Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board Federal Advisory Committee Meeting

June 13 – June 14, 2018

Committee Members Present:

LTG (R) John D. Hopper Jr. (Chair) Anthony Allman Carolina Winston Barrie Leticia Colchado Art Delacruz

Lisa Mahoney

Howard Hernandez

Philip Mangano

Daisy Mo

Roger McErlane

Stephen Rutledge

Jeff Scheire

David Tenenbaum

Debra Thomas

Ben Winter

Committee Members Absent:

Ray Delgado Kate Hoit Sarah Mahin (Non-Voting) Julian Manalo (Non-Voting) Phillip Tagami (Vice Chair)

Department of Veterans Affairs Staff Present:

Dr. Lynda Davis, Chief Veterans Experience Officer Eugene W. Skinner Jr., Designated Federal Officer Chihung Szeto, Alternate Designated Federal Officer Ann R. Brown, West Los Angeles VA Medical Center Director Meghan Serwin Flanz, Executive Director, VA West L.A. Campus Master Plan Toni Bush Neal

Nikki Baker

Betty Moseley Brown

Bruce Garret

Erik Gutierriez

Susanne Larkins (contractor)

Joan Liguero

Heidi Marston

Rob Merchant

Anita Merrill

Eric Faulkner

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Call to Order Lt GEN (R) John D. Hopper Jr., Chair, Mr. Eugene W. Skinner Jr. Designated Federal Officer (DFO)	 Lieutenant General John Hopper called the meeting to order at 8:38 AM PDT and noted that there was not a quorum of the full Federal Advisory Committee (FAC). Mr. Delacruz made a motion to convene as an ad-hoc subcommittee of the full FAC. Mr. Hernandez seconded the motion and the motion passed.
Opening Remarks Committee Chair Lt GEN (R) John Hopper	 LtGen Hopper thanked the subcommittee chairs for all the work that has gone on since the last meeting and noted they had discussed some legal issues with the VA Office of General Council (OGC). Two recommendations that the Master Plan Subcommittee and LtGen Hopper have put into SMART (Specific, Measurement/Assessment, Actionable, Realistic, Timed) format will be reviewed.
Opening Remarks VEO Dr. Lynda Davis	 Dr. Davis stated VA is ready to assist the FAC as needed. She shared the following information with the Committee: Los Angeles (LA) has been recognized as a Veteran Friendly Community. Dr. Davis thanked those who helped in this endeavor. The Veterans Experience Office (VEO) has the ability to conduct real-time surveys and provide results to VA Medical Center leaders using a customer service feedback tool. The data identifies Veterans with specific needs and service recovery opportunities along with program improvement requirements. The data is qualitative and quantitative and it is used to inform VA Central Office resource allocation decisions. VEO will make this information and a social media search available to the FAC. Data can be requested through LtGen Hopper. Dr. Davis invited the subcommittees to provide key words to be searched (homeless, skid row, wait times, Veterans Service Organization (VSO), purple line, green line, etc.) so that more specific information can be provided. A search on the Los Angeles VA outpatient experience revealed Veterans at the West Los Angeles (WLA) Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLAHS) are impressed with the quality of services and are treated with professional courtesy, however, there are access to care concerns, confusion about the new Choice program, and transportation challenges. Providers received primarily positive scores. Comments included: Issues were addressed quickly, transportation is a concern, and Patriot House is appreciated but there are sometime availability issues. The CVEBs can be used to do broader outreach regarding this Committee. The VA Deputy Secretary will make sure Congress is aware of the work the Committee is doing and is influential with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
DEPSECVA (VTC) Thomas G. Bowman	 Dr. Davis introduced Mr. Thomas Bowman, VA Deputy Secretary, distinguished Marine Veteran and former Tampa/St. Petersburg VA Medical Center Director. Mr. Bowman stated that the Committee was on a trajectory to provide a template that will be mimicked and utilized by other community meetings around the country. He noted that while the particular situation of the WLA campus was not likely to be replicated, the model for engaging the community and considering enhanced and

innovative uses of space could be a model for other sites. He stated that across the country, there was a need to look at how to VA can look at its assets and become more efficient, capable, and expansive in providing care to Veterans and their families beyond the traditional approach. The Chair and Vice-chair of the Congressional Veterans Affairs Committee see this as very important. Mr. Bowman stated that he will be involved in Veterans issues, including homelessness, with a special focus on the WLA FAC following his retirement. He will speak as a Veteran and an advocate. He noted that it will be important to develop innovative ways to attract communities to leverage unused housing units to reduce Veteran homelessness. This concept could be expanded through public/private ventures that are economically beneficial and of assistance to the community. Mr. Bowman encouraged the FAC members to bring innovative ideas to Capitol Hill as well as state, county and city government to influence legislators to create legislation. He stated he will work with the Congressional delegations to build the next budget, ensuring that it includes the funding required to complete the WLA campus rejuvenation, upon a Secretary's confirmation. Dr. Davis noted the FAC should balance the desire for near-term wins with the Committee's long-term legacy. She also noted that the new legislation was included in the Mission Act (https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senatebill/2372/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22VA+Maintaining+Internal+Systems +and+Strengthening+Integrated+Outside+Networks+%28MISSION%29+Act+of+2018 %22%5D%7D&r=2) and that \$54 billion has been appropriated to support the Mission Act. It was an expansion of the Choice Act that allows Veterans to use private sector providers. It expands caregiver stipends to pre-911 Veterans. The FAC was asked to inform VA of other Departments (HHS for substance abuse, Department of Transportation, HUD, etc.) that they want to invite to future meetings. Member General Dr. Davis introduced Dr. Betty Moseley Brown, a Marine Veteran, who has joined Comment and the team. She was the DFO for the FAC for Women Veterans. She will be providing Discussion governance and oversight for this and the Veterans, Families, Caregivers, and Survivors FAC. **Committee Members** Versions of draft recommendations in SMART format that were developed by LtGen Hopper and the master-planning subcommittee were distributed. LtGen Hopper noted that if they are approved today, they could be sent forward to the VA Secretary for action. The Integrated Project Team (IPT) would not be bound to act on them. About 1,500 HUD VASH vouchers go unutilized in Los Angeles. This points to the need to target homeless Veterans. Some groups have targeted that population through creative solutions (hotel/motel, pre-fab housing) separate from the WLA VA campus activities. This committee is charged with considering what happens on the campus in the context of how that would impact the overall quality of life for Veterans and their families, particularly those who are homeless. Deputy Secretary Bowman and HUD Deputy Secretary Patenaude have been engaged to look at these innovative ideas. WLA IPT Ms. Flanz introduced Ms. Heidi Marston (HM) who had information to share about Update/status the most recent homeless point in time count. Ms. Marston distributed a map that showed the homeless count for greater LA. Meghan Flanz Ms. Marston noted the following:

- The homeless point in time count was conducted in January 2018. Volunteers do a count of the homeless individuals at the same time every year at various locations. Those living on the street, in shelters, or in dwellings not meant to be homes or for habitation are counted. Through sampling and statistical methodology, they extrapolated to estimate the totals. The count is done across the country every four years and is done every year in LA.
- For the first time in four years LA had a slight decrease in its homeless population. There was a 3% decrease in LA County and a 5% decrease in LA City versus the previous year. This was significant in because homelessness did not increase and it is trending in the right direction, but the small change may be within the margin of error. The Veteran homelessness count decreased by 18% versus last year. This was the largest decrease of any subpopulation in LA. It showed that some of the changes made were the right changes.
- The count was run and validated by HUD in partnership with the University of Southern California (USC).
- There are a lot of resources for the homeless in Service Planning Area (SPA) 5, so it was good to see that people are accessing those resources. There was also a 25% decrease in SPA 4 (aka skid row). The skid row area had the highest population and is also the area with the most resources.
- The two planning authorities for LA are Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA), which includes SPAs 4, 5, and parts of 7 and 3, and Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA), which encompasses the rest.
- Only about 5% of placements were specific to Veterans. Over 600 units for Veterans are expected for HACLA and 114 for HACoLA by 2020.
- The City has been trying to get developers online to build units and were looking at ways to bring temporary housing to the campus (bridge housing) in partnership with the City and County while they awaited the permanent solution.
- Not everyone on the street can live independently. They may be too sick, or they may have a mental illness, so they may need a higher level of care. The count showed a 25% increase in homeless individuals over 65. This group will reach a point where they can no longer be independent. Ms. Marston asked the Committee to consider where this population would be housed. It is important to think about mixed uses/mixed models.
- As part of the survey, the homeless who were counted were assessed based on their vulnerability and how chronically ill they were and they were matched with the appropriate services.
- Staffing of homeless programs continues to be a challenge in LA, especially for VA. Of 600 full-time employee (FTE) positions, there were 190 vacancies for case managers. This is largely due to the high cost of living in LA. VA expanded the list of degrees/certifications required for case managers to expand the candidate base. Committee members will be provided the LA VA homeless program vacancy announcements.
- Those under 35 had more instances of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and mental health issues while Veterans over 50 had a much higher rate of substance abuse.

- There were more people who were experiencing homelessness for the first time. Many of the people in the safe parking program were homeless for the first time.
- Ms. Flanz stated the following:
 - The IPT needs the active engagement of elected officials, other federal agencies with overlapping concerns and city, state, and county officials to make the master plan a reality.
 - The IPT has involved VA leadership to ensure understand and buy into the vision. They also conveyed that they do not have the resources needed to do this work well.
 - The IPT met with the VHA acting Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who is open to considering different funding mechanisms for this campus. The funding for WLA VA was the same as it was for every other VA hospital. Innovative funding ideas have been proposed and are being considered.
 - The Master Planning (MP) subcommittee meets regularly with the IPT and the MP subcommittee's input informed the thinking of the IPT members.
- Ms. Flanz distributed a pre-decisional, aspirational set of timelines for the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). In November 2018, they expect to publish the draft PEIS/PEIR for public review and comment. Ms. Flanz suggested the PEIS/PEIR process could be a topic at the next FAC meeting.
- Ms. Flanz noted the following:
 - The IPT set aspirational goals/milestones and several of them have been met, including the operational opening of building 209 last summer and the selection of the developer for buildings 205 and 208.
 - The IPT proposes putting out a Request for Quote (RFQ) by the end of June 2018 and holding an industry day in July 2018. The VA Office of Enterprise Asset Management (OEAM) initiated this process with targeted market research. This involves talking to developers of all kinds to get industry information to help formulate the sources sought and the RFQ. The initial feedback OAEM received was that there was considerable private sector capability and interest, particularly from companies that specialized in affordable housing.
 - The Supreme Court Kingdomware ruling stated that if there were at least two qualified Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) or Veteran Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs) that could compete for and perform the work, the procurement must be issued as a SDVOSB or VOSB set aside. This process must be followed for all VA procurements, including the Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) procurement. The sources sought process enables this determination and that process is underway.
 - The RFQ will provide information to the development community about the opportunity to become a Principal Developer. It will ask about the qualifications (experience) of those who seek to compete in terms of their experience with master planning, large scale real estate development, building permanent supportive housing, securing public and private financing for supportive housing, and what concepts they have for implementing the approximately 900 units needed after Buildings 208 and 209 and MacArthur Field have been built out.
 - The OEAM believes that an RFQ is the better option due to the complexity of the work. A RFQ is not radically different from an RFI. VA has the statutory authority to use either.

The Principal Developer can plan without pre-supposing a particular outcome of the PEIS/PEIR. The PEIS/PEIR analyzes different scenarios. The developer can look at the entire campus and make recommendations that can inform VA's thinking after the PEIS/PEIR is complete. It is important to get industry input as soon as possible. LtGen Hopper stated that the Master Planning subcommittee noted that the qualifications for the Master Developer are distinctly different from the skillset for a Principal Developer for Building 207 and subsequent projects. The Master Developer would identify development opportunities for all 388 acres, develop alternative scenarios, and inform the next revisions to the master plan. Mr. Winter noted LA City knows the LA development community very well and has almost \$2B of outstanding loans and debt to affordable housing developers. LA has dozens of small-, medium- and large-scale developers, has developed a lot of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and RFQs, and knows how to navigate this process while ensuring the appropriate checks and balances. Mr. Winter encouraged the committee to think about how to bring in the local perspective before the final selection is made. Mr. Scheire recommended the Committee's milestones be overlaid with this roadmap. Mr. Scheire volunteered to work with the IPT on that. Mr. Hernandez suggested that money for undervalued EULs be given to VA. Ms. Flanz noted that, in general, when the DOJ seizes assets in a criminal process, the assets go to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and then to the Treasury. The VA legal team is trying to make the case that this lease revenue should come back to VA. Dr. Davis presented the LA CVEB with an award designating LA as a Veteran Friendly Community. Steve Peck, Larry Van Kuran, Howard Hernandez, and Ann Brown accepted the award on behalf of the CVEB. Tour/Visit skid row The Committee visited Skid Row and toured a Volunteers of America (VOA) facility. **Public Comment** Two non-Committee members and two Committee members acting as private Session (Bob Hope citizens spoke during the public comment session. Patriotic Hall – 1816 Ms. Kyle Orlemann, City of Hawthorne Veterans Affairs Commission (VAC) South Figueroa Street, Ms. Orlemann and her husband get their care at the West LA VA and have Los Angeles, CA been part of the planning all along. 90015) The Hawthorne VAC has heard from female Veterans who do not want to live on the WLA campus with 4,000 men. These women Veterans also expressed concerns about where their children would go to school if they lived on the WLA campus. Would they go to the Brentwood School? Ms. Orlemann described an eight-acre former hospital site In Hawthorne near the 405 and 105 freeways that is ten miles from the WLA VA campus. It was privately owned, but it is for sale and the City of Hawthorne would be willing to do what it took to make this a facility for women Veterans. The site could support medical care, job training, housing, and child care around the clock to accommodate shift workers. The original building was not earthquake-proof but could be used for emergency or bridge housing (200 rooms) right now. The second building was more than 50% complete and could be finished within two years. The bottom half could be a women's medical center and the upper floors could have agencies to support other services. Photos and a map were made available to the Committee.

- Women Veterans could run businesses out of this facility. There are aerospace companies and new hotels nearby.
- If this property was purchased by VA, they could do whatever they wanted on the remainder of the eight acres.
- Ms. Orlemann stated Hawthorne is a small (six square miles), walkable city with a light rail and other public transportation, and top-flight schools.
- Ms. Orlemann noted there are two developers with good experience on board and the City of Hawthorne put together a team that can accomplish everything they wanted to do on their site. She also explained that Hawthorne has schools, housing, jobs, and its own city council and police department. The City Council is very Veteran-friendly, able to move very quickly, and willing to do whatever it takes to make this to happen in partnership with the activities at WLA VA.
- Mr. Anthony Allman (FAC member spoke as a private citizen)
 - Mr. Allman noted that a homeless Veteran that comes to the WLA VA campus said he would like the campus to have:
 - A charging station for electronic devices. Perhaps solar panels could be used to make that available.
 - Wifi in Building 257. Current wifi was bad or not operational.
 - A place to inflate bike tires.
- Mr. Scheire (FAC member speaking as a private citizen)
 - Mr. Scheire recommended signage improvements on campus even before the roads are improved. Map or GPS tools should be able to recognize the building numbers. Ms. Marston noted that campus residents report having trouble getting mail and pizza delivered.
 - There was discussion about using building names, building numbers, a quadrant system, or a combination of these.
 - O Mr. Winter noted that the City of Los Angeles is redeveloping 700 units of former military housing, but has found the buildings still felt institutional, particularly because there were numbers on roofs so the LA police helicopters could identify the buildings. He also requested that the FAC remember that this will be a home for Veterans and that they should feel like homes, including the address/naming convention.
 - O Mr. Scheire stated he receives his healthcare at the VA and he has been trying to use the Brentwood campus gym. He reported that it is a great facility, but it is open odd hours (8:00 AM 12:00 PM weekdays, 12:00 PM 5:00 PM on weekends) and family members were not welcome. Mr. Scheire reported working with Brentwood School to see if they could extend the hours. He also reported difficult and inconsistent processes that led to problems accessing the gym.
 - Ms. Flanz noted Brentwood School is committed to providing gym access to Veterans and is looking at ways to make the gym more open to families. They also stated they have to ensure the safety of the children, who also use the facility. Ms. Flanz recommended that the Services Subcommittee put together a recommended process that ensures Veterans who live on campus can access the gym. The process may be more complicated for those Veterans who do not live on campus.
 - Ms. Marston noted the school built their schedule around the times most Veterans use the facilities.
 - Mr. Hernandez recommended gym usage be audited. He recommended that, if it was not being heavily utilized, gym access for Veterans should be

- suspended and VA should instead receive a monetary contribution from the Brentwood School.
- Ms. Flanz stated a third-party Inspector General audit of these agreements that is required by statute is underway.
- Mee Heh Risdon, A Community of Friends (ACOF), Director of Housing
 - Ms. Risdon stated A Community of Friends has been a non-profit developer of affordable housing for 30 years. It is their mission to develop affordable housing for those who are homeless with mental illness. They have approximately 40 properties, some of which are on VA property.
 - ACOF was excited about the upcoming RFP and hoped there would be more clarity in the RFP regarding expectations for the space uses, such as commercial space (who is targeted?), expectations for the existing buildings (what is required what is not required?), what is the housing intent (all supportive or also affordable housing)? Ms. Risdon noted these details make a big difference in assessing the feasibility of the project.
 - ACOF also has concerns about the amount of infrastructure needed, funding for that infrastructure, and the impact of infrastructure improvement on phasing of the project. They heard that there was no VA money to contribute to infrastructure.
 - Ms. Risdon requested the committee answer the following questions for the benefit of the development community:
 - Will there be enough Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers for the units being built?
 - Who will have jurisdiction over any issues that may arise during development, including environmental issues?
 - What is not appealable by the public?

Thursday, June 14, 2018

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Call to Order and Synthesis of previous day's site visit and Public Comment Session	 LtGen Hopper called the meeting to order at 10:36 AM PDT. As the public forum session at Bob Hope Patriotic Hall was not well-attended, LtGen Hopper suggested the FAC consider whether or not it was worth conducting a portion of the meeting at a second venue in the city. He also stated publishing the agenda sooner will provide a greater their opportunity to get out communications to increase turnout. Options for increased communication include CVEBS, FAC member mailing lists, Greater Los Angeles (GLA) IPT, and press releases. After discussion, the group recommended the next FAC meeting be held the week of
	September 10-14.
Full Committee	LtGen Hopper stated there was a quorum.
General Discussion	The Committee reviewed letters from the Master Planning Subcommittee that summarized, in SMART format, two recommendations for the Secretary's
All	consideration. The first recommendation was that there should be two competitions related to the Principal Developer selection process: one for the Principal Developer to develop the entire site (big picture) and another to develop Building 207. The plan now was to have a one competitive process to select a single developer to do both. Based on Master Planning Subcommittee and IPT feedback, the recommendation was to make these two separate processes. The Master Planning Subcommittee's recommendation was based on their expertise in large scale developments and extensive conversations and feedback from the IPT. In addition, the recommendation

- was that, for the selection of the Principal Developer, VA would issue an RFQ and a subsequent RFP because there was a significant difference in the amount of information received on an RFQ, versus receiving something from a developer who provided you a vision as to a sense of community and a place of purpose.
- Ms. Thomas noted that in large developments, the RFQ would be sent to qualified developers. Subsequently, respondents would be asked to provide a vision, which would be particularly important in this case, since the intent is to develop a community for Veterans, not just separate, disparate ELUs for different kinds of housing units. She stated the goal is to have a sense of what the developer planned as opposed to just knowing (s)he had put up a 12-story building previously. The MP Subcommittee asked if they could provide input into the RFQ but were told that this committee would not be involved in the government vendor acquisition process. The MP Subcommittee believes that unless a Principal Developer is selected, there will be many disconnected EULs and a golden opportunity to be a template that could be used across the country will have been lost. Ms. Thomas stated the intent behind separating Building 207 from the Principal Developer RFP was to have that building completed sooner and allow for a two-pronged RFQ/RFP process for the Principal Developer. Ms. Thomas noted that OEAM has never done a project of this size or scope, further explaining that, although OEAM has been responsible for projects, they have not been responsible for developments. She noted the traditional way this is done in the private sector, the gold standard, was to follow the process the Master Plan Subcommittee outlined.
- There was extensive discussion surrounding making two separate recommendations, the need to make the recommendation, the wisdom of separating Building 207, the need for both an RFQ and an RFP, whether the current VA process includes elements of both an RFQ and an RFP, the difference between the Principal Developer and the Master Planner and their authority, VA's authority and responsibilities, involving the City of Los Angeles in the process, the need for a lexicon of terms, ways to improve the RFP/RFQ process, EIR/EIS impact on the process, and the Committee's involvement in the solicitation process.
- The RFP is expected to be released at the end of June 2018 and an Industry Day is planned for July 11, 2018.
- Mr. Scheire recommended having Ed Bradley or a representative from the VA procurement office at all future meetings.
- Ms. Flanz stated VA does not have statutory authority to build market rate housing on the WLA campus. The Principal Developer will procure private sector funding and, through the EUL process, identify service providers to operate the housing.
 Operation of the housing pays the developer and the operator.
- Mr. Mangano motioned that the FAC accept Recommendation #1 as indicated on the screen <and read to those on the phone>.
 - Recommendation #1: Separate the solicitation for an EUL for Building 207 from the solicitation for a Principal Developer in order to expedite completion of the renovation of Building 207 into permanent supportive housing.
- Mr. Tenenbaum seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with 9 in favor, 1 against and no abstentions.
- LtGen Hopper pledged to include the appropriate information in the cover letter along with the Subcommittee's original letter when sending the recommendations forward.
- Mr. Delacruz made the motion that they approve Recommendation #2 and include the subcommittee's letter when the recommendation is submitted.

	 Recommendation #2: If the RFQ for a Principal Developer will not incorporate the substance of an RFP as defined in VA policy, then issue a separate RFP to those qualified developers who are identified through the RFQ. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed with 8 in favor, 0 against and two abstentions.
Outreach and Community Engagement Subcommittee Report/Discussion Jeff Scheire	 Ms. Flanz stated she will set up biweekly meetings with the FAC OCE Subcommittee and the IPT Outreach and Communications Subcommittee. Mr. Scheire stated that they are looking at ways to foster better collaboration and communication across subcommittees and have better outreach and communication with the community. He suggested the full Committee plan communications for the next year. Mr. Scheire emphasized the importance of distributing the FAC meeting agenda sooner to increase participation. He mentioned that there will be a series of town hall meetings related to the upcoming report on the environmental activities and recommended each subcommittee have representatives at these events. LtGen Hopper suggested the FAC invite a headquarters-level HUD staff member (possibly Assistant Secretary Neil Radcliff) to attend the next FAC meeting. He noted that they are a natural ally and can help advocate for capital dollars. He also recommended inviting Deputy Secretary Bowman to the next FAC meeting. Dr. Davis suggested developing a running list of frequently asked questions with responses that state the goals of the Committee, its current activities and the intended impacts. The group suggested the following be invited to the next FAC meeting: the US Department of Education (Veterans Upward Bound program), VA Benefits, and some
	people who spoke at the public comment sessions.
Services and Outcomes Subcommittee Report/Discussion	 Mr. Mangano noted the Services and Outcomes (SO) Subcommittee has identified the needs of elderly, transportation, safety, and housing as key issues. They have also identified specific needs to be addressed including electronics charging stations, a bike tire inflation station, gender-specific services, women's housing, women's trauma, and physical and psychological needs.
Philip Mangano	 Mr. Mangano described issues the SO Subcommittee is considering including: Ensuring access to all services, despite the divided north and south campuses Engagement for those in need of mental health and addiction services The high cost of living in LA, which impacts Veterans at risk for being homeless and the ability to retain homelessness program employees Moral injury as an aspect of care to be considered in conjunction with pastoral services Educational opportunities Mr. Allman stated the FAC has the opportunity to create a convergence of federal agencies on this campus so they can amplify on Capitol Hill the need for additional services. He recommended engaging the Department of Education whose Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) program offers remedial education classes to Veterans. Mr. Mangano and the SO Subcommittee support the chapel restoration and making it non-denominational, as it will be an important spiritual resource for the 1,200 formerly homeless Veterans who will inhabit the campus. Mr. Hernandez attended a meeting on May 8 at Building 401 at which it was announced that the PTSD clinic, mental health clinic, geriatric clinic, and the Military Sexual Trauma (MST)/Women's clinic were going to be moved. He expressed concern that moving these programs may be premature, as the Master Plan is still in

- development. He reported he has since heard that the PTSD clinic, which services 1200-1400 Veterans, is going to be disbanded and the participants will be assigned to the Vet clinics.
- Mr. Hernandez noted there are approximately 350 Veterans enrolled at UCLA and encouraged the FAC to support additional enrollment by streamlining the process that now requires them to go through junior colleges and community colleges.
- LtGen Hopper suggested the SO Subcommittee conduct an initial prioritization of services needed. Mr. Scheire suggested creating a journey map and identifying journey stages, the services most likely required at each stage, and the resources required to address those needs. He noted it will also be important to determine the necessary ratio of resources/staff to Veteran at each stage to create a cost structure.
- Mr. Mangano noted that the facility the FAC visited the previous day was a grant per diem (GPD) program, an old VA program that is akin to transitional housing. He stated there is discussion in Washington about whether to continue GPD programs or move to a Housing First strategy. He anticipates the housing units on the WLA campus will follow the Housing First model so it will be important to compile a profile of the service needs, particularly for those with mental health and addiction issues.
- Mr. Scheire recommended identifying VA capabilities, gaps, and non-profit community partners to fill them. He suggested the SO Subcommittee consider the following:
 - Transportation: Do we want to run a shuttle to the purple line specifically for homeless Veterans trying to get services? This could provide temporary relief and a quick win.
 - Homeless Veteran Journey: Can we map the journey of the homeless Veteran coming off the street? What are the pain points and opportunity areas?
 - Brentwood School/EULs: There is an EUL audit underway. I recommend having someone talk about those leases at the next Committee meeting so we can fully understand these activities.
 - Presidential Innovation Fellows (PIF): They are in the process right now of recruiting for the next year. PIFs could help augment the team here locally.
 - Social Media Analytics/Medallia: This could be used to tie our assumptions around what services are needed to data to get granular information.
 - Gyms: The facility we toured had a gym outside. Will there be workout facilities? This can be key to reintegration.
 - Gardening: There is a large garden on campus, but will there be microgardens around each building?
 - Kitchen: This provides someplace to hang out. What about getting the food to the kitchens? What about other community spaces?
 - Addresses: There is currently no good address system on campus. An early FAC recommendation could be to take care of this even before construction begins.

Master Plan Subcommittee Report/Discussion

Deb Thomas

- Ms. Thomas noted there are more recommendations to consider for the September meeting. She also stated the tax reform bill that passed caused developers to lose about 1/3 of their financing ability through tax credits developers so future EUL developers will likely struggle.
- Mr. Winter offered to give a tutorial on how supportive housing financing works and provide a rough estimate of what this would cost and what the gaps might be for an initiative of this size. He stated housing should be the highest priority among the services to be provided and that should be part of the Committee's SMART recommendation.

LtGen Hopper noted the FAC should encourage the VA Secretary to collaborate with other Secretaries on concepts and ways of operating and collaborating. Ms. Christine Barrie provided an update on the use of the 1887 fund: VA is in the process of getting a new out-lease or a revocable license to be able to work on the buildings. The Governor's Mansion was vandalized and, because of its historic status, there is a bureaucratic process that requires approval from Washington to complete the repairs. The 1887 fund fully plans to ensure each building has a Veteran-focused purpose. For instance, the plan is for the chapel to be a spiritual center with a chaplaincy program, an outreach program, and a center for moral injury. Every building should be alive and fully used by the Veterans. o The remaining Hoover Barrack may be converted into a restaurant with a culinary school for Veterans that is run by Veterans as part of the town center along which will include a trolley depot and a newsstand. At one point the plan was to designate the Governor's Mansion for women and children, but that may not be possible. Fundraising efforts continue with the current focus on funding the chapel renovation. The chapel is the oldest building on Wilshire Boulevard and it will be the spiritual center and a beacon of hope. Once work gets underway on the chapel, it will raise awareness of the project and may enhance contributions. Efforts will be coordinated across the many public and private organizations that are willing to assist. Mr. Allman noted that Metro recently announced several concepts for rail lines including one that would bring a Sepulveda transit line to the campus, potentially to the Westwood/UCLA station. Discussion and next After discussion, it was decided the next FAC meeting will be held September 12-13, steps/priorities of 2018. **VCOEB** LtGen Hopper stated a draft assessment will be sent to the Committee that includes activities this year, goals for the coming year, and meeting topics and potential guest speakers. Committee members should review the assessment in advance so that it can be approved at the next meeting. Suggested participants at the next meeting include the HUD Deputy Secretary, Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM), UCLA, Brentwood School, the City of Los Angeles, IPT financial planning section, Core Companies, and Shangri-La with Step Up on Second. Suggested topics include EULs, implications of RFP/RFQ process, a retrospective evaluation of the RFP, how financing works for affordable housing and gaps, the Impact of tax reform on tax credits, strategic planning, key messages (talking points), milestones, and accomplishments. **Public Comment** 22 people spoke during the public comment session. This section contains comments Session made by each speaker. The statements represent solely the opinions of the speakers. Terence Lyons, Strawberry Bulletin o Mr. Lyons is a Vietnam era Army Veteran. Veteran correspondent for Strawberry Bulletin. • Volunteer participant in the development of this master plan, working with Vets Advocacy and others. o Mr. Lyons stated this Committee should go to Congress and have them tell VA

the Committee should be involved in the letting of the development contract and the selection/evaluation of the Principal Developer. He believes the

- Committee's role is to provide oversight of VA in the master plan implementation process.
- The 1887 Fund intends to develop a center for the study of moral injury in conjunction with their intended use of the chapel. Mr. Lyons urges the Board and the 1887 Fund to consult with the chaplaincy corps in the development of that program.
- Bev Dennis, Retired Disabled Veteran
 - Mr. Dennis served in the Army for over 2 decades, including 5 ½ years supporting OEF and OIF. He spent over three years in the hospital in a wheelchair and was medically retired.
 - Mr. Dennis noted that the military healthcare in Washington DC was phenomenal and the VA care received in LA was also phenomenal, including the Traumatic Recovery Service for combat Veterans.
 - Mr. Dennis asked the Committee to leverage its position as a Federally mandated FAC to ensure the combat PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) programs that have been here for 20-30 years for do not go away with this development. Mr. Dennis indicated these programs have been very successful and believes the plan to relocate them from Building 256 to Building 401 would lead to privacy concerns and HIPAA violations. He would like the programs to continue in a building that can accommodate all the therapy programs.
 - Mr. Dennis noted this issue has been going on for over a year with town hall meetings and a meeting with the Patient Experience Office, but he believes the participant input falls on deaf ears. He questioned the qualifications and motives of the director of the LA VA Behavioral Health/Mental Health Program.
- Larry Van Kuran, USO Coalition WLA VA American Legion
 - Mr. Kuran was a combat infantry Veteran, Big Red One Vietnam, rifle soldier and platoon sergeant.
 - Mr. Van Kuran is the Veterans Service Coalition (VSC) Co-chair. VSC has over 450,000 members in California and represents the six major Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) Congressionally chartered in the area.
 - Several people on the VSC team have master plan experience, including Mr. Van Kuran who worked with Kaiser for 26 years at six medical centers. VSC submitted an initial plan for the rollout of the master plan to the Federal Register.
 - Mr. Van Kuran stated the development should occur as quickly as possible, while ensuring the capability of the infrastructure to support it (electric, sewage, water). He noted the LA Department of Water and Power (DWP) indicated the campus is not equipped to handle the current plans without major renovations and that it can take time to navigate the DWP bureaucratic processes.
 - Mr. Van Kuran encouraged the Committee to include certification and vocational training programs to help Veterans improve themselves and enable them to get jobs.
- Tess Banko, UCLA Veteran Family Wellness Center (VFWC) Executive Director
 - o VFWC is one of the lease holders on the WLA VA campus.
 - Ms. Banko noted that when you are building the infrastructure, you are also building the community.
 - She provided a list of items she wished she knew when she started for the Committees consideration. Topics include training, safety, things to engage

- with VA on as a partner, facilities, repair and sanitation, IT, public affairs, event planning, requesting land use, marketing and branding, rules for seeking donations as a community partner, voluntary services, IG reporting guides and resources.
- Ms. Banko noted that required services such as sanitation/garbage, police, commissary, education and business services, transportation, recreation, animal care, building maintenance, and child care should be considered. She noted that child care is a huge issue and recommended a partnership with the Foundation for Women Warriors or UCLA.

• Steven Goldstein, Veteran

- Mr. Goldstein was a First Lieutenant who served in the Infantry in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970. He is a patient in the PTSD outpatient services team program in Building 256.
- o Mr. Goldstein noted that the PTSD program reaches a lot of people and has great success. It currently serves one thousand combat Veterans from five wars. It is also set up to serve non-PTSD Veterans and victims of MST. Since its inception, the hospitalization rate for those in the program is less than 1%, which is an incredible success. There has only been one Veteran suicide among those in the program in 21 years. Mr. Goldstein noted the program serves a vulnerable population with some very fragile participants and he warned that discontinuing it might put participants at risk for suicide.
- Mr. Goldstein stated that group therapy can work in conjunction with evidence-based therapy (EBT).
- Mr. Goldstein believes the Administration said the group would be moved to Building 401, but that they intend to discontinue the program altogether. He recommended the Committee use its influence to have the program reinstated.

• Richard Aprahamian, Navy Veteran

- Mr. Aprahamian served in Operation Earnest Will and Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.
- Mr. Aprahamian has been in the Post Program for 3 years. He stated that the Post Program saved his life.
- Mr. Aprahamian has done Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and EBT. He noted that the Post Program offers EBT but gives participants the choice instead of pushing EBT on them when they are not ready for it.
- Mr. Aprahamian believes it would be a travesty if the Post Program ended.
 He stated the program saves lives, it helps, it works, and it gives participants
 somewhere to go. He noted there is camaraderie, that it is like a family, and
 that it works in conjunction with EBT.

• Leontynae Rhynes, Veteran

- Ms. Rhynes stated that Veterans who do not have substance or alcohol abuse issues but need housing should also be considered.
- Ms. Rhynes noted that she attends group therapy in Building 401 and believes their group can be heard in the other room.

• Kyle Orlemann, Caregiver/Spouse

- Ms. Orlemann spoke in her capacity as a civilian wife and caregiver of a disabled Veteran. Her husband is a Vietnam and cold war era Veteran (1969-1982) with over 330% service-connected disability.
- Ms. Orlemann stated it is very important that the family caregivers be included as a critical part of the treatment team as they are the door keepers for Veterans who seriously need help.

- Ms. Orlemann noted that the Post Program helped her husband tremendously after a suicide attempt, but that the game changer for him was getting a service dog. She suggested a service dog training academy should be an important part of the campus.
- Ms. Orlemann noted that when Veterans pass, spouses often do not have the skillsets to get jobs and are at risk of becoming homeless.
- Janet Turner, Field Supervisor from Representative Ted Lieu's Office
 - During his first term, Rep. Lieu worked with Secretary McDonald on the draft master plan. Rep. Lieu co-authored HR5936, which authorized VA to fulfill the master plan.
 - Rep. Lieu is a former active duty Air Force member and is currently a Colonel in the Air Force Reserve.
 - o Rep. Lieu recommended the following to the Committee:
 - Develop a community center for the campus relocate Hoover barracks for this purpose.
 - Include a space for community-run Veteran support groups, especially for PTSD and substance abuse.
- Anita Merrill, HUD VASH, Food Bank
 - Ms. Merrill is a HUD VASH Social worker helping Veterans get subsidies through HUD (collaborative effort).
 - Ms. Merrill recommended the Committee consider how to feed those who
 will be living on the campus as the West Side food bank that currently
 provides food will not be able to support the number of people expected to
 live on the campus. She suggested that the Master Plan should include a food
 bank. She noted this idea was endorsed by Rep. Lieu and former Secretary
 Shulkin.
 - Ms. Merrill submitted the food bank idea to the WLA VA think tank and noted that other VA sites have done it. The Chicago VA established a food bank in collaboration with Americorps.
 - She is willing to volunteer and other social workers are behind it.
- Alvin Adams, Dual-Diagnosis Treatment Program (DDTP)
 - Mr. Adams is a registered nurse (RN) and a member of the case management staff of the DDTP.
 - Mr. Adams noted the DDTP program has been in place for over 25 years and it has 76 active participants.
 - Mr. Adams stated the Program promotes sobriety and mental health, gives participants a place to meet with their peers and participate in therapeutic groups, provides lifestyle and balanced nutrition counseling, and offers field trips to show alternatives to using drugs. Mr. Adams emphasized that DDTP is an important program that Veterans want to keep running to help their peers.
 - Mr. Adam stated DDTP is short staffed and has no addiction therapist at all.
 - Mr. Adams suggested that Veterans who have experienced this Program be involved in the making decisions about DDTP.
- Herbert Mannery, Veteran, DDTP
 - o Mr. Mannery is a disabled Veteran who came to DDTP in 2010 when he had no income.
 - Mr. Mannery has had a home since 2011 and now has his service connected disability status.

- Mr. Mannery indicated that the space is too close in in Building 401 and there
 is no privacy. He suggested using trailers if necessary rather than moving to
 Building 401.
- Mr. Mannery stated that DDTP is his recovery and his safe haven. He asked for more help and staff.
- Jim Perley, Western America Properties
 - o Mr. Perley is a Navy Vietnam Veteran.
 - Mr. Perley heard about the Veteran centers about 15 years after when he joined a group. It made a huge difference in his life.
 - Mr. Perley stated that he is in the affordable housing business and is very active in the homeless Veteran space.
 - O Mr. Perley agreed with the decision to appoint a Principal Developer but encourages local sub-leases which will allow developers to teach others how to put these complicated deals together and get them involved in day-to-day services and management for the Veterans. Mr. Perley noted that to be more effective off campus, a lot of operators must be trained to do this.
 - O Mr. Perley recommended the following:
 - The RFQ/RFP should encourage teaming up and working together.
 - VA should team up some of those who submit RFQs to encourage cooperation and allow those with more experience to help train others
 - Include the respondent's ability to build local development teams in the RFP scoring criteria.
- Michael Folonis, VA Patient PTSD
 - Mr. Folonis stated that he is in full support of homeless Veterans housing on the grounds. He has participated in both evidence-based and group therapy and has benefitted greatly from the assistance of a combat Veteran, a clinical social worker, and others who helped him with his mental baggage from the Vietnam War.
 - Mr. Folonis stated that neither the Chief of Staff, nor the program director reached out to them to engage in a civil discourse about their plans. He believes their actions indicate they do not care to listen to participant needs nor do they want to understand how participants feel.
 - Mr. Folonis noted that the group supports mental and physical health and allows participants to share their trials and tribulations with a group of brothers who are supportive of one another.
 - Mr. Folonis stated that group-based therapy and EBT are not mutually exclusive. This group provides the evidence that this therapy works.
 - Mr. Folonis suggested that decisions have been made by civilians who do not understand how combat affects a human being's mental health. He reminded everyone of the stated values of the Veterans Administration: Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, Excellence.
 - Mr. Folonis asked the committee not to allow the groups to be abolished.

• Alan Pietruszevski

- Mr. Pietruszevski is a retired Navy Commander.
- Mr. Pietruszevski suggested that these meetings and public comment sessions be videotaped or audiotaped to capture these stories. He also recommended holding Veteran-only meetings before the FAC meetings so they can develop a priority list that goes forward to the Board.
- Mr. Pietruszevski suggested the FAC be more engaged with Veterans and that the meetings be held at night to increase participation.

- Mr. Pietruszevski stated he would like the master plan to include meeting spaces for Veteran groups.
- Mr. Pietruszevski asked where the money from the existing leases went. He stated that the leases should be published in their entirety and be easy to find. He indicated the UCLA and Brentwood leases are undervalued and suggested selling the property at market value. He stated this is an opportunity for Mr. Lieu to make a lasting contribution to the campus.

Keith Martin, UCLA

- Mr. Martin is a former contract social worker for DDTP.
- Mr. Martin provided a graph that shows the number of days of hospitalization for Veteran homelessness for schizophrenic patients with drug problems went from approximately 2,000 days per year when the program to 500 days per year at the time of the study and it has continued to decline.
- Mr. Martin stated that dual diagnosis patients have delusions and hallucinations and cannot take care of themselves very well. He stated they can only live independently and maintain housing due to the help DDTP and St. Josephs provides. He indicated this program saves VA millions of dollars.
- Mr. Martin does not believe those who made that decision not to fund the program understand the program or what St. Josephs does. He stated Dr. Eckman was not allowed to speak to WLA or Salt Lake City on behalf of the program this year.
- Mr. Martin suggested the FAC look into the DDTP and ensure that new staff support the program. He asked for St. Josephs program to get reinstated and funded. Mr. Martin noted that patients are at risk to be homeless again if the program goes away.

• Richard McCormick, Veteran

- o Mr. McCormick is from New York City and was homeless for 15 years.
- Mr. McCormick stated that he has been through all kinds of PTSD programs but did not progress until he made it to the DDTP program. He now has a wife, a dog, and some normalcy.
- Mr. McCormick stated that he has been in the VA system for quite some time, and that the only thing that saved his life is the Post Program. The Program broke down his PTSD diagnosis for him through classes, anger management, therapy, etc. He realized he was not crazy, he had an issue.

• Willie Boyd, Vietnam Veterans of America

- Mr. Boyd is a certified peer support specialist and a U.S. Navy Veteran who served in Vietnam.
- Mr. Boyd came to VA in 1987 after some of his shipmates were killed on the USS Stark. He came to the VA because he felt he was self-destructing.
- Mr. Boyd stated that the best help participants get is the help they get from other Veterans. He believes maintaining this program is a matter of life and death because, without this program, many more suicides would occur and more people would self-destruct.
- Mr. Boyd indicated that he will continue to support his peers whether he is paid or not. He also stated there is no greater fraternity than the Veterans fraternity.

David Pope, P.O.S.T. Clinic

- o Mr. Pope served in the US Army and is a Desert Shield/Desert Storm Veteran.
- Mr. Pope stated that the Post Clinic is where he lives. It is his job. He wants the committee to save a program that is proven and believes it is a matter of life and death.

- Mr. Pope said that his war did not end. Someone set off fireworks as he walked past the other day and he froze and it took 15-20 minutes to realize he was standing on a corner he walked past regularly.
- David Young, Building 209 Tenant
 - o Mr. Young is a U.S. Navy Veteran.
 - Mr. Young has been service connected for a TBI injury at a zero rating for 30 years. He stated his last service-connected (SC) increase was in 2005 and that he is still caught up in the system.
 - Mr. Young stated that living in Building 209 has been life-saving for him and that it gives him half a chance.
 - Mr. Young said that issues of disparities, bias, prejudice, and racism exist in the military and VA and they impact quality of care. He has only seen one black psychiatrist in 40 years.
 - Mr. Young feels he suffers in a system of racism, bias and disparities and that
 if those issues are not addressed, we will pay a dear price.
- Arthur Gonzales, Retired VA Regional Office PTSD Program
 - Mr. Gonzales is a Vietnam Veteran who dedicated 25 years to serving Veterans and their families at the WLA VA until September 10, 2001. After September 11, Mr. Gonzales quit his job to come into the PTSD program.
 - Mr. Gonzales stated that it is disgraceful and shameful that Veterans will be denied treatment for PTSD. He noted that the PTSD program saved his life many times. It brought him out of the depths of his despair.
 - Mr. Gonzales asked how Veterans will be brought back into society if the program is shut down. He believes the PTSD Program is the most vital program VA has.
 - Mr. Gonzales believes having private companies build housing on the WLA VA campus takes away from the impact of the Veteran voices. He indicated, slowly but surely, pieces of VA are being privatized.
 - Mr. Gonzales told the FAC that other regions have come to the WLA VA to observe this program so they could model the program at their VA. What message is being sent if this model program is shut down?
 - Mr. Gonzales stated that he has served proudly and now it is time for VA to step up for Veterans.
- Raul Aguiar, Building 256 VA Veteran
 - Mr. Aguiar served in Vietnam from 1966-1969 in the Special Forces and First Cavalry.
 - Mr. Aguiar requested that the program not be shut down. He stated he has been here 10 years and a lot of people have saved his life, including other Veterans and several doctors.
 - Mr. Aguiar stated that the homeless Veterans who will live here will also have PTSD and they will need treatment.
 - Mr. Aguiar noted that many staff members have already being fired. He reminded the FAC that when there are more Veterans on campus, that will be needed.
- LtGen Hopper thanked the speakers and noted that their input is appreciated. He noted that minutes of the FAC meetings are available to the public. He explained that this Committee will make recommendations to VA Secretary regarding the master planning effort itself, engagement with the public, and what the services and outcomes will be. The public comments made at this meeting inform the Committee of the importance of the PTSD program and what it means to Veterans here. He

	 stated he would share the information with local VA staff beyond those who attended the meeting. Dr. Davis shared her experiences as a Veteran and agreed that peer support is critical. Dr. Davis is the Chief Veterans Experience Officer and she noted that she reports directly to the VA Secretary and will share the comments from the public with leadership in Washington, DC. She stated the intent would be to reinforce the good things that are going on and enable WLA VA leadership to respond in the best way to what was said. She told the speakers they have been heard. LtGen Hopper stated the Committee will pass the task to local VA leadership and request that they inform the FAC on the PTSD program and the Building 256 and
	Building 401 issue.
Discussion and next steps/priorities of VCOEB (cont.)	 Mr. Mangano noted that the issues raised in the public comment session (PTSD, substance abuse, dual diagnosis) will be key to consider as part of redevelopment. Ann Brown explained that the WLA VAMC has patient advocates and the Veterans Experience Office (VEO) is redesigning the role of patient advocates to enable them to address not only individual issues, but also larger, systemic issues. After discussion, it was decided that the Services and Outcomes subcommittee will meet with GLA VAMC leadership to gain additional information on the plans for the PTSD/DDTP groups. It was suggested that the subcommittee may recommend easy access for Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors to bring concerns about services forward on both the North and South campuses. LtGen Hopper noted that Lisa Mahoney will be leaving the board due to potential conflicts with her company's VA contracts and that the Committee will miss the depth of her expertise in environmental law and environmental studies. He stated the FAC will work to replace her and her expertise.
Adjourn	The meeting was adjourned by Lt GEN (R) Hopper at 6:52 PM PDT.
Committee Chair Lt GEN (R) John Hopper	

/s/ Eugene W. Skinner, Jr.
Approved
Eugene W. Skinner Jr., Designated Federal Officer
/s/ John D. Hopper Jr.
Approved

LTG (R) John D. Hopper Jr., Chair