

**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Responses to Veterans and Community Oversight
and Engagement Board (VCOEB)**

February 2023 Recommendations

Recommendation 19-01-A: Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VAGLAHS) leadership to develop a permanent housing action plan for every current resident in temporary housing on campus by June 1, 2023, and every future resident in temporary housing within 90 days of move-in.

VA Response: Concur.

VAGLAHS will develop a permanent housing action plan for every current resident in temporary housing on campus 90-days after VA's response and every future resident in temporary housing within 90 days of move in.

Recommendation 19-02-A: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs send a written communication to METRO advising the agency that the current station affiliation to "Westwood" does not accord with the Veterans community's perception of this land.

VA Response: Concur.

VA agrees with and appreciates the VCOEB's recommendation that the current station affiliation to "Westwood" does not accord with Veterans' perception of the land. As has been articulated in the Draft Master Plan and Master Plan 2022, VA considers the I-405 Freeway to separate the Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System's West Los Angeles Campus (West LA Campus) from Westwood.

VA plans to write a letter to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) addressing many topics relating to the ongoing construction of Metro's Purple Line station on the West LA Campus and will include reference to the fact that the inclusion of Westwood in the temporary station name is not consistent with VA and Veterans' understanding of the neighborhood in which the West LA Campus and the future Purple Line station are located.

Recommendation 19-02-B: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs include in his written communication to Metro that the VCOEB's preferred name for the transit station is "Pacific Branch/VA Hospital."

VA Response: Non-Concur.

While VA appreciates the VCOEB's recommendation, we cannot concur with this recommendation and commit to advocate for the VCOEB's preferred name to Metro at this time. Pursuant to the easement granted to Metro for construction of the Purple Line station, VA and Metro are constrained, both by the terms of the easement and their respective policies and regulations on naming. VA, for example, is limited by

38 U.S.C. § 531 in its ability to name property. The easement states, "Prior to the commencement of operations of the Transit Facilities, VA and Grantee shall jointly agree on the official adopted name for the Transit Facilities, consistent with the Parties' then current policies and procedures for such actions."

At this time, VA and Metro have not begun to discuss permanent names for the Purple Line station, and thus VA does not believe it is appropriate to begin sharing the naming preferences of the VCOEB or other stakeholders. When Metro and VA begin to discuss the official name to be adopted for the Purple Line Station, we will encourage the solicitation of Veteran stakeholder input and feedback as to any name considered. VA believes it will be more appropriate for the VCOEB to share its naming preferences directly with Metro at that time.

In VA's letter to Metro, we will inquire as to the anticipated timeline for initiating discussions with regards to the official adopted name for the Purple Line station and will share the timeline for those discussions with the VCOEB.

Recommendation 19-02-C: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs not attempt to describe the transit station by merely referring to it as "VA Hospital" because doing so will denigrate the importance of restoring the campus to its historic role as a home for veterans predating, by several decades, the creation of the Veterans Bureau in 1921, the Veterans Administration in 1930 and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in 1989 (https://www.va.gov/HISTORY/VA_History/Overview.asp). Simply referring to it as "VA Hospital" would also fail to emphasize the future housing and civic component to the campus as a resource of all veterans – not just those receiving medical care at the hospital.

VA Response: Concur-in-Principle.

VA appreciates the VCOEB's recommendation and whole-heartedly agrees that the West LA Campus is much more than the Medical Center located on the South Campus. While VA and Metro have not begun to discuss permanent names for the Purple Line station, VA expects the future permanent name of the Purple Line station to accurately reflect the totality of the West LA Campus, including the redevelopment of the North Campus into a vibrant and restorative housing community for Veterans.

Recommendation 19-03-A: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs send a written communication to METRO encouraging the agency to be more inclusive of veteran community input for artworks to be featured in the Veterans' Campus Station.

VA Response: Concur.

VA agrees with and appreciates the VCOEB's recommendation. In VA's aforementioned letter to Metro, we will encourage Metro to be more inclusive of Veteran community input for artworks to be featured in the Purple Line station on the West LA Campus.