



**THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON**

June 26, 2019

Lieutenant General John D. Hopper Jr., USAF (Retired)
Chairman, Veterans and Community Oversight and
Engagement Board Advisory Committee
241 18th Street South Suite 202
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for your recent letter that was included as part of the Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board Advisory Committee Recommendations. I was pleased to review the Department's responses to your current recommendations on the key issues identified from the January 2019 meeting in Los Angeles, California. Enclosed please find the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) responses to the Committee's recommendations.

I sincerely appreciate your leadership and the efforts of the Committee. The Committee has made valuable contributions: identifying the goals of the community and Veteran partnership; improving services and outcomes for Veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and the families of such Veterans and members; and on the implementation of the Draft Master Plan.

If additional information is needed, please contact your Committee Designated Federal Officer, Mr. Eugene W. Skinner Jr., at (202) 631-7645 or by email at Eugene.Skinner@va.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert L. Wilkie

Robert L. Wilkie

Enclosure

**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Response to Veterans and Community Oversight
and Engagement Board (VCOEB)
January 2019 Recommendations**

Recommendation 1: In light of the scale and unique opportunity at VA West Los Angeles, VCOEB recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs direct the Veterans Health Administration to identify and include real property projects, specific to the Draft Master Plan, by March 2019 in VA's Strategic Capital Investment Plan permitting use of CHIP IN Act strategic partnerships.

VA Response: Concur-in-Principle.

The Communities Helping Invest Through Property and Improvements Needed for Veterans Act of 2016, Public Law 114-294 (CHIP-IN Act), is one of several statutes authorizing VA to accept donations that would enhance VA's ability to provide services and benefits for Veterans on VA's West Los Angeles Campus. VA has long had authority to accept donations of funds for facility projects. But the CHIP-IN Act is distinct from those authorities because the CHIP-IN Act is not a donation of funds authority, nor is it a public-private partnership (P3) authority.

Donations of Land and/or Buildings, or a building on VA land

As was explained during a January 10, 2019, briefing to the VCOEB by CHIP-IN Act experts from VA's Offices of General Counsel and Construction and Facilities Management, the CHIP-IN Act allows VA to accept donations of real property--e.g., land and/or buildings, or a building on VA land, which, when delivered to VA, is ready for activation and occupancy at no further costs for the building other than costs associated with normal operations. The CHIP-IN Act prohibits payment of rent, usage fees, or any other amounts to the donor or other entity that is a party to the donation.

The CHIP-IN Act authorizes two types of donations. The first type is one which contemplates the donation of a facility project as to which funds have been appropriated for the VA facility project. The second type is one for which funds have not been appropriated and are not expected to be appropriated for the donation. The donation must meet a bona fide need of VA, be part of VA's long-range capital planning process, and be the location for a facility project that is included on the Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) process priority list in the most recent budget submitted to Congress by the President.

CHIP-IN Act Limitations

The CHIP-IN Act is a limited authority, authorizing the Secretary to carry out a pilot program in which he may accept not more than five donations of real property and/or facility improvements between December 2016 and December 2021.

The CHIP-IN Act cannot be combined with another donation authority, and it does not authorize donations of funds or donations of construction to support the delivery of housing for homeless Veterans, which VA provides under its enhanced-use leasing authority using third-party developers' own funding and is not included on the SCIP process priority list.

However, VA concurs that private donations would assist VA in carrying out the housing and other projects contemplated in the Draft Master Plan for VA's West Los Angeles Campus. For that reason, the Secretary and the VHA Executive in Charge will actively pursue all appropriate opportunities to obtain donated funds and/or donated construction to assist in implementing the Draft Master Plan.

Recommendation 2: VCOEB recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs properly resource VA West Los Angeles, and other VA offices associated with campus development, to carry out donations under the CHIP IN Act.

VA Response: Concur-in-Principle.

As noted in response to Recommendation 1 above, 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. That said, VA will ensure that the new West Los Angeles Campus Master Plan Program Management Office (PMO) is resourced to receive donations and to carry out work using donated funds and/or donated construction services under other appropriate authorities.

Recommendation 3: VCOEB recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs expedite the announcement of a solicitation to acquire expertise in promoting CHIP IN Act opportunities at the West Los Angeles Campus to potential donors.

VA Response: Concur-in-Principle.

As noted in response to Recommendation 1 above, 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. That said, VA will ensure that the new West Los Angeles Campus Master Plan Program Management Office (PMO) is resourced to promote donation opportunities under other appropriate authorities.

Recommendation 4: VCOEB recommends that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Office of Real Property approve mutually agreeable plans for development and operations of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Purple Line Extension station at VA West Los Angeles.

VA Response: Concur.

VA interprets this recommendation as VCOEB's general endorsement of VA's ongoing efforts to reach mutually-agreeable terms with LA Metro for the construction and operation of a Purple Line Extension station on the VA West Los Angeles Campus. VA does not interpret the recommendation to require that VCOEB and VA mutually agree on the terms of any Purple Line development and/or operation plans before the VA Secretary and/or Office of Real Property approves such plans.

Pursuant to authority delegated by the Secretary, VA's Office of Real Property is currently negotiating with LA Metro the terms of a temporary and permanent easement to allow LA Metro to construct and operate a Purple Line Extension station on the VA West Los Angeles Campus.

Actions to implement

Steps to Implement	Lead Office	Other Offices	Due Date	Current Status	Contact Person
Negotiate temporary easement	ORP	OGC, VHA	12/31/19	pending	Matt Leddy Matthew.Leddy@va.gov 202-382-2715
Negotiate permanent easement	ORP	OGC, VHA	12/31/19	pending	Matt Leddy Matthew.Leddy@va.gov 202-382-2715