intended for exclusive use of campus residents. This conversion may take the form of an Enhanced Use Lease or lease that principally benefits veterans and their families authorized in the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016. If the latter, VCOEB advises the Agency to prepare a Request for Qualifications as soon as possible given the growing community of veteran residents on campus.

### **VCOEB RECOMMENDATION 23-03**

**WHEREAS**, when the Department entered into a “*Principles for a Partnership and Framework for Settlement by and between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Representatives of the Plaintiffs – Valentini v. McDonald*,” VA stated that it would “[i]nclude the objective and goals of the Principles Documents and the New Master Plan in VA’s annual Strategic Capital Investment Plan (SCIP) ten-year planning process.”

**WHEREAS**, during the fourth meeting of the VCOEB, the committee recommended to the Secretary that the Agency “identify and include real property projects, specific to the Master Plan, by March 2019 in VA’s Strategic Capital Investment Plan permitting use of CHIP IN Act Strategic Partnerships.” (*Recommendation 1, January 2019 meeting*).

**WHEREAS**, the Secretary did not accept the committee’s January 2019 recommendation to include Master Plan projects in the Strategic Capital Investment Plan. (*Response to Recommendation 1, January 2019 meeting*).

**WHEREAS**, without conceding the necessity of including Master Plan projects in the SCIP, the Secretary’s response instead stated that the CHIP IN Act was not an appropriate source of funding because it was set to expire in 2021 and because the project must “meet a bona fide need of the VA, be part of VA’s long-range capital planning process, and be the location for a facilitation project that is included in the [SCIP] process priority list in the most recent budget submitted to Congress by the President.” (*Response to Recommendation 1, January 2019 meeting*).

**WHEREAS**, the Secretary’s response to the committee’s January 2019 recommendation did not directly address the suitability of the CHIP-IN Act to fund the construction of elements of the Master Plan, such as the Town Center. Instead, the Secretary’s response stated, “the CHIP-IN Act is not an appropriate authority for VA to use in delivering housing for homeless Veterans on the West Los Angeles Campus, nor will it still be in effect when work begins on the replacement hospital or other South Campus major construction projects.” (*Response to Recommendation 2, January 2019 meeting*).

**WHEREAS**, with the benefit of hindsight, it now appears as though the Agency’s response in January 2019 was meant to indicate that it did not intend to place Master

Plan projects on the SCIP; instead only the replacement hospital or “South Campus major construction projects” would be included in the SCIP (it being understood that the EULs that would provide supportive housing could not be included in the SCIP).

**WHEREAS**, in June 2022 the VCOEB Master Plan Subcommittee reviewed VA Budget requests from FY 2016 to FY 2023 and found no projects identified in the Strategic Capital Improvement Plan (SCIP) specific to execution of the Draft Master Plan.<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS**, at that time the VCOEB made three recommendations regarding this omission/failure by the Agency. The Agency agreed to address two of those omissions with a “concur” responses; however, the Agency did not agree to put Master Plan projects into a budget request to Congress, as part of five-year planning process:



# VCOEB RECOMMENDATION 23-03

VCOEB Recommendation	SEC VA's Response
RECOMMENDATION 17-02-B: the Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct the appropriate office that all budget requests necessary for <i>turnover of VA parcels</i> to lessees appear in the Strategic Capital Improvement Plan (SCIP) moving forward.	Concur.
RECOMMENDATION 17-02-C: the Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct the appropriate office that all budget requests necessary for installation of <i>required infrastructure projects</i> on campus appear in the Strategic Capital Improvement Plan (SCIP) moving forward.	Concur.
RECOMMENDATION 17-02-D: the Secretary of Veterans Affairs create a similar budget forecasting mechanism to VA's Five-Year Development Plan for the purpose of <i>advising Congress what future budget requirements are necessary, and when, to execute Master Plan 2022 and successor Master Plans.</i>	Concur-in-Principle. SECVA will work with VA's Office of Budget and OAEM to include the known budget requirements related to implementation of the Master Plan in the budget submittal. Not all funding related to the Master Plan originates in VA, and therefore cannot be included. In additional, requirements for specific years beyond the budget year can only be depicted hypothetically as they will not have gone through the budget process. VISN 22 is currently using available forecasting tools and resources to appropriately plan the funding outlays, project requirements and timing to ensure continued Veteran care operations while facilitating additional housing and infrastructure upgrades.

**WHEREAS**, since the June 2022 recommendation the Agency has begun including parcel turnover costs and infrastructure costs in the SCIP. But according to the most recent version of the SCIP, there are no other Master Plan projects included (available by means of FOIA request at <https://www.governmentattic.org/52docs/VAlongRgCapPlan 2024.pdf>).

**WHEREAS**, also as part of the June 2022 recommendations, the VCOEB recommended that “the Secretary of Veterans Affairs identify which VA office is most appropriate to lead transformation of the North Campus, consistent with the Master Plan 2022, and empower that office with the authority to request, prioritize and implement projects through VA's regular budget process.” (Recommendation 17- 02-A).

**WHEREAS**, the Secretary's response did not agree to identify one office or to empower that office with budget authority, to request Master Plan projects. Instead, the Secretary's response indicated that he would "work with VA's Office of General Counsel (OCG), VA's Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM) and VAGLAHS to determine and empower the most appropriate office, or offices, within VA to lead the transformation of the North Campus and satisfy the objectives of the Master Plan."

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB believes that the West Los Angeles Leasing Act sets forth an expectation by Congress for the Agency to do more than simply facilitate development of supportive housing by a housing developer. Instead, the West Los Angeles Leasing Act sets forth an expectation that the Agency will comprehensively redevelop the North Campus to include services for the benefit of all veterans (not just those who receive supportive housing), including: "(a) The promotion of health and wellness, including nutrition and spiritual wellness; (b) Education; (c) Vocational training, skills building, or other training related to employment; (d) Peer activities, socialization, or physical recreation; (e) Assistance with legal issues and Federal benefits; (g) Volunteerism; (g) Family support services, including child care; (h) Transportation; (i) Services in support of one or more of the purposes specified in subparagraphs (a) through (h)."

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB is unclear whether Congress has or intends to provide any funding to the Agency other than through the Enhanced Use Lease program (which monies we understand can only be used for supportive housing).

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB is of the opinion that were the Agency to take the position that it has no obligation to fund Master Plan projects and activities such as described above --and that the Agency need only facilitate the development of supportive housing by a private developer -- this would undermine the intent of the Master Plan and the Agency's commitment to comprehensively redevelop the West Los Angeles campus for the benefit of all veterans, not only those who are experiencing homelessness.

**NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RECOMMENDED ON JUNE 26, 2024:**

**RECOMMENDATION 23-03(A):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs identify **one** VA office to lead transformation of the North Campus consistent with the operative Master Plan and empower that office with the authority to request, prioritize and implement projects through VA's regular budget process.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-03(B):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct the appropriate office that it identify the capital needs for implementation of a Town Center area and a worker enterprise zone (the latter referred to as the Auxiliary Services Opportunity Center in Master Plan 2022 and as the Veterans Vocational Enterprise and Cultural Center in the 2016 Master Plan), report those to the VCOEB, and include those in the next SCIP.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-03(C):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct the

appropriate office that it identify whether legislative changes will be needed in order to accomplish appropriations for the Town Center and worker enterprise zone, and report those to the VCOEB.

#### **VCOEB RECOMMENDATION 23-04**

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB has raised concerns about ensuring the integrity of the Town Center component of the Master Plan, and based on these concerns, the VCOEB recommended to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Recommendation 17-05-B) that the Agency obtain “technical assistance from an objective third- party for the purpose of appropriately defining the parameters of a vibrant Town Center on campus (including audience, purpose, and program).”

**WHEREAS**, the Secretary concurred with that recommendation and, subsequently, VA received technical assistance from Urban Land Institute Los Angeles (“ULI”) whose recommendations are memorialized in a Technical Assistance Panel Report titled “The Commons: West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Town Center,” (“ULI TAP”) which was posted to the Master Plan website on January 24, 2024.

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB appreciates the work of the ULI in creating the ULI TAP for the Town Center and agrees with most of the recommendations therein, in particular the concept of “The Commons” with its three distinct sub-districts, “The Quad, “Parade Ground, and “Chapel Square” [p10] to help ensure that the Campus “becomes a regional magnet for Veteran connection, camaraderie, and collaboration” [p41].

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB agrees with the ULI TAP that a) critical themes of the Town Center should be “placemaking, Veterans’ integration, and community” [p9], and b) a key part of the Vision Statement for the Town Center is to “produce a legacy of enduring pride for the residents of the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Campus and all Veterans in the Southern California region”.

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB agrees with the ULI TAP that The Quad should be the “heart of the North Campus” [p31].

**WHEREAS**, the ULI TAP envisions a “mixed-use town center” [p10, 26], but also recognizes the need to a) “create harmony”, “create districts”, and “contain with edges” [p26] and b) ensure that there are clearly defined “public” and “private” zones and adequate buffers to limit “public intrusion into private areas” of Veteran residents [p24].

**WHEREAS**, a “mixed-use” environment can be created in The Quad by integrating uses such as retail, dining, services, conveniences, recreational, education, vocational, and hospitality, without including residential uses in the Town Center.

**WHEREAS**, the VCOEB is concerned that allowing residential uses south of Nimitz - and in particular directly adjacent to or integrated into the Town Center - will compromise both the privacy of the residences for our Veterans and the open and “public gathering place” feel for “the overall community of Veterans for whom it serves”

[p31].

**WHEREAS**, limiting permanent supportive housing to areas north of Nimitz will not “impede implementation of critical housing” [p24] in that there are sufficient identified “Potential” buildings which do not conflict with preserving adequate space for the Town Center, that can be used to create over 400 housing units [WLA EUL Phasing Plan & Release Parcel Schedule dated February 14, 2024 (“EUL Parcel Schedule”)].

**WHEREAS**, based on the EUL Parcel Schedule, there are currently 811 units of permanent supportive housing at the West LA Campus which are either “Open” or “Near-Term” (as defined below) in areas North of Nimitz Avenue which do not conflict with the potential area for the Town Center, comprised of the following:

- 233 units “Open”,
- 503 units “In Construction”, and
- 81 units of “Negotiating Lease” and “Preliminary Planning” [this total excludes Building 408] (the “In Construction”, “Negotiating Lease” and “Preliminary Planning” units are defined herein as “Near-Term Units”).

**WHEREAS**, based on the EUL Parcel Schedule, it will take approximately two years (through June 2026) for the Principal Developer to complete the 584 Near-Term Units.

**WHEREAS**, it is imperative that changes to the EUL Parcel Schedule - to remove buildings south of Nimitz Avenue which conflict with the potential area for the Town Center and to reprioritize other identified buildings in the Principal Developer’s “North Village” Concept which do not conflict with the Town Center - be made as quickly as possible in order to minimize any potential delay to the development of the targeted number of permanent supportive housing units.

**WHEREAS**, the TAP recommends that the VA a) designate a VA “champion” to advocate for the Town Center, b) consider the option of separating the Town Center into a new master development area and initiate a RFP process to select a new master developer for the Town Center, c) evaluate the existing Principal Developer land release schedule [p36].

**NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RECOMMENDED ON JUNE 26, 2024:**

**RECOMMENDATION 23-04(A):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct the Veterans Experience Office to post the Urban Land Institute Town Center Final Report to Regulations.gov so it can receive public input in a fair and transparent manner.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-04(B):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs direct VA staff to designate a VA “champion” to advocate for the Town Center.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-04(C):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs evaluate as quickly as possible the existing Principal Developer EUL Release Schedule and determine if the

Principal Developer can achieve the targeted number of permanent supportive housing units in areas north of Nimitz.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-04(D):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs direct VA staff not to include permanent supportive housing in the Town Center area because of the importance of preserving distinction (and distance) between private spaces for residents of the campus and public spaces for visitors to the campus, and instead to reprioritize the release of buildings.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-04(E):** the Secretary of Veterans Affairs separate the Town Center into a new master development area and initiate a RFP process to select a new master developer for the Town Center.

**VCOEB RECOMMENDATION 23-05**

**WHEREAS,** the Department of Housing and Urban Development allows public housing authorities to use up to 20 percent of its authorized voucher units to project-base units in a specific project if the owner agrees to either rehabilitate or construct the units, or the owner agrees to set-aside a portion of the units in an existing development.

**WHEREAS,** the Los Angeles County Development Authority and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles have reached the cap on the percentage of project-based vouchers they can allocate to new or existing developments, putting any future Veteran housing projects with project based vouchers at risk, both on and off the West LA VA Campus.

**WHEREAS,** legislative efforts are being undertaken and supported by local and federal elected officials to raise the cap on the percentage of authorized voucher units the public housing authorities can project- base in a specific project.

**WHEREAS,** Los Angeles City and County public housing authorities have a significant under-utilization of tenant based HUD VASH vouchers (currently 50%).

**WHEREAS,** converting more of the unused HUD VASH tenant based vouchers to project based vouchers will ensure that housing projects in development on and off the West LA VA campus can address the housing needs of Veterans experiencing homelessness, reducing Veteran homelessness while also increasing HUD VASH utilization rates.

**WHEREAS,** credentialing processes for new staff within the local VA system contribute to low utilization rates of HUD VASH vouchers.

**WHEREAS,** clear accountability for process improvements related to HUD VASH have proven to increase HUD VASH utilization rates at other VA medical centers.

**NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RECOMMENDED ON JUNE 26, 2024:**

**RECOMMENDATION 23-05(A):** that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs take all available actions to 1) increase the cap, or 2) grant HUD waiver authority to increase the cap, to 50 percent on the percentage of vouchers that Housing Authorities are permitted to project base, including, but not limited to:

- Advancing relevant legislation
- Allowing or issuing relevant waivers
- Reviewing and/or revising pertinent regulations
- Partnering with the Los Angeles County Development Authority and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles to advance these goals.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-05(B):** that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pursue all available actions to ensure that a significant percentage of any future increased allocation of project-based vouchers, including HUD-VASH vouchers, be dedicated to Veteran-specific housing projects, both on the West LA VA Medical Center Campus and at sites across Los Angeles city and county.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-05(C):** that, pursuant to 23-04(B), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs rely on local by-name list data to determine the appropriate percentage of any increase in project-based vouchers to be dedicated to Veteran-specific housing projects.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-05(D):** that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs vest the Medical Center Director at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center with the authority to credential all Medical Center staff *and* proposed new hires, for the purposes of increasing the utilization of available HUD-VASH vouchers.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-05(E):** that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or his designee direct the appropriate staff to provide monthly reporting on the status of hiring and credentialing at the West LA VA Medical Center, pursuant to 23-04(D).

**RECOMMENDATION 23-05(F):** that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs vest the Medical Center Director at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center with the authority to adopt national best practices for expediting the credentialing and hiring of staff who are critical to fully utilizing HUD VASH vouchers in the region. Best practices to improve such credentialing and hiring may include, but are not limited to:

- Contracting the hiring of service staff to community based non-profit partners.
- Permitting credentialing to occur up to and including the 90th day of employment.
- Allowing contracted non-profit organizations to create their own credentialing processes, with approval from the VA.
- Use of retention, relocation, and recruitment bonuses for qualified new hires
- Making hiring a top priority for the Medical Center Director by setting a date certain, within the next year, by which 90% of all vacant positions must be filled by qualified individuals.

**RECOMMENDATION 23-05(G):** that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs direct the

appropriate staff to add the following key metrics to the West LA VA monthly dashboard, and to report quarterly on these metrics to the Veterans Community Oversight and Engagement Board:

- current utilization rates, separately for: a) tenant-based HUD VASH vouchers and b)
- project-based HUD VASH vouchers by each of the ten housing authorities in Los Angeles County
- length of time of hiring process for essential HUD VASH staff
- the current number of staffed positions in the HUD VASH program as the numerator
- over the denominator of total budgeted HUD VASH budgeted staff positions
- Number of referrals by source to public housing authorities for HUD VASH vouchers
- HUD VASH voucher attrition rate (voucher issued but never leased up)
- HUD VASH voucher turnover rate (voucher returned after leased up)
- Have seen a lot of progress on the north campus. the pace of change and quality of housing is extraordinary but will come out in lawsuit.
- Areas to improve-recommitting to Town Center
- Worker trainer areas. fallen off the radar, will require a deliberate effort from the agency.
- Ms. Kabat thanked the board. she said that the Secretary is focused from input from all stakeholders.
- Mr. Begland said they will meet with the subcommittees tomorrow.

*/s/Robert Begland*  
*VCOEB Chair*

*/s/Eugene Skinner Jr.*  
*Designated Federal Officer*

## **Appendices**

### **VCOEB RECOMMENDATION 23-01**

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Veterans Affairs (the “Agency”) entered into an agreement on January 28, 2015 entitled “Principles for a Partnership and Framework for Settlement By and Between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Representatives of the Plaintiffs – Valentini v. McDonald”

**WHEREAS**, the Agency agreed to “coordinate to finalize a New Master Plan for VA’s West LA campus by 10/16/2015...The primary considerations will be: (a) the provision of appropriate levels of bridge housing and permanent supportive housing on the campus, either in renovated existed buildings or newly constructed facilities, while taking into account the parties’ assessment of available housing units available in the Greater LA community...”

**WHEREAS**, the Agency issued a draft Master Plan on January 26, 2016 calling for “approximately 1,200 units of PSH [Permanent Supporting Housing] on the GLA campus.”

**WHEREAS** the target of 1,200 units of permanent supporting housing was expressly premised on the “homeless Veteran and chronically homeless Veterans populations in GLA as of 2015 [being] 4,366 and approximately 1,300 respectively based on the 2015 Point in Time (PIT) Count.

**WHEREAS** the 2016 Master Plan stated that “[t]his planning analysis will be refreshed at least every three years utilizing the most current community and VA data available to establish current housing needs and supply target.”