

**24th Veterans Community Oversight and Engagement
Board (VCOEB)
Federal Advisory Committee (FAC)
December 13, 2024**

VCOEB Board Members Present

Robert Begland (Chair)
Christine Barrie
Nicole Branca
Michael Canfield
Stephanie Cohen
Samuel Homes
Sarah Hunter
Cara Munn
Dr. Patricia Nwajuaku Beth Sandor
Jim Zenner

VCOEB Board Members Absent

BG (Ret.) Loree Sutton (Vice Chair)
Aimee Bravo
Keith Boylan
Dylan Tete
Dave Weiner
Dr. Etsemaye Agonafer
Abe Bradshaw
Dave Howden
Amy Perkins

Employees and Staff Present

Barbara Morton (VEO Chief Officer)
Eugene Skinner (DFO)
Chi Szeto (Alternate DFO)
Maggie Walsh (Contractor)
Shilpa Desai (Contractor)
Alfred Flores (Contractor)
Andrew Strain
Chelsea Black
Sally Hammitt
John Kuhn
Margaret Kabat
Robert Merchant
Dr. Keith Harris

Public Attendees

Sennett Devermont

Robert Canas
Francisco Juarez
Samantha Yu
More
Ally B
Ally Cimino
Anthony Allman
Cheryl Scheidth
Danielle Armbruster
Darryl
DeCarlo Smith
Hannah Dunn
Harold Hanson
Janet Turner
Kyle Orlemann
Moore Lori
Parisa Roshan
Robert McKenrick
Tess Banko
Robert Madden
Marlin Brower
Tom Shea
Stephan Keller
Jiemenez Elvira
Jennifer Allen
Katie Fruin
Stephen Peck
Tyler Munroe
Brian D'Andrea
Jim Perley

Call to Order, Attendance, Welcome

Mr. Skinner introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the 24th VCOEB FAC meeting and led the board with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Opening Remarks. Mr. Robert Begland (Chair), BG (R) Loree Sutton (Vice Chair), Chair, Eugene W. Skinner Jr, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

The DFO reviewed the rules of engagement for the meeting.

- 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.
- This is a 100% virtual meeting today so please click on the "Raise Hand" function at the bottom of your WEBEX screen to indicate your desire to comment or ask the

Chair a question. Once you have made your comment, asked your question, or no longer want to raise your hand, re-click to lower your hand.

- Allow DFO/VCOEB Chair to yield the floor to you prior to speaking.
- Please help our minute takers and identify yourself before speaking so they can attribute the comments/questions to the correct speaker.
- This meeting is being recorded.
- Please note. Questions and comments are restricted to Board members only.

The FO reviewed the WEBEX information with links that was previously sent out in the notice of meeting in the federal registrar.

Chairman Begland: Was happy to see the level of participation today. He believes the work that they are doing to improve the campus, (West LA), is going to continue to receive a great deal of attention in the coming weeks and months. One of the effects of Judge Carter's ruling was that it has caused a lot of attention to the agency's choices and planning for this campus. Even if you find fault with elements of Judge Carter's ruling, it is a chance for everyone to critically look at these choices.

Chairman Begland then asked the West LA Leadership about a complaint that was made by a Veteran, who has been reliable about reporting these things in the past, that there have been people turned away from CTRS this month, specifically on December 4th and 5th. The complainant went on to explain that there were between seven and 15 people who were turned away from CTRS and between New Directions having a bed bug infestation that we just don't have much temporary capacity at the campus.

Chairman Begland asked, "Is the campus at capacity right now in those respects?"

Mr. Kuhn: At this moment on campus, they do have capacity issues for temporary housing. However, they do have scores of open community beds for temporary housing that are available and are offered to the Veterans who are turned away because of capacity issues in an on-campus program. They do not say "there is no emergency housing", they might say that a program is at capacity. He believes this is an important distinction.

- There is available emergency housing capacity.
- They are addressing the capacity issues, and they have new beds opening at a bridge home next week, which will add eight beds on the way to 32 additional beds, and a bridge home opened by January.
- CTRS is expanding drop-in beds, they currently have a dozen drop-in beds and will expand this to at least 18 and perhaps more.
- They remain open for emergency housing and offer those beds in the community.
- There has also been an issue with increasing throughput. They are working with Veterans who are in their temporary housing units and acknowledging that sometimes for those who have been in a street environment and may have experienced trauma and constant stress moving to permanent housing may be scary. They may feel since temporary housing has provided a safe

- place, they don't have to worry about paying rent, or where safe, healthy food is coming from it can be hard to let that go. So, they are providing the support necessary for Veterans to make that next step to permanent housing.
- Their goal is permanent housing. Temporary housing, the Veterans are still homeless. So, they are strongly encouraging Veterans to make the available choices. They offer several choices to Veterans on permanent housing. They have available permanent housing units:
 - Currently they have 200+ units of project-based housing open and available.
 - They have almost 190 beds opening next month on-campus and additional beds opening in the community next month as well.

There are ample permanent housing opportunities, and they want to see Veterans who are in temporary housing take advantage of those and create more openings for those who want to access the programs described.

Chairman Begland: He was very grateful to hear that Mr. Kuhn, and his team are addressing this issue. First because with winter coming, they need temporary housing capacity as they get rain and colder conditions. And second, as he understands the agency has asked the 9th Circuit court to stay that portion of Judge Carter's ruling that relates to temporary housing. In his opinion, he believes that a federal judge should not be dictating where they place temporary housing, which is his understanding of the ruling. But if they end up in a situation where they are turning people away because of a lack of temporary housing on campus, people might think Judge Carter's intervention is more correct. So, he hopes that if the agency is going to take the position that it can best decide how to allocate resources for temporary housing, they make sure that this capacity issue doesn't happen again.

BG (R) Sutton is out for medical reasons.

VA Leadership Welcome and opening Remarks /Q&A, Ms. Margaret (Meg) Kabat, VA Chief of Staff

Ms. Kabat: She announced this was her last VCOEB meeting. In November she attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the McArthur Field buildings where they had a couple of the residents share their experiences as well as other leaders in the community speak. She expressed how proud of the work that has been done, and the ongoing work that continues here.

Mr. Begland: Thanked Ms. Kabat for her support and the importance of DC leadership to make the trip here to see the progress.

Opening Remarks Executive Sponsor, Ms. Barbara Morton, Acting, Chief Veterans Experience Officer

Ms. Morton: She is temporarily in the seat that the previous Chief, Veterans Experience Officer, John Boerstler, was occupying. There will be a new Chief experience officer in the

next administration. She thanked the board for all the work they have been doing and wanted to thank those board members whose terms will be concluding. There will also be a new VA senior leadership team coming in January and she appreciates the board's efforts moving forward.

Opening Remarks GLA Leadership, Mr. Robert Merchant, Medical Center Director, VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

Mr. Merchant: Provided some updates on the West Los Angeles (WLA) campus and some results that show the solutions they have in place to address this crisis are working.

- In FY 24, they placed 1854 Veterans into permanent supportive housing. This is more than any other city in the country.
- In LA County, Veteran homelessness is down 23% since last year.
- On November 14th they had the ribbon-cutting ceremony at 671 MacArthur Field.
- Next month they expect to see a total of approximately 500 Veterans homes available on the WLA campus with the opening of buildings 402 and 404.
- Significant construction continues across the campus.

Mr. Begland: Where does LA County stand on the landfill issue and the ability to engage in construction within 1,000 feet of the landfill areas?

Ms. Black: They have been working extensively with the county on the landfill issue, and they have about four different options that the VA and the developers are coordinating efforts on. They are currently tracking and there is no impact to construction at this point.

- The main goal is to close the landfill and provide a post-closure land use report to the County.
- They are engaging in the initial draft of a phase one report and have a deadline to complete that by December 2025.
- Each developer is working with the County to institute mitigations within their sites to monitor methane both temporary and permanent monitoring systems.
- The 671 MacArthur, which is the 401 MacArthur site was one of the first to initiate a plan for temporary monitoring.
- The sister site of 701 MacArthur which is 402, is also implementing a temporary monitoring system.
- Existing buildings 205, 208, and 209 are developing a plan for a temporary monitoring system.
- Building 300 is the first building that is within 1,000 feet that will go into construction.

Chairman Begland: When do you expect to pull the permits for building 300, which is the critical hub of services for the residential area?

Ms. Black: Building 300 is still pending parcel release. The developer is working with the County to see if the developer can implement some of the plans within their design and

implement some solutions to be able to pull permits when the time is right.

Ms. Cohen: Who in the county are you working with and are they being collaborative or is this more of us being collaborative with them?

Ms. Black: They are working with the Department of Public Health, they have a local enforcement agency, this is a state requirement that they are trying to satisfy. They are very collaborative it is a complicated issue and the County understands that. We have so much activity on this campus such as developments that are already occupied, developments under construction, and those that are going into construction and they are being helpful at this point to make sure that the deadlines are being met and advancing development.

Chairman Begland: It also sounds like all municipalities, the county is taking the position that things have been built without having raised this objection before, it is being raised now, and they are going to expect you to do the post-closure report. And then the question is, what kind of accommodation do we get in the interim? Do they give us the building permits for building 300 before the post-closure report and the period that runs from it? Building 300 is very important to the development of the residential portion of the campus, so they will look to Ms. Black for updates on whether the County is cooperating to make that happen.

Ms. Black: Building 300 is arguably the most important building.

Chairman Begland: Building 300 is the most important building because of the services that it will provide to many residents.

Mr. Merchant: Yes. He agrees that building 300 is one of the most important buildings because of the services it will provide.

Mr. Begland: Stephanie Cohen used to work with the County and the board may be able to help in the relationship with the county.

Ms. Cohen: Can offer her support by providing recommendations if there are County issues or things that Ms. Black may need to work through with the County. She also mentioned that Jim Zenner would also be a good resource.

Ms. Black: She expressed her appreciation for any assistance. It is a very complex process, and they have been working collaboratively with the County. They want to assist us, and she appreciates that.

Mr. Zenner: Their commission has requested a brief from the Department of Public Health and when they give the brief to the commission, he will make sure to flag it for VA and VCOEB leadership.

Opening Remarks Special Advisor, Dr. Keith Harris, Senior Executive Homelessness Agent (Greater Los Angeles), Office of the Secretary

Dr. Harris: The new Point in Time (PIT) count results came out since the board last met. There was a 23% decline in the LA Continuum of Care, and nationally, they saw a 7.5% decline. This is more proof that what they are doing in partnership is having a positive impact. The board has discussed the importance of continuing to evaluate the scale of the need in Los Angeles. It is one of the recommendations that he and his team concurred with. He discussed evaluating the need and the analysis they hope to do around this.

- The VA has a gap analysis tool which he and his team worked on about 10 years ago under Secretary Shinseki. It is a sophisticated tool in terms of looking at both the at-need population in terms of numbers of homeless Veterans and the type or stage of homelessness they're in but also the assets GLA has and the placements they can achieve with those.
- Currently, the updated version of this tool is being built out by the VA Central Office, analytics team at the homeless program. Once GLA gets the updated version, they can work on building out that analysis. The tool has a built-in function where they can use either the PIT count as the starting point on need, or the By Name List (BNL) number.
- The PIT and BNL numbers have had dramatically different numbers in terms of their estimates and the numbers of homeless, with the new tool Dr. Harris and the team can use the estimates from the PIT and BNL and triangulate on the most accurate estimates.
- Update on another effort they have undertaken with Mayor Bass' office. Recently the Mayor approached the VA Secretary explaining she wanted to put together a high-profile landlord outreach campaign. The goal was to get more landlords to dedicate units to Veterans and rent to Veterans, in particular HUD-VASH voucher holders. The primary ask from the mayor was around making sure that we made enough referrals to the public housing authorities (PHA) so that they could fill all those units that are made available through this process. So, Dr. Harris and the team have incorporated this initiative into the One Team structure, and they've got a large inner agency team working on that. They expect this to formally run from January 1st through April 1st. There is a staff-focused launch next week and the mayor's office is in the planning stages of a more public PR launch and campaign that will happen in early January. They expect a large surge in Veterans moving through the HUD-VASH process and being referred to the PHA, identifying units, and moving in.

Chairman Begland: The board was very happy to hear that the agency had chosen Dr. Harris to lead the needs analysis as this was a board recommendation from June. Do you have any sense of when this analysis will be complete? Do you think it will be complete before the 9th Circuit hears the appeal of Judge Carter's ruling? While many of the board members appreciate Judge Carter's desire to provide housing, they question the arithmetic of it. Mr. Begland is wondering if the agency's going to be in a position when it argues the appeal to the 9th Circuit to offer an alternative assessment.

Dr. Harris: He understands the rationale of the question. However, he does not feel that he can speak to the legal side of this and the use of the results in the proceedings. In terms of more general time frames, it is mostly a matter of when he and his team receive the tool, the most recent update was that they were aiming for this month, but Dr. Harris has not gotten another update in about a month on this, so he is not certain as to when they will receive the tool. Once they have received the tool, he anticipates it would possibly be a one to two-month process.

Mr. Begland: Is it possible they could hear about the results this spring?

Dr. Harris: Yes.

Public Comments Session, Registered members of the public (5 minutes per speaker)

Mr. Devermont: Newly elected Vice Commander of the AGIFL Camino Royale Forum and the Executive Director of the AFTP Foundation. He claims that every Land Use Lease or Enhanced Use Lease signed since 2018 at the West LA Soldiers Home is illegal. The West LA Leasing Act Law states: (1) “principally benefit Veterans and their families defined in this section determined principally benefit Veterans and their families with respect to services provided by a person or entity under a lease or property or land sharing agreement. Under, a lease or property or land sharing agreement, it means services (a) provided exclusively to Veterans and their families, or (b) that they are designed exclusively for the particular needs of Veterans and their families as opposed to the general public and any benefit of those services to the general public is distinct from the intended benefits of Veterans and their families.”(2) “It excludes services in which the only benefit to Veterans and their families is the generation of revenue for the Department of Veterans Affairs.” That is very important. The generation of revenue does not make any legal Enhanced use Lease legal. He claims that when Judge Carter is negotiating with Brentwood School or UCLA about whether they should pay more money, that violates the West LA Leasing Act Law. In number (1) of the West LA Leasing Act laws relating to leases and land use. If the Inspector General (IG) of the Department of Veterans Affairs determines, as part of an audit report or evaluation conducted by the IG, the department is not in compliance with all federal laws relating to leases and land use at the campus or the significant mismanagement has occurred with respect to leases or land use at the campus. The Secretary may not enter into any leases or land-sharing agreements at the campus or renew any such leases or land-sharing agreements that are not in compliance with such laws.” He read a portion of the 2018 OIG report stating, “the OIG determined Brentwood School lease violated the West LA Leasing Act.” meaning that every lease, renewed or signed, is illegal. He believes that is why Secretary McDonough hasn’t signed any of these leases. He asked the question “What gives Alan Trinh any authority to sign any illegal Enhanced Use Lease? Zero, it’s illegal.” In 2021, the OIG came out again, He claims that nothing had been done, and the OIG determined that the Brentwood School did not comply with the law. Some OIG findings in 2018 and 2021 showed non-compliance. He believes any leases renewed or signed with Brentwood School, UCLA, the Metro, Step-up, Century Housing, U.S. Vets, or the Veteran Collective

are all illegal. And what seems to be the intention of private developers and third parties? Maybe some of the intention is to shrink the remaining 388 acres, into 70 acres so that a town center and a hotel can be built for the community, all in our nation's capital of Veteran homelessness. If the point of this board is to end Veteran homelessness in Los Angeles, why are you not looking at Veteran Avenue where 3000 UCLA students live in buildings on 36 acres of land that was in the footprint of the Soldier's Home? The city plans to house the Olympic Village there. How do we plan on housing Olympic athletes before our homeless and disabled Veterans on their land? Why did they leave out the CNH track and the 36 acres when they made the West LA draft master plan? Why did they leave out the Salvation Army's West to a transitional that has civilians living in it that is on the Soldiers' Home property? He read Ronald Regan's note upon signing the Veteran Healthcare Act, "I also note my concern over section 301 which modifies the reverted interest of the United States on some 35 acres of land in Los Angeles." He clarified that is the Soldiers' Home, and for the board not to be advocating for that land is a shame. He has also spoken to some Veterans living in the MacArthur apartments and claims that their stoves are broken.

Mr. Juarez: The National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) Coalitions have advocated for decades to save the Soldier's Home, the CNH track, and the beachfront properties. The West L.A. master plan includes an element for a publicly accessible 450,000 sq. ft. mega mall and a hotel which he believes is disguised as a town center which would violate the deed-restricted land use mandates, the rule of law, and federal law. He believes the activities of the principal developers and 3rd party contractors have negatively impacted the quality of life for the patients and residents of this national home resulting in the trafficking of drugs, drug overdoses, prostitution, and other biases. He believes this negative impact is occurring because the land was to be a home for disabled Veterans and not a portion of the state of California, Los Angeles County, or the City of Santa Monica. He claims death and loss of sanity are taking place due to the mismanagement of Step-Up on Second, and other third-party vendors and an entity that is currently indicted in other states. Judge Otero from the Ninth Circuit court left the mechanism in place. Mr. Juarez claimed this plan has failed and the VCOEB has the responsibility to do right by disabled Veterans. He emphasized the importance for the board to acknowledge the NHDVS Coalition, which he believes has not happened in the past. He claims the NHDVS has tried to explain to the board what is right and what is wrong with the plan to no avail. He does not believe the board is out to do the right thing. He then asked, "Will his comments go on the record?"

Mr. Skinner: Explained that the meeting is being recorded and will be part of the minutes.

Mr. Juarez: Asked if it would be transcribed under the federal register.

Mr. Skinner: Explained that it will be available on the ACMO website, not the Federal Register.

Mr. Canas: He is a resident on the West L.A. campus and has lived in a Step-Up building for approximately four years. He had read in the L.A. Times that there was a plan to build a hotel on this campus. He has met with a number of Veterans who live on campus, and

they do not want a hotel here. He believes the VA doesn't want Veterans here as patients, so he was not sure why they would want a hotel and feels that this is a waste of resources as they should be building more housing and not a hotel. He had attended the court proceedings regarding the lawsuit against the West L.A. VA Campus, and the results of those proceedings which held the Department of VA accountable for failing to honor its obligations to provide housing and healthcare to disabled Veterans, as it was originally intended. Mr. Canas is currently an inpatient at the domiciliary on campus he claims that his medical record is being weaponized against him, and he is being harassed by the staff and claims he has no recourse and no one to help him. He claims his HIPAA rights have been violated twice as a patient at the domiciliary and claims he cannot get assistance with that. He claims there is no case management being provided to the Veterans who live in the Step-Up property, and that there is no help with educational or vocational resources.

Ms. Cohen: She asked if the VA staff could follow up on Mr. Canas' comments.

End of Public Comments.

Veterans Garden Project, Kaitlyn M. Fruin, UCLA Preventive Medicine Fellow, Jennifer E. Allen

Jennifer Allen is a nurse practitioner and the GLA Whole health program manager at the West Los Angeles campus and Dr. Katie Fruin spent three years as a primary care provider in our HPAC clinic and the West LA VA providing primary care to Veterans experiencing homelessness and is currently completing a Preventative care medicine fellowship at UCLA. They introduced the Veterans Garden.

Ms. Fruin: When the GLA campus was reimagined as a space for Veterans, the 2012 Master Plan included the garden as a space that could potentially be designated as a therapeutic place to grow food and provide a job training program for Veterans. So, this is critical when we start to think about, as you mentioned in the call previously, how we can holistically care for the Veterans that are living on campus.

- The need to provide these Veterans with fresh and nutritious food, meaningful and purposeful work, and skill building opportunities is crucial in their healing and wellbeing. Next slide please. So as many of you know, the garden was established in the 1960s. It's a 15-acre plot of land located behind the Jackie Robinson stadium, and it was a place for Veterans that were returning from Korean and Vietnam Wars to come and to be with other Veterans.
- Through attrition and retirements, the garden went dormant, but in its heyday, the garden was employing almost 3,035 Veterans in a compensated work therapy program, and there were two full time staff, an occupational therapist, and a horticultural specialist.
- In 2007, there were a couple of other entities that took control of the garden, but they were unable to really keep the momentum.

- In 2021, whole health stepped in, we partnered with the domiciliary, and we started offering classes for all inpatients.
- They shared some testimonials from the Veterans that were in the 1st iteration of the garden. We recently connected with some of the original vets that started the vets garden, and we got a lot of rich history.
 - Of the Veterans that were there and the change that it had on people's lives. So, this 1st story is incredible. Joe battled substance abuse for about 25 years, started in his teens, continued through his service, was diagnosed with schizophrenia, ended up homeless, which is a story that we hear all too often here at West LA, and then through the garden, he experienced a total transformation.
 - He ended up being promoted to a supervisory position in the garden and was overseeing 15 vets and he maintained half of the garden at one point. In recent months we had a female Veteran that came to the garden from the DOM program.
 - She was unhoused and participated in our program and then ended up going on to become a Master Gardener.
 - She got housed, and really, it's just a demonstration of the potential that this garden has to empower Veterans to engage in their self-care.
- So why restore the garden?
 - Reactivating the 15-acre garden within the VA campus is a really unique opportunity for us to provide a nurturing environment, that green space that you were talking about in the survey, where Veterans can come.
 - Reconnect to the land, reconnect to themselves, reconnect to each other, and build community, and then through the garden, we empower Veterans to improve their health, to promote their nutrition security, their community building, and we support the Veteran transitions to new employee employment fostering a sense of purpose and belonging in their post military lives.
 - A parallel question to ask when we asked, "Why restore the garden?", is what would our health system look like if we use the \$4.5 trillion, we spend on health care to not just react to disease but to truly promote health?
 - Ms. Fruin explained the six pillars of health: nutrition, exercise, healthy relationships, stress management, sleep and preventing and treating substance use, which is not really where our money is spent in healthcare right now. And unfortunately, both within our Veteran and our non-Veteran population, we're seeing an explosion of non-communicable chronic disease.
 - Among our Veteran population, we have a high burden of preventable diet related disease, including one and four of our Veterans have diabetes.
 - 78 % of Veterans are overweight or obese, which mirrors the non-Veteran population.
 - And 87 % of Veterans have hypertension.
 - In West LA, we see quite a high rate of food insecurity especially among our HPAC patients at two times higher a rate than the civilian population.
 - In studies of Veterans with food insecurity, nearly half of Veterans experiencing food insecurity also experienced suicidal eyes.

- We also see that while we have exceptional mental health treatment programs at the VA, fewer than 50 % of returning Veterans with mental health needs are accessing treatment. And sometimes that's because Veterans are concerned about the stigma of having a mental health diagnosis and not wanting to enter traditional clinical space.
- As you know, suicide is a priority for the VA health system, especially because for our younger Veterans, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death.
- We, along with all our other primary care clinicians, are thinking about loneliness.
 - As a predictor of disease, people with high rates of loneliness have the same risk of premature death as individuals who smoke 15 cigarettes per day.
 - And the fact that more than half of Veterans endorse feeling lonely is an unexamined crisis within our health system.
- As the largest integrated health system in the nation, it's exciting for us at VA to have the opportunity to think differently about what it means to promote health. Part of combating loneliness is through integrating our food and health systems and creating opportunities for clinical spaces that are not just our patient facilities, the hospital, but really can we meet our patients in the garden, in our communities and watch side by side rather than our hierarchical of traditional models of care.
- West Los Angeles VA has one of the oldest agricultural therapy programs in the country.
- Farming as the therapeutic modality has gained a lot of interest in recent years, in part driven by the VA's priority around addressing mental health and preventing suicide.
- The Senate appropriated \$2 million to the Office of Health to create the VA Farms Program or the VA farming and Recovery Mental Health Service Program.
 - This was a program to really study how farming as an intervention could both improve Veteran health and prepare Veterans for post service employ employment in the agricultural sector.
 - You'll notice that although in California we're the leading agricultural state, we didn't have any VA farms pilot sites in California, which I think is a huge, missed opportunity because four Veterans interested in transitioning to agricultural careers California is the best state to do so.
 - This funding was allocated in 2017. The program started in, 2019, but because of the COVID pandemic from talking to VA clinicians involved in this project, there were a lot of issues with implementation and data collection.
- VA sites across the country are looking to West LA because we have the oldest program and the largest farm to build the evidence space of how we can.
- what is the solution you ask? Like Katie said, we really have a unique opportunity here at West LA with the largest population of food and secure Veterans, 1200 Veterans potentially living on our campus.
 - If we restore this garden and dedicate it to healing Veterans, we can grow food, we can build community, we can provide education and meaningful

- training for employment.
- who are the partners thus far?
 - We anticipate there will be many partners, this is a big project, right? But thus far VA Whole Health, our dedication is really to empower Veterans to take charge of their life. We focus on well-being; we focus on helping Veterans to live their best life.
 - Grow Good is a nonprofit that perhaps many of you have heard about before. They work with the bell shelter. They've been working with them for the past 13 years to create an urban farm that's actually adjacent to the shelter. The urban farm provides produce and employment and training for the residents.
 - And then of course UCLA help. We've partnered with the VA, they've partnered with the VA now for over 70 years and they really understand the importance on focusing on creative and innovative solutions, to this epidemic of diet related disease that Katie was really talking about.
 - Here's the dream--rehabbing all these old buildings to include things like a produced pharmacy and food hub, an outdoor demonstration kitchen where we can harvest vegetables and fruits and bring them over into Each Veterans had to prepare them. An outdoor classroom for skill building training.
 - Again, the regenerative farm aspect of it, an orchard with fruit trees, rehabbing the old greenhouse. We do not want to tear it down. It's really a testament to, a different generation.
 - We want to preserve the history of what the garden was and show what the garden can be again. Next slide please. So, this is the same slide.
 - It just shows you a larger scale picture of what the garden space is now. We're finalizing a partnership with GrowGood now and they'll be on that back acre of land and that's where they'll have. If their home base for the training program when we think about the different buckets of programming we're going to be having in the garden, the 1st is the programming we have already started, which is wellness programming and restoring the garden as a clinical space.
 - From my time as a primary care provider at HVAC, I started in 2020, which was the height of the COVID pandemic and so many of my patients struggling with mental illness and said the telemedicine classes really aren't working with me.
 - We wanted to have classes and things to do outdoors and reactivating the garden as a space where Veterans working on managing their mental illness and can interact with other Veterans in a low-stress environment but also have time for themselves, is an innovative solution and something many other health systems can't offer their patients.
 - We have gardening for whole health classes, and we hope to expand the programming (administered through the VA) but have them be offered in the garden as well. These would be our integrative medicine and whole health mindfulness classes, which include movement-based therapies such as yoga, which has proven to have positive benefits to both mental and physical health.

- We'll have a nutrition component as well and want all of us to expand our idea of what a clinical space can look like because it doesn't just have to be, you know, sterilized.
- Buildings with four walls that a small clean with disinfection, but that we can really have our clinicians in the garden meeting our Veteran patients where they're at.
- If you're Veteran patients or if you know any other Veteran patients, this is our current schedule.
- A programming, so we have our gardening for whole health classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.
- Our Monday class is taught by an Air Force Veteran and does therapeutic quarter culture. Our Wednesday class is taught by Trish, who is an integrative medicine nurse, navy Veteran, and master gardener, so she's amazing and has been such an asset to the garden, and then Jen teaches our Friday class and on Tuesdays and Thursdays we have open garden hours.
- Here is a photo from this past Monday.
- Claude, who's a Veteran all the way on the right, he actually used to work at the garden back in 2005 and was so excited to be back in the garden, and Curtis on the left grew up in Arkansas farming, and so they're both at the domiciliary right now and we're so excited to have a space to connect with their own heritage and past time and connect with each other on a different level with, shared experiences that hadn't come up at the domiciliary.

Ms. Allen: I'm also one of the co-chairs of the food security committee, and so we're trying to find creative ways to provide food.

- For Veterans living both on and off campus and, the garden has the potential to maximize to grow food for almost a thousand Veterans.
- We love the idea of having something like a pharmacy.
 - The food is medicine movement is really growing nationally, and we want to empower our VA clinicians to be able to write prescriptions for produce that vets can come and fill the same way that they write pro prescriptions for Ozempic and at a much less cost.
 - Currently, all the produce that's grown on the garden either goes to Veterans participating in the program or we bring the leftovers to the food distribution on Wednesdays. It also helps to supply our healthy teaching kitchen.
 - We had the initiative; we were working with Westside food bank. They were saying the number one most requested thing is tomatoes, but food banks have a really hard time with tomatoes because they're hard to store and they're hard to transport.
 - We did something called the Thousand tomato project and we partnered with UCLA help. We planted a thousand tomato.
- We harvested almost 400 pounds of tomatoes, which we distributed to Veterans living at the EULS, Veterans that came to the food distribution, etc. So, really a

success story of the potential of the garden.

- There is also the benefit of jobs and skills training.
 - finalizing our relationship with GrowGood, they're proposing a 300-hour job training program that will employ 30 Veterans per year.
 - It will be a paid training program very similar to CGW Tea, and it will help build skills to make Veterans more employable in jobs related to food. Think restaurants, think nurseries, maybe some of them will go on to be big farmers but those basic gardening skills to be able to find jobs.

Ms. Fruin: When thinking about the impact of this project, this is going to be an incredible resource to promote Veteran food security.

- We'll be able to connect patients not only with food but fresh, nutrient dense food that hasn't been sitting for days in a storage facility.
 - It will also have a huge impact on promoting Veteran mental health and we hope it will be a place where Veterans who may be hesitant to engage with mental health care through our traditional model of an appointment through their primary care doctor through working in the garden and meeting VA clinicians there might be more open to engaging further with their mental and primary health care.
- As Jen just mentioned the last slide, opportunities for Veterans to increase employment or to just build skills to be able to provide for themselves or for their neighbors, and then a huge thing is preventing and treating diet related disease. Diet related disease is the leading cause, preventable.
 - With disability and death in this country, and I think that we all must ask ourselves, why can, as primary care providers, Jen and I prescribe medications that are hundreds of dollars a month, but we can't prescribe at this time?
 - For example, let us make a salad with olive oil to get that mix of mono and poly- saturated fats instead.
- This is just going to give us a totally different way to engage our dieticians and really talk to our patients about the lifestyle changes that are the foundations of preventing disease and managing disease to live a healthy life.
 - At the bottom, you can see many of our Veterans and gardeners, who anecdotally have said that some of them have reduced the medications they're on and are feeling a lot better just from having access to nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables and a community of people that they can keep coming back to.

Ms. Allen: We had one more slide that didn't make it in, but we have started to collect some preliminary data from the Veterans that are participating in programming at the garden.

- There's a tool, which is a series of thermometers, that the Bronx VA was using in partnership with the Bronx Botanic Garden, and they were measuring depression, pain, loneliness, and stress levels.

- We've started collecting these on all our Veterans participating, and it's very preliminary.
- Our N is very small, but thus far we've shown a four-point reduction in the stress levels of the Veterans that participate in the programming, a three point production reduction in their pain, a four point reduction in their depression and a three point reduction in their loneliness scores, and we know all of these things are contributing factors to Veterans suicides, so if getting Veterans out in the garden can help reduce the rates of suicidality amongst our Veterans here at GLA, I think it's a very worthwhile investment.
- So, yeah, so that's it. If anybody has any questions or comments for us, we're happy to talk more and we're very grateful that you gave us the time to come and present.

Mr. Zenner: I appreciate the presentation. Really appreciate the recent tour. I think the question in my head is, can we afford to not do this? And can we afford to not support your guys' vision, which is very aligned talking to some of the Vietnam vets that were around back when the original garden was created?

- An ultimate solution towards making sure that our men and women that are housed on that campus have some real options to get outside their apartment, get outside their head and really, get some healing going.
- enthusiastically supportive of this, this work and I would recommend to the rest of the board if you have not gone down and toured this space, it, it just walking through the space, you'll see the vision that Jennifer and Katie lined up for us today just come to come to life.
- It's an amazing opportunity to provide a lot of support and I think all of us will feel and be able to sleep a lot better at night once you kind of grasp what's, what the potential is here.

Chairman Begland: The plan sounds extraordinary, and I would love to write a check to fund this.

Ms. Allen: As a VA employee, I cannot solicit donations, but we are working with GrowGood to apply for some grant funding.

Ms. Fruin: It's easier to bring money in through the UCLA health side.

- We reached out to some of the contractors, just to get estimates of some of the capital costs.
- I don't think we showed a photo, but we have an amazing old greenhouse. I think the dimensions are like 30 by 80 and that.
- from talking to some of our Vietnam war Veterans was a sacred space on campus and really a central gathering point for many Veterans. The foundations of the building are strong. It's a brick building, but to take the roofing off, the contractors estimated that would be, you know, maybe in.
- On the \$550000 range, and so there are some significant capital costs. What

we've really been hoping to focus on is just getting more Veterans in the space and activating the garden.

- What would be essential to us is we visited the Long Beach VA that they have an amazing 2.5- acre garden. It's much smaller than ours, but they have a, a Veteran who went through compensated work therapy and now manages the garden, a halftime farmer of the area.
- Need a farmer to help maintain the plants, we're limited in how we can expand production without having more staff on site.
 - We have a fundraiser through UCLA with the thought being that if we could fundraise for a farmer position, UCLA could hire them as a contractor and they could come in as a, without compensation, credentials to the VA, and so that's really where we're starting.
 - Right now, we have the donation of garden beds, but we don't have soil to fill them.
 - There are still some basic supply costs like soil, seedlings, fertilizers, etc.
- We got a donation of beds for the garden, but we don't have soil to fill the beds. So, there are also just some supply basic supply costs like soil, seedlings, fertilizers, and other things that keep the garden flourishing.
- For the entire project, it will probably cost around 1.3 million.
 - That would be the capital costs of greenhouse renovation building, building an outdoor classroom with shade, and a demonstration kitchen, which I believe will revolutionize how we talk to our patients about nutrition because we can prepare meals with them.
 - I believe the kitchen will be a huge social event because you can access healthy food, and we already have a teaching kitchen right outside CTRS on Fridays.

Chairman Begland: A question for Rob Merchant, could the agency use lease revenue monies to pay for this revamp?

Mr. Merchant: It probably could, Rob, we would have to look at that. One of the challenges we have right now is that the balance in the lease revenue account is running down currently. So, it's always a question of requirements and demand.

- This is an incredibly exciting project and while we cannot, as federal employees, go out and fundraise, we can respond to opportunities and make people aware of the need and this is where the partnership.
- This is where our academic affiliate becomes important and the conversation that we're having now ties very nicely into the one that we had immediately preceding this and others.
- This goes back to that question of, "what are Veterans going to do here and what are the things that give people meaning purpose in life and help ease that transition from homelessness into housing?"
- As always, I'll defer to, to my partners in, in council to draw the boundaries around that requirement.
- we have used those funds primarily towards supporting our efforts to develop

housing and housing options on campus first, but I don't think that this would be outside the realm of possibilities.

Chairman Begland: Interested to hear what other board members think.

- I believe it's one of the most beneficial and merit-based ideals we've heard in a long time.
- I don't think anyone has come to this board and said with a million dollars, we could do something that has this much impact.
- I am curious if other board members would be willing to make a recommendation, we would like this to be treated as a priority by the agency.

Ms. Munn: I would like to make this recommendation and we can work on that.

Ms. Branca: I couldn't agree more. We've been doing more and more food and security work gardening in our nonprofit work in New York and our families love it and report it has helped with trauma.

- It's too early to see if the diabetes has gone down and hypertension, etc., but I am excited about doing it.
- If we can do this on the campus, I would vote for it every day.

Mr. Merchant: One other thing to add is that Jen Allen has been an amazing leader, not just on this particular project, but on similar projects across our whole healthcare system.

- We are going to start a beekeeping program initially at our support campus and I am incredibly excited about.
- We now do things like battlefield acupuncture and healing touch at all our outpatient clinics across our entire healthcare system and the ability of people to walk in for the services at designated times at outpatient clinics as far away as San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria and other places.
- This keeps us connected around things that matter to Veterans and is important work.

Ms. Barrie: We remember when the garden was thriving and every Saturday there was a Farmer's Market.

- We remember how disappointing it was for the Veterans when it shut down.
- It's such an integral part of the healing process and I commend you for going forward with it.
- What you're pursuing is wonderful.

Mr. Zenner: If you need a co-applicant who's a local government jurisdiction, we are very willing to partner and make sure all the money gets over to the garden.

- Received Katie's email and are going to make an introduction to our

philanthropic partners over at Southern California grant makers.

- I am going to encourage them to have the funders meet at the garden itself because of how powerful it is.
- And one other thing, not to bring up a sore spot, but UCLA and Brentwood School, it seems like this is a golden opportunity to help a lot of Veterans out in a very meaningful way with a very limited amount of money.
- Just wondering if we've engaged with either of them around the costs and maybe that's something else that we can pursue to get this funded as soon as possible.

Mr. Peck:

- Maybe some of you know, probably a lot of you don't know that Grow Good was started by Brad Pregerson, who is Judge Pregerson's grandson, so he is delighted to be involved in this effort.
- As you mentioned, he's already doing a garden at Bell Shelter, which has been very successful, and there is a lot of agriculture money available for growing food.
- Keep us updating on securing grant money.

Chairman Begland:

- I think the board may make a recommendation to the extent you can't get that money immediately; we also make a recommendation to the agency that some of the least revenue funds be treated as a local priority.
- This strikes me as an ideal example of the value of taking those least revenue monies and instead of them going back to the US treasury in Washington, a local leadership saying that a project that has great local merit that gets addressed.
- Thank you again. Just for the record, just to assure everyone that these revenues do not go back to treasury.

Ms. Allen: We thank you all for your support and, you know, thank you for enabling us to be so creative in the way that we're caring for Veterans. I think it's going to be instrumental as we move forward with having all these Veterans permanently on campus.

BREAK

OAEM / Veterans Collective

Tyler Monroe, Senior Vice President, Thomas Safran & Associates

Teresa Banko, Project Director, U.S. Vets, Oscar Alvarado, Vice President, Housing Development at Century Housing

Ms. Banko: Thanked the board and was honored to present the progress that has gone on since the last meeting.

- These reflect considerations of what Veterans would like to see in the community, a particular interest in safety and security, which I've outlined some of the measures that we've taken most recently here and engaged in with VA.

- It includes implementing the wider campus services and amenities.
- It includes the interface between the services building three 300 and building 13 and other buildings that will house services that are.
- What Veterans over the years have told us that they want and need and most recently in this survey iteration have outlined are important to especially those living on the campus. So, digging into this slide, a safety and powered community, lots of progress in the backbone community building, as you probably know, and we've talked about before.
- The backbone established and uses a collective impact model and that includes establishing a common agenda with stakeholders. There are many different stakeholders across the campus and community wide as we touched on earlier.
- We have worked to develop measurements and methods of looking at different challenges, developing platforms for continuous communication, establishing, and implementing, joint and aligned plans of actions, which are especially important around safety and security.
- And then engaging with funders and other resources to bring opportunities to the campus like that you just heard about in the presentation originally was a funder for US sets and collective partner sites.
- Here's been a lot of common areas safety and security planning detail that's gone on most recently with building 300 you see some of the illustrations show the different types of security that are considered for that building.
- There's been a lot of conversation about joint/shared spaces community spaces and how those will be managed.
- You can see here a diagram of the different types of security measures, things like electric locks and card readers and, you know, which way do doors lock, how do we ensure that resident spaces remain resident spaces and those public in community spaces are usable.
- How do we manage and maintain that?
 - These are all conversations that are occurring, you can see on the bottom right, there's a security office diagram, there's been a shared commitment to one provider among TBC that's elite services, so we're working in conjunction with them.
 - Building 300 will involve having not only a stationary security guard, but also some roving, there will be, those who work in the building trained in the different security measures, not unlike the other EUL housing buildings.
- There are a lot of security measures that are put in place.
 - VA recently amassed a safety and security working group. There were three different working groups and that went on from about July until September and out of that came a list of recommendations.
 - Deep dive into the different issues seen not only amongst residents but staff, much like with the resident server that we just discussed, Andrew Strain and I went out to the different buildings, talked directly to residents, got their feedback, and really try to understand what was occurring in terms of their thoughts on safety and security, not only in the buildings but among the community.

- So, you'll see here that the security hub that we're looking at that will monitor, have top down, you know cameras to all the shared community spaces under the collective. The physical security, and of course that that campus wide security safety planning.
- There was the launch of the inner campus communication system, so we have done a soft launch on that.
- We have been using a platform called Pride, which has a platform area where presidents and others are able to communicate with the Veterans Collective and especially with the opening of the Services Center, the temporary services center in place of building 300, on the campus.
- If you haven't been out here, we're adjacent to Building 100 which is under construction, but you'll see a building a structure that's gray and blue. And if you come into this center there are things like resources and amenities. We also have resource boards.
- We not only under the collective have raised a sharing library that that is external, so there's about 16 different categories that anyone in the community can access. But we've translated those into hard copies and lots of conversations about how information is shared on the campus, the Veterans, how do we.
- Get word out, how do we communicate with each of the different buildings? These are granular things, but I think really speak to some of the conversations that were had earlier this morning about getting that information.
- We've been working carefully with VA on vetting and engaging community partners, things like the nutrition working group, which is one of the partner and provider alliance members, working in conjunction with the food bank that's going on in Building 300.

How do we make these connections early? How do we make sure that everyone's growing in the same direction and how do we do it in conjuncture with VA departments, with subject matter experts all around us, and make these connect connections happen the way that they need in order to serve Veterans in the best way as possible?

- There's a lot of systems thinking that goes into that. There are multiple different categories that are examined, not just those 16 different resource categories, but things like security transportation, amenities, those wider discussions about the things that Veterans, which find valuable on the campus, nutrition, there's faith-based resources.
- There's just a plethora of different items for coordination, which the collective cannot do alone and really relies on the partnership of VA and other community partners.
- you'll see here a list of the different items that we're working on, including that very important point and piece that we talked about earlier today, the continuous feedback collection.
- That feedback collection has been ongoing since the collective was contracted to the VA. That includes both initial surveys that were put together by the developer team, feedback from the federal register that's been submitted every time feedback has been open, joint work we did, lots of qualitative feedback over

thousands of events over the past years since the Collective came, it's been opened. It also includes joint work we did, lots of qualitative feedback over thousands of events over the past, years since the collective came into existence.

- All those things really inform our work on the campus.
- I wanted to talk about the services and amenities progress. At the root of the community, as Rob and others noted, there is that therapeutic community approach.
- Residents have responded well to that approach so far. There have been lots of questions about the number and types of security guards for instance that might be needed.
- Collectives models as a lead service providers model that we use is called the therapeutic community.
- Within that, and working in conjunction with BASH teams, and the BASH protocols as they exist, we adopted the Housing Retention Action Plan.
- It's a 4-step plan that really has worked in some substantial ways to keep Veterans in Building 207 as the first building, but we anticipate for further buildings to keep Veterans healthy, happy, and housed and address issues in real time and account for that conversation between services and property management.
- You can see here some of the dual roles between property management and case management.
- You can read that on the slide can read that on your own. Get more of an idea,
- The interface and the HRAP also brings the voice of the Veteran to the conversation.
- It's noticing that there's an issue, there's been reports from other Veterans in the building, and property management, services available to draw the Veteran into that conversation and find out what's really going on with them as opposed to a punitive, non-preventive model of looking at issues and dealing with them retroactively.
 - This is a preventive measure that we've put in place. It appears to be working. There have been to this point NO evictions in Building 407 and it opened a year ago.
 - Additionally, lots of joint work undertaken with VA other developer services partners, so spreading that model across the different buildings and VASH partnerships information really has been a big part of both the backbone under TBC and US Vets as a lead service provider, finding the best ways to do things like incorporating new tools and actions that case managers and others on the ground can take.
 - There's been the multiyear BASH RFP that's been awarded for the upcoming buildings, as you know, we'll hear more about, there are two that will the opening in January that we're very, very excited about, but lots of joint events, trainings, initiatives with BASH, VA and community partners, been all of these different wonderful initiatives that have gone on, theater Art starts in February where we're starting training for Veterans.

- Who would like to be involved in training with the Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles Literacy Workforce
 - there was another Veterans construction career for health here and fifteen Veterans showed up, who wanted to work on bringing this housing community to fruition.
- And finally, the wider community, the macro community, if you will, there's been a slate of building in canvas events that have been completed thus far.
- Lots of supportive efforts for the residents growing, and again that includes creating those connections.
- How do we get information about what's going on with the Veterans Garden to Veterans in the wider community? How are we responsive to hearing what Veterans needs are and able to build programming.
 - One of those ways has really been direct interface.
 - We did implement, along with community partners and the tremendous support of VA, the Bunker social peer community gathering. That incorporates not just resources, but also trained Veteran peers, which is very important.
 - Veteran peer work is a different model that is not specifically clinical but opens the door and has trained peers who know how to have those conversations if a Veteran might be needing something.
 - That group has grown from approximately 10-15 Veterans to 70-100 Veterans coming out into what eventually allegedly will be the town center outside Building 306 every Monday. There are lots of conversations happen there and lots of feedback is collected.
- Between April 2024 and 1 November, there have been 1388 peers served at one event on that Monday at Bunker Social. So that includes Veterans who are unsheltered and finding resource there.
 - They are able to get housed through the transitional housing line, residents on the campus, Veterans from the wider county.
 - V PAN is a partner, DAV is a partner, American Legion is a partner, VA sections are partners, and it's a tremendous effort.
 - I'm very proud and excited to share that.
 - These events are a great way to get information to Veterans, we are vetting the partners carefully, though, making sure they're reputable and have the best interest of Veterans at heart.
 - With that, I will hand it off to Brian D'Andrea

Mr. D'Andrea: My name is Brian Deandra Senior Vice President at Century. And we wanted to start with tests today and share with you the amazing Using community that is emerging. And when we think back to our original selection under the RFP from, that summer of 2018. We were tasked with and ultimately selected to create community. And you're going to hear a lot about the housing today.

- There's lots of pictures of progress that we're, we're thrilled to share with you, but I think what excites us most is this emerging community that that Tess just spoke about. It doesn't happen on its own. It takes manpower, its women power, it takes

partner agencies, it takes funding.

- A lot of this backbone work that test has just spoken to has been philanthropically funded, and I want to acknowledge whilst Cargo as one of the key sponsors of that effort. So hopefully you get a sense of all the activity and opportunities for engagement for our residents, which is really important as we seek to promote recovery amongst our residential population.
- I'll turn my attention to Building 404. This is Century's first project that we broke ground on in November 2022. It sits right in front of Building 207. We are rumbling towards completion early next year.

We have a couple of progress photos, we're into finishes and the interiors, the building is coming out beautifully.

- It's a three story, type five building on a podium with some subsurface parking.
- We are wrapping up the site work and landscaping on the outside of the building.
- Several months back we initiated the lease up process and had been organizing weekly meetings with our partners at the VA and the housing authority.
- One of the slides is slightly outdated—it shows 54 active referrals. We have eight applications that are approved as of earlier this week, so we're making good progress towards the 72 homes that we ultimately will fill in this building.

Our next set of buildings that are under construction are buildings 156 and 157.

- These are the old tuberculosis hospital buildings, beautiful assets that sit up on the north campus fronting the 205-208-209 quad. The first of these buildings, 657, represent 112 units and we are moving towards completion in the late spring next year (May 2025)
- Of those 112 Veteran homes, we have set aside 35 of those units specifically for Veterans with a mental illness.
 - The building will feature extensive case management, both through VASH case management as well as several positions that will be funded by the building directly.
 - the building is a beautiful example of the Spanish mission revival architecture. You can see the couple up on the roof, the south facade of Building 157 in the lower right-hand corner. There are some amazing spaces in this building with a lot of natural light with beautiful landscaping.
 - We will keep courtyards in between these buildings.
 - They will be beautifully landscaped.
 - We are onto drywall and making good progress.
- The last Project that Century has under construction is Building 158 This is the sister project to Building 156 and 157.
- On the eastern side of those two building and will contain 49 homes for Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- We broke ground in November of last year, so we're just about a year in and expect to reach completion in the summertime of next year.
- These buildings are a little bit behind 156 and 157 as you can see the rough

framing that's happening.

- We had to add a new roof, to building 158 to mirror the gabled roofs that are on 56 and 57.
- Our metal studs and some of the MEP work that's on ongoing. Next slide please. A lot of seismic retrofit work had to happen. You can see some of these light wells that have been created on one of the facades.
- The last thing I want to mention is that in connection with Building 156 and 157.
 - We have undertaken nearly \$20 million worth of streetscape and pedestrian and active transportation infrastructure work throughout the north campus that will connect all of these new buildings to each other and then down to the west side of the campus and where the big blue bus lines will be available to shuttle residents to various places throughout the region.
 - This is work that is being funded through the State Department of Housing and Community Development. There is a component of, IIGF which stands for Info Infrastructure Grant Funding, as well as AHSIC, which stands for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program.
 - These programs are oriented around reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting active transportation pedestrian bicycle, and public transportation.
 - A lot of effort has gone into this given all the surrounding work that is happening.
 - Here you can see just some of the street widening work, new curbs, things of this nature, new sidewalks, etc.
 - This is the repaving of McArthur. And with that I'll turn it over to, our friends over at Thomas Safran Associates (TSA), Parisa Roshan.

Ms. Roshan: Thank you for the opportunity to brief. I'll give you guys a quick update today on building 402 which we're now calling by its permanent name, which is 701 MacArthur. As you all have seen on prior briefings, it's a modular new construction project.

- We have 118 new homes for formerly homeless Veterans, and we have two units set aside for staff, so we will always have two members of our team on site at this property.
 - As you can see, we are nearing construction completion. We're on track for early 2025 hopefully by the end of January.
 - It is a garden style building, so there's a lot of outdoor space, it's on three acres, ample land and landscaping, walkways, and open areas for Veterans to gather on this parcel.
 - Top left is the primary entrance which there's still some work left to be done, but we're looking forward to finishing up the landscaping and all the site work and being complete sometime in January (referring to slides).
 - That's just another angle from MacArthur, our future community room (referring to slides).
 - We are happy to have completed the phase one infrastructure work that was all along McArthur earlier this year, which gave way for Century's

team to step in with their important ASIC work that will benefit all projects around this area.

- We're glad to be working in partnership with them on all of the MacArthur work.
- We're really pleased with the progress that's been made.
- We have 187 referrals at this point. Our team has been doing interviews and processing applications on site at the domiciliary and at CTRS.
 - The GLA and OEM teams have done so much to help drive referrals to this project.
 - We have more than 1:1 ratio at this point and we look forward to getting as many Veterans approved and into their homes as quickly as possible.

Mr. Peck: We are doing a lot of the case management for the various buildings, but we are also developing this building.

- It is 38 units with one manager unit.
 - It is women female Veteran priority. We know that there are women out there, particularly women with children who have very few resources available to them.
 - We want to make sure that they have, a, a priority place on campus. You're looking at the, the rendering there as the top two stories. There's a 3rd story that is below that that faces only to the east. And there's a secure entrance on the south side of the building, so, it will provide real security for women.
 - There's a garden behind the building, which overlooks the vet garden that was talked about earlier and we think it's an excellent spot so that women will feel secure there on the edge of campus.
 - The abatement and demolition are complete, and we anticipate the certificate of occupancy in April 2026.
 - We're bringing female Veterans services to this building, and we've had a program for eight or nine years called Women Vets on Point, which provides a counseling and services for women Veterans, and they are already visiting campus so that will be providing additional services aside from the VASH case management to the women in that building.
 - We've gutted the building in that upper right (the 3rd floor on the ground level)
- For Building 300, we have just been awarded low-income housing tax credits, which happened two days ago, so we anticipate closer financing and start of construction by June 2025 with about a 20-month construction schedule. This is the support service building on the north campus.
 - We've talked about two hubs on campus, one that support a service building which is Building 302, the town hall building in the town square, which will be the social hub.
 - We've already talked about having a dining facility and store there.
 - There is a food court on the north campus, and this will provide a whole variety of social services for Veterans and a real gathering place for

Veterans on and off campus.

- Building 300 has 15,000 square foot of support service space, so all our community partner will have space in there. There'll be a west side food bank that will be specific to Veterans there.
 - There will also be a barber shop, US Vet staff, and homeless prevention.
 - We want this building to serve Veterans on and off campus as we drive down the homeless population, as we have done in many communities across the country, we want to be able to provide those homeless prevention services, mental health and employment services that will prevent Veterans from becoming homeless in the first place.
 - We're very excited to get this up and running, and at the moment, Tess is running our service center. We have a double wide trailer next to building that is currently providing service.
 - All those services that Tess has talked about, this will be the permanent home to all of those services Tess talked about, and the backbone will be headquartered here, so we'll be able to coordinate those services across campus.

Ms. Roshan: We're happy that Building 300 did receive that tax credit allocation so they can kickstart the hub for the north campus. We are pushing ahead with the town center projects, 408 being the first one, and we will be applying for tax credits in January.

- We look forward to starting construction late in 2025 (that's our most recent rendering on the bottom we're building a hundred new units for formerly homeless Veterans)

Mr. D'Andrea:

Building 409 is the second 2nd development in this same area. This is the phase two area of the campus and in around that is currently known as the town center.

- This project consists of 17 units, and we anticipate starting construction in November of next year following an award of tax credits that we will be applying to, like TSA, in January of this coming year.
 - We anticipate that this project will have a wonderful.
 - Support healing and recovery for our residents. We're excited about that.
 - Broadly speaking, this picture paints the picture of where we are in terms of the minimum 112 homes that were promised as part of the original settlement agreement from back in 2016.
 - With all of the projects that we've spoken to that are in pre-development which weren't discussed today, but we will be just under 100 homes short of that minimum target of 1,200 units and so it is quite remarkable that we have gotten to this place within essentially six years of our selection
 - We were selected in November of 2018 and have come a very, very long way. I love the fact that we opened today's presentation with you on the community because you can see now these being delivered, residents moving in, and this community really blooming.

Chairman Begland: What's the date, by which you project you'll get to 1,200 units? What date by which we expect those 1,200 units will be delivered or starting off with this pipeline here. What's the approximate date for that 1,100 units that you have forecasted?

Mr. D'Andrea: I would want to look and get you a good number. I don't want to promise a date. It is within reach.

- We can follow up with you with a specific target that we're working towards.

Chairman Begland:

- What about the category under construction phase one. Do we know when you're going to, it looks like 780?

Mr. D'Andrea:

- 401 B, that is the one I don't know if Core Companies reported out to you, but it's our 2nd phase that is going to be delivered soon with Buildings 402 and 404.
- Those are within the foreseeable future; all will be delivered next year and begin the leased-up process.
- Building 201 will be April 2026

Chairman Begland: So, in a year and a half, all those homes under construction will have been delivered?

Mr. D'Andrea: Correct.

- What has enabled all that progress are the incredible financing commitments that we've received from the private sector, from the public sector, from the VA itself.
- This slide shares where all those commitments have come from organized by project status, so completed projects, under construction, projects that are closing, and projects and predevelopment.
 - In total, we estimate close to \$900 million of financing commitments have been leveraged and that number will surely go up as buildings 408 and 409 move at 256 in the year ahead with financing applications and anticipated awards.
 - When all is done, we will be well north of a billion dollars in financing commitments that will have enabled this transformation.
 - We just received a \$10 million, philanthropic donation for the wellbeing center in building 300, so, and have several meetings with, people with real money. To the point, hopefully we'll bring, be bringing more of that in.

That's a great segue to the next slide, which is the Veteran Promise Campaign, which I think you're best equipped to speak to, Steve.

Mr. Peck:

- We're continuing to have meetings with the foundations.
- Some came from the Schmidt Family Foundation, who we've been talking to for many years.
- Rick Caruso is going to be visiting campus, and several other significant family and family foundations will be visiting us.
- At this point, our Veteran Promise Campaign has raised about a hundred million dollars. Our goal is a 180 million.
- That will include an endowment that will continue to provide funding for the support services on campus, so we're making good progress, but we've got a ways to go.
- We're well underway with the construction at this point and 700 units (closer to 800) will be done by 2026.
- We're making the connectivity improvements that the streets and sidewalks on that north campus need a lot of work. We constantly see Veterans in wheelchairs rolling down the middle of the street, so these infrastructure improvements are going to make it safer and easier for Veterans to get down to the metro, which will be completed in 2028.
- We're continuing to design and raise funds for the Veterans Plaza area. We'll have two or three projects, groundbreaking quick and I've already talked about the Veteran Promise Campaign, and we still have some legislation that we need to provide the ongoing amenities that we all envision on campus.
- So, we're working with our lobbyist in DC on that. Hopefully we can get that done over this next year.
- I think all in all, together, we've made remarkable progress.
- We will now open the floor up for questions.

Chairman Begland: You guys have made incredible progress. It's great to see how many housing units. I wanted to ask a question to begin with about the infrastructure. I think it's extraordinary that you've been able to find \$19 million to complete some of that infrastructure. I mean, one of the concerns I've always had is that you have a hard time assembling funding for things other than housing, but it looks like you've done a great job here on a critical need. Do you think you can go back to the state and obtain more funding in the future for infrastructure around some of these units?

Mr. D'Andrea

- I think it's possible that there could be future ASIC in our IG awards.
- those programs are constantly evolving the latest ASIC round is out, you know, so we'd have to, you know, it really depends on what, what is the nature of the improvements? Do those improvements reduce greenhouse gas emissions?
- It's possible and we're constantly scouring the available resources that are out there to finance our projects.
- The IG capital that we accessed was of a variety that was meant for multi-phase kind of catalytic projects, so it was a perfect fit for this project. That was more of a

- one time, type source.
- Another issue we have with the IG right now and other state programs is that HCD, the State Department of Housing and community development is essentially very limited in terms of the capital it has to deploy.
 - talk this past year of a \$10 billion housing bond. It didn't make the November ballot, and the hope is that it will make the midterms ballot in another year or two.
 - we need more resources at the state level and county level. We have some new resources that are available to us through Measure A though those will be rolled out in the months and years ahead.

Chairman Begland: That is very encouraging., we were thrilled that the state invested that kind of capital on federal property to enable this transformation and we're very grateful.

Ms. Branca: Hi everyone, at every board meeting I've attended, I've asked this exact question and it's never been incorporated into this presentation. I'm still looking for the unit breakdown, unit size breakdown for the developments. It is quite possible that all these buildings are being built with thoughtfulness around family composition, including Veteran families, people who become pregnant and need larger spaces, people who have home attendance, who need larger spaces, but it's hard for us to tell if we can't see that information. I would ask again if we could incorporate that into the next presentation and then anything you can offer today so that we can get a better sense of what's available.

Ms. Roshan: There are seven projects currently under construction at West LA. The composition and the unit sizes vary from project to project.

- For the sake of brevity, we probably didn't include it in today's briefing. I didn't know that it was something specific you had asked for previously. That having been said, we can easily put that information together for you, it exists and our partners at OAEM share that with you directly.
- Please know that our team is very thoughtful building by building to make sure that we're meeting the needs and the data and what we're hearing from Veterans, how many of them have families or children or how many of them are hoping to age and place and may need an attendance in the next couple of years.
- This is permanent supportive housing and we're not building things for a couple of years or five or six.
- Ten years it's really in perpetuity. So, we hear your concern and your question, and we can get something over to you.

Chairman Begland: Yes, Nicole has requested this a few times before. My understanding is most of the units that are being built are studio, and there's a few one bed there's a good portion of one bedroom and there's none or virtually NO two bedrooms. To Nicole's point, is there enough diversity?

Mr. D'Andrea: We will share that information, but you are right. The early projects did feature an abundance of studios in the subsequent phases we've done more, and more one bedroom, for instance, building 158 is entirely one bedroom.

- We do have some two bedrooms sprinkled and across the region it has been challenging to fill two-bedroom Veteran units. The nice thing about what one bedroom is they can accommodate household compositions between one and three members, so we want as much flexibility in these buildings as possible to meet the Veteran need as it exists.
- We will be sure to share that information. We have a nice matrix that we shared with this committee previously on the AMI issue and I think what we can do is add the unit mix to that same matrix so you have it all in one place.

Ms. Cohen:

- I have a few questions. The 1st one is around Building 408
- The meeting that happened this week where I think 300 was approved and 408 was not. Are you all going to resubmit, I assume. And then how does that hold up or does it hold up the project or the parcel release schedule? I am curious how that non-approval contributes to the timetable.

Ms. Roshan: Yes, 300 was selected. We were next in line, like I said, we'll be reapplying come January. At this point, it's not going to hold us up too much. We're working internally to figure out what our new timeline will be, but it should not be too behind for shovels in the ground.

- The timeline we showed earlier shows "Q4" construction and we're not anticipating anything later than that.
- It's hopefully not going to push back our timeline too severely.

Ms. Cohen: Thank you and let me know if you know more in the coming weeks. My next question is something I ask about all the time is voucher allocation. Where are we in terms of voucher allocation to projects and then the worry or maybe it was a past worry about reaching the cap, and isn't relevant anymore about the county.

Mr. D'Andrea: LACHA has provided the vouchers and in the commitments and I know there is an ongoing concern about reaching that cap. I don't think they're there yet.

- There's been a lot of advocacy at the federal level to increase the cap, and that's something that housing authorities across the country have signed onto.
 - To those advocacy efforts, we haven't yet hit that threshold though.
 - The projects that are in construction right now and anticipated are already allocated. They receive a commitment prior to construction closing and you sign what's called an agreement and entering a housing assistance payment contract, so you have that commitment locked in at the point of construction closing.

Ms. Cohen: The county won't or couldn't necessarily reallocate those vouchers to a different project if a different project. I don't know, like finished construction sooner, or could they?

Mr. D'Andrea: That is a contract that we sign with the house.

Ms. Cohen: We must be prepared to deliver those and have those vouchers available at the point that the building's being leased up.

- we really are not clear on whether there will be vouchers available, for future projects because we don't know what other projects are going to come through the county pipeline.

Dr. Harris: I don't have newer information than I've shared previously. I just wanted to remind you of what I've said before, which is, there is an ongoing disagreement from what I can tell between LACDA calculations regarding its cap and HUD headquarters calculations regarding its cap.

- Whether they hit the cap or not is therefore not known. It's also a consistently moving target because it's based on a denominator that is likely to issue new vouchers either this year or future and that would change the calculation and would push out the cap.
- The reason I raised my hand is I think one thing you could do as a board here is request a presentation about this topic and invite not only LACDA but invite HUD headquarters.
- Let's have everybody in the same conversation because that's the piece that doesn't seem to have happened yet. I've asked for that and haven't been able to get that myself, so it's something for the board to consider. It unquestionably has potential bearing on the development of the campus, our ability to hit 1,200 units.

Chairman Begland: What would be the best program office within HUD to ask for it?

Ms. Cohen: I have a contact I could send you.

Chairman Begland: That would be great, Stephanie. I am curious if Brian, Steve, or Parisa have had any conversations with the county supervisors about this topic and this issue, so that when there is a time for a push for LACDA for the county with HUD, that there's political support. Do they even know that this is potentially an issue?

Mr. D'Andrea: I am not certain; we haven't gotten to the place where LACDA has not been able to issue commitments, and we have essentially three additional commitments in hand now that are all moving forward.

- I agree with you that it would be helpful to have, the LACDA Supervisor be aware of this issue.

Ms. Cohen: Yes, I would recommend that you prep the supervisors because I don't know when this will be an issue, but I anticipate that it will be at some point. I have one more question, Steve, is this your last meeting?

Mr. Peck: No, I will be around, but I am retiring as CEO on December 31st and handing it off to Darryl Vincent, who might be on the call.

Ms. Cohen: Good, I saw a news article that you were retiring and as you transition out of the role, I just personally want to say thank you!

- I don't know if you know this Steve, but you, got me interested in Veterans affairs and Veteran advocacy when I was a very young Field Deputy almost 15 years ago working for the state legislature, you brought me to the location in Inglewood and we talked about services and the way that you provide services for Veterans and we've done a lot of good work together and I just want you to know that I personally appreciate you.
- I appreciate you on this project and your commitment to this population is something that's inspired a lot of people, but someone like me who's not a Veteran, I really appreciate you and I appreciate your work and I wanted to take time to thank you in front of all these people.

Mr. Peck: Thank you, I appreciate that, Stephanie. I'll be around to continue to advocate in DC for this site. I want to make sure that it carries on.

- Darryl Vincent will be picking up the ball very effectively.

Chairman Begland: We look forward to meeting him. Thank you, Stephanie. I think all of us feel the same way, Steven. We're glad you have been on board. I know we've had our disagreements from time to time, but I know we are all focused on trying to get the best results for Veterans.

Ms. Sandor: Just a congratulations to the team for this incredible progress. It seems there's a lot happening in 2025 to be excited about, which makes me just want to talk about something we have talked about before, which is how to really use the referral process.

- This may be a question for the One Team staff as well but how is the team that is doing referrals into these buildings and the folks who are going to operate these buildings, thinking about the balance of acuity level among the tenant population so that these buildings are manageable, livable for the tenants.
 - We already have established the total number of units across the campus right now at 1,200 is unprecedented, and not having a balanced mix of acuity level across the individual projects as well as the portfolio buildings is likely to create a lot of strain on staff, case management staff, and, and staff generally on the site.

- How are you all thinking about balancing those referrals? I know to line up with what your restrictions are from funders but ensuring that it isn't for some of these buildings coming online (e.g. Building 404 and 73 units) aren't being entirely filled with that high acuity needs and that there's some balance in the tenant mix.

Mr. Kuhn: This is the challenge we face. We have worked with Sampson Bearers to identify a screening tool that we can use to try to spread the high acuity Veterans in placements across different buildings both on and off campus for the very reasons you described. The challenge for us is that the pace of interest that we get from Veterans is such that if we were to use this faithfully, this instrument and limit the number of high acuity Veterans who are referred to these buildings, these buildings wouldn't be filled.

- We essentially need to refer everybody we can get the buildings filled. I will let Sally Hammitt talk more about this since she is more involved than I am.

Ms. Hammitt: I can echo what you said and while we're excited to balance acuity and think that should be a priority, we're finding it's a little bit more challenging than we originally thought it would be due to the need to refer and ensure that we get the buildings filled.

- One of the things we're talking about is, is there an ability to use VA data points to be able to identify a level of acuity.
 - We have a lot of hotspot reports and a lot of data in the VA system that can lead us to understand the acuity without having to have a personal relationship with the individual.
 - I know there have been some initial conversations with the Homeless Program Office in the past about using a variety of data points to include addiction information, severity of complexities and medical issue.
 - We haven't landed on a solution just yet, but that is front of mind and important to us.
 - We want to fill up these buildings quickly, but we also want to do that in a way that intentionally matches individuals to buildings so that we can create that kind of balance that you're talking about.

Ms. Sandor: Is the pressure to fill the coming from maybe two things or three things. Is it related to LAHSA and urgency around housing Veterans, but what are the key drivers of that urgency and what support would you need to know? There are light tech deadlines that might not enable this, but what would you need to be able to do this thoughtfully? What support would you need to be able to do this in a thoughtful way? Many of us on this board have been in this situation before, you know, once you lease up the building, that's your tenant population, there's obviously attrition and turnover, but that's what you have, and you only get to do it well once. And with so many units coming online next year, how could this board support you?

Ms. Hammitt: The committee and having the resources and the time and the space you need to do that well, so these buildings operate optimally.

- Ultimately, all those things mentioned are urgent, but I will say that the pressure to ensure that Veteran is housed is probably the highest priority for me in particular, but I know I saw Keith had his hand up and we had actually talked about data points to do that.
- I think having the flexibility to be a little bit more intentional about how we fill the buildings would be incredible. There's a lot of work right now, going into by name list case conferencing and even refining that more, specifically to, you know, keep up with the momentum of, of what we're trying to do for the surge and really put some things in place that can be used for the long term. And I will say that doesn't get us to that information that we really need in terms of acuity and things like that, but I'll stop there.

Dr. Harris: Beth, this is specifically for you. You may recall that many moons ago we worked with you in community solutions to build in vulnerability index items into Homes and we use that in terms of reports we provided to community solutions supporting hundred thousand homes campaign.

- Those items are still there, and one of the things that the team has offered is to essentially build a little acuity report out of those. And my question for you, because I haven't kept up with the literature, I know the speed act fell out of favor.
- I don't know if the vulnerability index did. I don't know if those are the best items, but we have a huge advantage in the sense that they're already in the system.
- We've got years of data with it.
- I would love to talk to you about that and get your take.

Ms. Sandor: I'd be happy to follow up offline like how we could give you some what information. Have on that and support any way we can.

Chairman Begland: I wanted to add this briefly, but we have a matching contract that is starting with the Military and Veterans Affairs, Jim's Shop.

- We hope that that will help us speed these referrals.
- Another downside is if we don't get these referrals quickly, this is very much a use it or lose it situation. We have a couple of Project Based Vouchers (PVB) referrals where we had to let go of because we couldn't fill them fast enough.
- if the choice is not filling the units or maybe putting too much acuity in it, we're going to put in too much acuity because we don't want to lose units. So that is the economics of this, the rules are inflexible, and they have their deadlines.

Ms. Sandor: Thank you all for those clarifications, it's helpful.

- Are there things the board can do to be supporting you to, given the constraints of high tech and others, any support or expertise we all can provide or cover or

conversations to help make this as balanced as possible, I think it will serve the entire project to have buildings that are balanced in the acuity level long term but thank you for your thoughtfulness.

Mr. Peck: Thank you for bringing this up. We talk about this a lot because we have large sites.

- The therapeutic community really helps with that putting since housing first, the acuity level of our Veterans has gone up, so we've had to add a professional staff.
- We're working here in California with the state to add more mental health, assistance. There's California Veterans, the CVHI Health Initiative, which will add mental health professionals to our staff.
- We're aware that there's going to be a lot of significantly disabled Veterans in this project.
- The emphasis has been to get homeless Veterans off the street, but we would like to be able to put more workforce housing in here so that there was, there was a good mix so that the Veterans who are more able are lifting those who are less so, and the therapeutic community can help us do that, but
- It's a work in progress and we will learn as we go.

Chairman Begland: I have a follow up question related to that, which is as to one of the buildings, the Frank Yari design building that TPSA has.

- The developer committed to something like 50 of those units being for Veterans with serious mental illnesses, is that correct?

Ms. Roshan: That's correct.

Chairman Begland: I would have to guess that in the next year, that ends up being kind of a real serious resource for deciding for those Veterans that have serious mental illness and what's the correct place to place them. You have a lot of capacity in that building.

- Do you have any senses to how you're, you're using that? One of the questions I've always had is with three different developers now, how are thinking among themselves about referrals?
- Is the agency making a referral, but why wouldn't there be a preference for the time being for Veterans with serious mental illness to refer it to TSA for that building. It's just not how the referrals are done.

Ms. Banko: It's not how the referrals are done because of fair housing. It's also important to note that even though there are 50 set aside for Veterans with several severe mental illness, in that strata are Veterans with various levels of severe mental illnesses and disabilities that require different levels of case management.

- In addition, there are likely are already more Veterans with severe mental illness, in a building like 207 or other buildings because so many Veterans go with undiagnosed and untreated mental illness.
- It is an interesting question, but something could be solved by, you know,

concentrating those with severe mental illness in one building since it's so prevalent within the community.

Mr. Peck: As Tess said, there are 206 and out of the 70 units in building 207 are units for Veterans with severe mental illness and that building is very stable. I think that's the most stable population thus far on campus.

- There have been a couple of challenges, but if we continue to add professional staff, work with VA to provide those services, I think it will work well, but I think in the long-term, it's a desirable mix.

Chairman Begland: I want to ask a follow up question because I need to make sure I understand how this is going to work.

- The TSA building with the 50 units for serious mental illness is not yet open. But what I'm asking is the question of once it's open, why wouldn't there be a preference to refer all Veterans, all homeless Veterans who have serious mental illness to that building as opposed to other buildings? I don't see how that would violate fairness housing laws, am I missing something?

Mr. Peck: We want there to be a mix. It would not be a desirable to put all Veterans with serious illness in one building. Their day-to-day activities are lifted by those others more capable Veterans in the building. We want to spread them out throughout the campus rather than put them all in a single building.

Chairman Begland: I understand the notion of spreading them out so that you don't ever have that grade and acuity. I'm asking if you have a building with 120 units of which 50 are deed restricted to be used for folks with serious mental illness, doesn't that get regarded as a resource for the purposes of making the referrals?

Ms. Roshan: I think Rob, you're saying from a referral standpoint, can we ensure that VA is referring all Veterans on the By Name List who have indicated mental illness? Can we ensure that that entire population is being referred to 407. You're not saying all 118 units set aside for mental mentally ill.

Chairman Begland: Yes.

Ms. Roshan: Okay, I understand now. I think that's more of a question for Mr. Kuhn's team. We received the referrals from them. And we are committed to filling the 50, but in terms of the total population and how they're handling referrals, that's more of a question for John's team.

Chairman Begland: My concern would be that as three people come in, we refer them to three different buildings, to three different developers because of some notion that we must make each of the developers successful.

- I don't think that's the way we should think about this. I think the issue should be, we have certain housing needs, and we have certain housing constraints and 701

has some real practical constraints with the level of acuity we agreed to or that the developer agreed to, so maybe my question is, when you think about referrals is there a notion that we go around the buildings and we try to distribute them across the buildings so that they're each kind of experiencing the same operating risk about filling them or are there a way to kind of referee all the needs of the Veterans, that's a lot of questions, so I'll go to John Kuhn.

Mr. Kuhn: There are multiple competing interests here. I've mentioned a couple of them, the economic ones, the desire to get Veterans and department housing.

- We also offer Veterans choice to where they want to live and offer some options.
- The Veteran might apply or request to apply to multiple units and what happens is because of Veteran choice, we don't exercise total control of where a Veteran goes.
- We're dealing with high rates of disability and serious mental illness (SMI) may prefer to be on the grounds because of access to healthcare.
- We're almost certainly going to see higher rates of SMI and disability on the grounds first because obviously it's PSH, but also the Veterans who have high needs for medical care, this is just easier for them and they often elect it instead of community options, which we have many.
- In fact, most of our placements still go out in the community.

Ms. Sandor: I have referred often to the housing matrix you guys provided back in August and I appreciate that.

- Thank you for adding the unit type as Nicole's requested. In the kind of understanding the unit set aside for the buildings that are coming online in the next year. They all say that they're set aside for homeless, you know, like Veterans homeless, and then the ones in development say homeless or at-risk Veterans. For the buildings 156 and 157 coming online sooner. Is that also true that those set asides are for Veterans who are homeless or at risk or is it 100% for homeless?

Mr. D'Andrea: The earlier buildings tended to have more city county, state capital that have more restrictions such as chronically homeless designations, SMI designations, etc.

- Keep in mind that Buildings 156 and 157 have 35 units set aside for Veterans that present with serious mental illness, so it's not just a 402 condition.
- The expectation is that we carry on and we can we continue using pack deck capital in some.
- You know the tunnel to tower foundation capital, that we will have developments that are less restrictive in terms of those sub populations.
- They could serve them, but they're not restricted to those subpopulations, and then we would be bound by the Leasing Act itself, which requires supportive housing, and that definition of supportive housing involves both the homeless or at risk of homelessness definition so it's less restrictive and that's I think the place that we're looking to get to.

- We can enjoy more balance within our buildings. One other idea that I want to just kind of share that kind of I think is an intersection of everything we're talking about Today is that Veteran choices is incredibly important.
- We've had eight Veterans turn down Building 404 already. They chose not to live there and that is their prerogative, and we respect that.
- Once a Veteran moves into a unit with a project-based voucher, they can port that voucher after living there for a year into any other apartment that a landlord will accept their voucher.
 - keep in mind that a Veteran that lives on the outside with a housing choice voucher or without, they can't go into a voucher-based unit.
 - That PVV unit must be set aside for a Veteran an existing Veteran that is experiencing homelessness that represents kind of a new move in.
 - We've talked amongst the PV team about that idea of, could a Veteran on the outside, either an existing PVV unit somewhere else in LA or an HCV holding Veteran?
 - Should they be permitted to move into existing PVV units since they were previously homeless?
 - And they would represent Veterans that have more stability, and that could potentially be a mechanism to promote more balance within our buildings.
 - That would require some legislative changes and policy changes.

Mr. Kuhn: I wanted to amplify a bit of Brian's comments because he is spot on about the need to have a more mixed population that is not exclusively PSH client. We are working with a challenging clientele and the only way for us to really mix the population is move to an affordable housing concept that offers services.

- As Brian described, we can offer supportive services, but they do not need to be at the same level of intensity.
 - Support services could be assistance getting in point. You know transitional assistance, things that are not nearly as needed or may not even be a part of PSH.
 - I think we have options open to us if we can pursue them.
 - This is going to be critically important going forward as we expand this community.
 - We want to create a community people want to live in, that is desirable, that incorporates every the every one of the elements that you've heard about, that Veterans even in our limited service.
 - It's a pretty attractive campus with amenities and there's a surrounding area that's desirable.
 - We want people to want to live here and for Veterans to experience everything that they should in their home, in their community. But if we go straight PSH and we build out more than 1,200 units, whatever we end up landing at, without a more mixed community, I think it's something we're going to regard.

Ms. Sandor: Expressed her support for ensuring these campus buildings have mixed income and security levels, this is important to the viability of this project long term. There is a sense of urgency because when they look at the lease-up schedule and these 800 units getting filled, if the board is not mindful of how these units are being filled now and that it is a community on campus that represents other communities in neighborhoods in Los Angeles they run the risk of Veterans not choosing to live in the communities on campus. She encouraged the board to pay attention to how these buildings are being leased up, who is going into these units, and how to make it mixed with Veterans who need workforce housing and those who are low-income income at risk of homelessness. She believes there may be pressure to fill the next unit with the next highest security Veteran who is on the street and needs to move into housing tomorrow because of the urgent public health crisis of having Veterans on the streets and that may or may not be the best long-term strategy. She thanked everyone for their work.

Mr. Begland: Felt this was a timely conversation because he believes that there is going to be a lot of placements work next year, which is a good challenge to have however, if it is not done well then, they will be haunted by the consequences for years to come. He went on to discuss the renderings for Buildings 408 and 409 and that the Secretary did not agree with the board's last group of recommendations in June which were:

- The Secretary and the agency keep the development north of Nimitz Road for the time being.
- Deferment of the status of buildings 408 and 409.
- Project-based voucher cap.
- Question regarding what the level of need was.

The Secretary did not agree with the board's recommendations and decided that they would move ahead with the construction of buildings 408 and 409 and allow the principal developer to do ground floor commercial or retail activities. He asked Mr. D'Andrea and Ms. Roshan if the renderings were what the architect would be working from.

Ms. Roshan: Yes.

- The rendering for building 408 this does include some community-facing amenities on the ground floor. Both buildings 408 and 409 are coming up in 2025.
 - Building 408 is already in plan check and they have their voucher allocation. There is an opportunity for ground floor activation in all the buildings that they are contemplating for the town center.
 - What is being discussed is not commercial in a traditional sense, it is more communal facing amenities that can be used by residents of 408 and 409 in the future town center but also will be accessible to Veterans living across the campus.
 - Most of the buildings for TSA, U.S. Vets, Century, and their partners at Core Companies, will have a small community kitchen or small fitness center. They are contemplating more of a programmatic effort in these spaces.

- For Building 408:
 - They are contemplating a larger fitness center that would be programmed to have more organized classes and a bigger set of offerings than what you might find in individual building fitness rooms.
 - A communal recreation center/room. Much of the feedback that they have received both anecdotally and as the result of Tess's outreach is that Veterans want a place to gather.

Currently in the buildings they have community rooms, but they are not necessarily big enough for what Veterans are looking for. In this space, they are discussing having more of a peer resource room, a place for employment support, possibly computer labs, or a small library.

- They are working with the VA to see what Veterans want and what they may need and proceeding accordingly.

Chairman Begland: Building 408 looks like a four-story structure, correct?

Ms. Roshan: Yes.

Chairman Begland: On the ground floor the idea is to have an expanded recreation room and an expanded gym. Are those the two main activities for the ground floor?

Ms. Roshan: There is a third amenity that is meant to be a vocational training center. There are three separate spaces for community amenities A, B, and C all are on the left of the rendering. The right side of the rendering is reserved for more building-specific amenities for the residents of that building. They recognize that many Veterans may not want to be in a more public gathering with other people from the community and may want to have a more private space for residents only. They wanted to be respectful and mindful of that, particularly when they are serving Veterans across the spectrum of mental health.

Mr. Begland: Are services such as the gym and the recreation room meant only for campus residents, correct?

Ms. Roshan: They are meant for the Veterans of the West L.A. Campus. Some of these uses they've talked about for the town center could be inviting Veterans from around Greater L.A. to come to campus and participate.

Chairman Begland: There are recreation rooms in other buildings, and they traditionally think of them as amenities for the residents. The agency's response to the board has been that they are going ahead with the town center. However, he does not feel that any of the items described strike him as a town center, it seems more like building amenities. Is there anything on the ground floor of these buildings that's contemplated for Veterans generally?

Ms. Roshan: There is A, B and C. The gym is meant for all Veterans who choose to

come to campus to take part. The recreation room is also something that would be open to the community to take part in. The vocational training center could serve Veterans from the greater Los Angeles. So, when the word “commercial” is used that signals that the use of the spaces is not in line with the actual vision for the space.

Chairman Begland: He believes that the word “commercial” could mean a gym.

- He and some of the board members don't find the agency's responses satisfactory. So, they will be laser-focused on what is implemented here and they hope that it is not just a larger recreation room or a larger gym that is meant mainly for the residents.
- The agency is telling the board that it is going to implement the town center by activating these floors.

Ms. Roshan: These uses will activate the ground floors and 408 is part of what they are contemplating for this entire area, which includes indoor/outdoor space, an interface with building 13 that U.S. Vets will be rehabilitating, a lot of communal activation begins with the ground floor.

- Does not understand why the board would think this would not be a form of communal activation to have those uses in those spaces.

Chairman Begland: It all depends on implementation.

Ms. Hunter: I have a question about the previous conversation regarding referrals and choices Veterans make regarding choosing to live on campus vs. living elsewhere. Are the reasons why Veterans are deciding to live off campus being captured? If so, what is learned from this? If not, can you do a better job of capturing that information so that it could lead to continuous quality improvement and make the campus the preferred option for Veterans?

Ms. Banko: Some feedback from Veterans who have chosen not to live on campus is some reasons why are personal to them whereas, project-based housing and apartment-style housing may not be attractive to them.

- They want a solo unit and have come to see what was on the campus, not all Veterans want this.
- There is also further discussion about collecting additional data, and she emphasized the importance of considering the sources of information, what they are linked to, and how those things tie back to the feedback that Ms. Banko and her team are receiving.
- They do have a continuous feedback loop they have the online survey that the Veterans Collective conducts.

Mr. D'Andrea:

Discussed the rendering for Building 409 and the ground floor activities for that building. It

is one of the five buildings in the town center area and is one of the four new construction buildings.

- Building 409 will be contributing more than 4,000 sq. ft. of space to the external community the focus of this building is on healing through art. Two of the uses will be a “maker space” where the programming will be focused around painting, sculpture, and other forms of manipulative arts and then also a performance art-oriented space, including a black box theater that can be used for performances, art shows, and things of this nature.
 - This is intended not only for residents of this building and the broader West L.A. community, but it could be open and available to Veterans throughout the region.
 - The building itself will also have some of the specific amenities that Ms. Roshan mentioned earlier.
 - This is how Building 409 will be contributing to the town center and how it will ensure the activation of these ground floor spaces.

Subcommittee/Recommendation Brief

Mr. Canfield: He thanked the presenters. Part of the board’s charge is to help improve the services and outcomes for Veterans.

- These are long-term objectives that require them to look beyond just the shelter aspects of the campus. The master plan subcommittee has been focused on what it takes to make a community, and that’s primarily the town center and commons. As mentioned earlier, a dozen recommendations primarily related to the town center were made during the June board meeting and the Secretary did not concur with eight of the recommendations.
- While this was disappointing, they are committed to advocating for a town center that will meet the needs of the residents and the greater Veteran community. The residents don’t have employment and don’t have other places to go to fill their days and the town center can be that place.
- The town center is critical to establishing that sense of community. It’s a place for healing for this vulnerable population. It is a place where they can meet up with friends for coffee, can do some job training, or work on a hobby. The town center is a critical component of the community to give Veterans a place to go, to connect and define meaning and purpose.
- Mr. Canfield then read a quote from President McKinley, 120 years ago, when the Pacific Branch was dedicated, “The government for which you fought to which you gave the best years of your lives, that government, will see to it that in your declining years, you shall not suffer, but shall be surrounded with all the comforts and all the blessings which a grateful nation can provide.” He discussed what comforts were provided to the Veterans 120 years ago; commissary, recreation halls, theaters, a library, chapel, etc.
- Reiterated to the board that they will remain committed to ensuring the town center lives up to its full potential and is not compromised.

Ms. Sandor: The services subcommittee is committed to ensuring that what happens on campus is in service of Veterans and a thriving community in Los Angeles.

- The things that they continue to focus on is supporting the use of qualitative and quantitative data to recommend a rational level of supportive housing across the site based on what is needed and what makes sense on campus to continue to support a balanced tenant mix in the individual buildings and across the portfolio of buildings to ensure that Veterans can be successful here.
- Making sure there is the right support for the level of services that are needed, the safety and property management support within and across all of the permanent housing that's being developed, and a clear path for continued progress on ending Veteran homelessness across the county and maintaining those gains. Looking at all the housing resources and services that exist across the continuum in L.A. County to help ensure Veteran homelessness is ended and that Veterans don't become homeless in the first place and look at that holistically.
- While this board is tasked with oversight of this campus they are connected and are dependent on each other and they need to be looking at the broader progress and how they can clear a path for the team that is trying to do that at scale and run one of the most complex places in the nation.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Merchant: He thanked the board and appreciated the thoughtful discussion it reflects a lot of investment of the board and understanding of everything that is happening here and the complexities associated with what is trying to be accomplished.

Ms. Morton: Thanked the board for helping to move things forward.

Chairman Begland:

- Thanked the members and the fact that they are volunteers underscores how committed they are to improving the process. Regarding the town center, he expressed his disappointment with the agency's response, but he is not giving up hope for it.
- In the 2022 revision to the master plan the agency set aside the idea of a vocational training zone and he believes that decision makes the work of the town center even more vital. He is uncertain if the agency will follow through on that commitment to vocational training at the level that they had originally expected with the master plan process but the idea of activity on campus seems to be more relevant.
- Setting aside plans for vocational training may make the idea of the town center more viable because the Veterans living on campus will need to be able to have activities.
- Believes the board's charge is to say the right thing and do the right thing and

that does not necessarily mean 100% concurrence is necessary.

- It was great that the agency accepted the board's recommendation to do a thorough needs analysis, and the chair also thought the agency's response to the BNL choice was principled. But the responses to the town center issue are not the end.

Review/ Wrap Up/ /Adjourn, VCOEB Chair/ DFO/FAC Staff

Mr. Skinner: Discussed some administrative requirements for the FAC documentation requirements for CY 2025.

- The OGE Form 450
- Ethics Training for Special Government Employees

Chairman Begland thanked the VA employees for all the support as well as the board members for attending.

The meeting adjourned.

Approved: /s/ Mr. Rob Begland, Chair

/s/ Eugene Skinner, Jr., Designated Federal Officer
Date: February 6, 2025