



Los Angeles

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System West Los Angeles Campus

THE COMMONS:

WEST LOS ANGELES VETERANS AFFAIRS TOWN CENTER



ABOUT THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

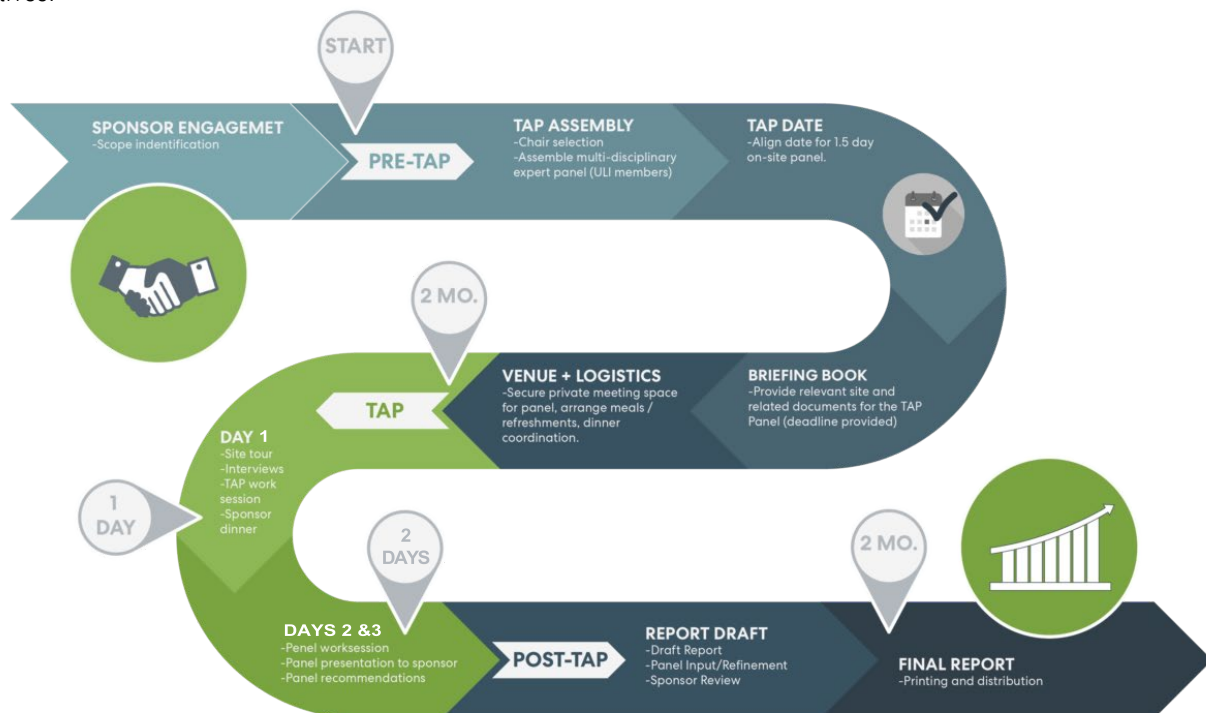
The mission of the Urban Land Institute ((ULI) is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute’s mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI’s interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and the Asia Pacific region, with members in 80 countries. Los Angeles, a district council of the Urban Land Institute, carries forth that mission as the preeminent regional real estate organization providing inclusive and trusted leadership influencing public policy and practice.

About ULI Technical Assistance Panels

In keeping with the Urban Land Institute mission, Technical Assistance Panels (TAP) are convened to provide planning and development expertise to public officials and local stakeholders of communities and nonprofit organizations who have requested assistance in addressing their land use challenges. The ULI LA TAP participants donate their individual expertise on a pro-bono basis in the interest of serving the needs of the greater community. Their recommendations are meant to be unbiased and objective.

A group of diverse professionals representing the full spectrum of land use and real estate disciplines typically spend three days visiting and analyzing the built environments, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a fashion consistent with the applicant’s goals and objectives.



TAP Sponsor

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

In February 2022, Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VAGLAHS) engaged Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Los Angeles District Council to convene a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to evaluate the 2022 and 2016 Town Center Master Plans as they relate to the Town Center and provide recommendations on the optimal path forward to VAGLAHS. ULI's recommendations are advisory in nature and one important step in a process that will help inform how to shape The Commons

The current plan, Master Plan 2022, describes and depicts a Town Center concept that has been modified from that first contemplated in Draft Master Plan 2016. There is a concern that the 2022 Plan is not best meeting the needs of the Veteran community and is not consistent with the goals of Veterans Affairs (VA) leadership. VAGLAHS, through this process, is seeking feedback and specific recommendations from the ULI LA TAP in a number of areas including site layout, buildings, parking, and implementation.

Recommendations Requested

Site Layout

- Provide a recommendation on whether Master Plan 2022 Town Center is the most efficient and viable use of the site.
- Provide a recommendation on the types of revisions or alternate scenarios for the Town Center Site.
- Provide a recommendation on alternate locations within the North Campus that should be considered for the Town Center. Identify the locations and provide illustrative examples of the Town Center at these alternate locations.

Buildings

- Provide a recommendation on whether the Master Plan 2022 Town Center adaptive reuse of the Town Center existing buildings is viable and recommended by the ULI TAP. If so, provide several schemes to provide illustrative examples.
- Provide a recommendation on whether partial or complete demolition of the Town Center existing buildings should be taken into consideration. If so provide several schemes for adaptive reuse and several schemes for new construction.

Parking

- Provide a recommendation on the quantity of designated parking that should be available on the West LA Campus for the Town Center to operate efficiently and without adverse consequences to surrounding property uses on the West LA Campus.
- Provide illustrative examples of the recommended parking solutions on the West LA Campus.
- Provide a recommendation on the quantity of designated parking that should be available on the Town Center Site, for the Town Center to operate efficiently.
- Provide illustrative examples of the recommended parking solutions on the Town Center Site.

Implementation

- Describe the recommended types of land uses that should be located within the Town Center.
- Describe the recommended types of Veterans services that should be provided within the Town Center.
- Describe the recommended process for obtaining Veteran engagement and feedback on the types of land uses and types of Veterans services to be provided within the Town Center.
- Describe the recommended strategy for the day-to-day management and governance of the Town Center.
- Describe the recommended process for obtaining Veteran engagement and feedback on day-to-day management and governance of the Town Center.
- Describe the recommended strategy to ensure that the Town Center principally benefits Veterans, including Veteran residents living at the West LA Campus as well as non-resident Veterans throughout the region.
- Recommend potential strategies on how the Veterans services located within the Town Center would be funded and administered.
- Recommend potential sources of funding and capital structures for the construction of the Town Center.
- Recommend potential sources of funding for the operation and maintenance of the Town Center.
- Provide a recommendation on whether legislative changes or new legislation is required to successfully fund, construct, operate, and maintain the Town Center.

Panel Area of Focus

The TAP Panel focused on the areas of concern that would have the greatest impact on how the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Campus (WLA VA Campus) could best serve Veterans and the issues that were possible to effectively address within the confines of the available technical information and within the time frame of the TAP. Guidance on developing the Town Center was at the core of the Panel's efforts. Understanding the community of Veterans as part of a market analysis on who would utilize the Town Center, a review of the 2016 and 2022 Master Plan, and strategies for implementation were key to developing the Panel's recommendations.



Existing Aerial Plan of the West Los Angeles VA Campus



TAP Panel touring WLA VA North Campus.



TAP Panel reviewing master plan proposals with existing conditions.



Anthony Allman leading TAP Panel site tour

PROCESS AND INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

The TAP Panel spent two and a half days on the WLA VA Campus learning about the Veterans' needs and the opportunities of the physical environment.

TAP Panel Immersion Tour

Anthony Allman, Executive Director of Vets Advocacy, guided the TAP Panelists through a 2-hour walking tour of the north WLA VA Campus. The panel noted the on-site users, circulation patterns, open space condition and layout as well as the buildings. Of note were the historic buildings - Wadsworth Chapel, Wadsworth Theater, and Building 13; designated open space - the existing Town Center site, Heroes Golf Course, and the Rose Garden; and newly-built permanent supportive housing.

During the tour, relatively few pedestrians were seen on the campus with the exception of a well attended event in parking lot 7. The Campus was characterized consistently by Panelists in terms such as, "lonely," dilapidated", "uncaring and uncared for", "a medical center not a home", and "lacking a heart". The common perception was that the Campus desperately needs a heart and that a Town Center could fulfill that need.

Stakeholder Interviews

The TAP Panelists interviewed 21 stakeholders including VA staff from various departments, Veterans, advocates from Veterans' groups, representatives of the Principal Developer, and design professionals. Interviews were either in person or virtual and intended to gather background and attitudes on potential campus development. Outcomes of the interviews included:

- Veterans are the priority and primary user of the Campus
- The Campus should support "community" and interaction between Veterans
- The Town Center is a hub for Veterans, providing services for Veterans of five counties

Context

Upon assessment of the TAP objectives, stakeholder feedback, and the briefing material, the Panel determined a set of ground rules that framed the process and recommendations.

- This report is not intended to validate or invalidate any particular concept in previous VA Campus Master Plans or subsequent revisions and **acknowledges the tremendous amount of work** that has been done to maximize the utility of this property for the Veteran community.
- The Town Center **primarily functions to serve Veterans who live on Campus** and secondarily for Veterans who live off campus or others who may visit.
- This study is an **independent analysis** of the most **beneficial, efficient, viable** location and use of space for the Town Center site.
- An increase of **permanent supportive housing** units is **timely** and **imperative** to address homelessness prevention in the Greater Los Angeles area. It is critical to **move expeditiously** and to address, with urgency, the issue of Veterans experiencing homelessness. Any TAP plan recommendation is **not intended to impede the progress** in advancing the mission of increasing permanent supportive housing and community on the North Campus.
- **Placemaking, Veterans' integration, and community** were the most consistent themes voiced during stakeholder interviews.
- There is a **myriad of regulations** in place governing land use, the approval of leases, and designated services.
- Development will be **most effective at serving Veterans if service-oriented** rather than commercially-oriented.



Panel Member Interviewing Veteran on Campus



Stakeholder Interview on Campus



Remote Stakeholder Interview

VISION STATEMENT: A COMMUNITY OF VETERANS

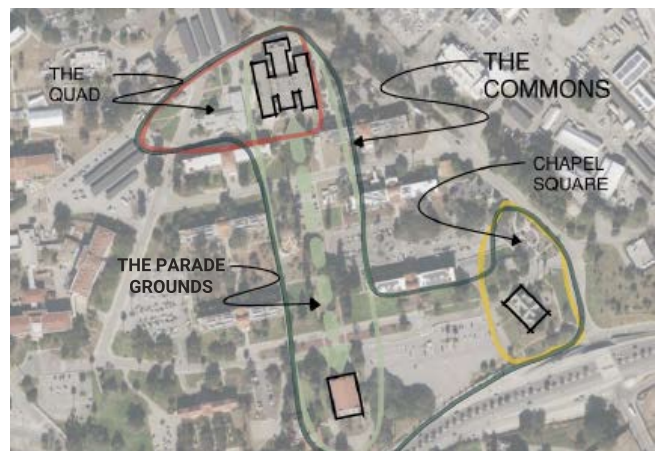
To create an inviting, human scaled, mixed-use town center that prioritizes visual beauty, connects to and builds community, respects regional history, reflects local core values, embraces sustainable principles, evokes a sense of place, is informed by contextual forces, and produces a legacy of enduring pride for the residents of the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Campus and all Veterans in the Southern California region.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

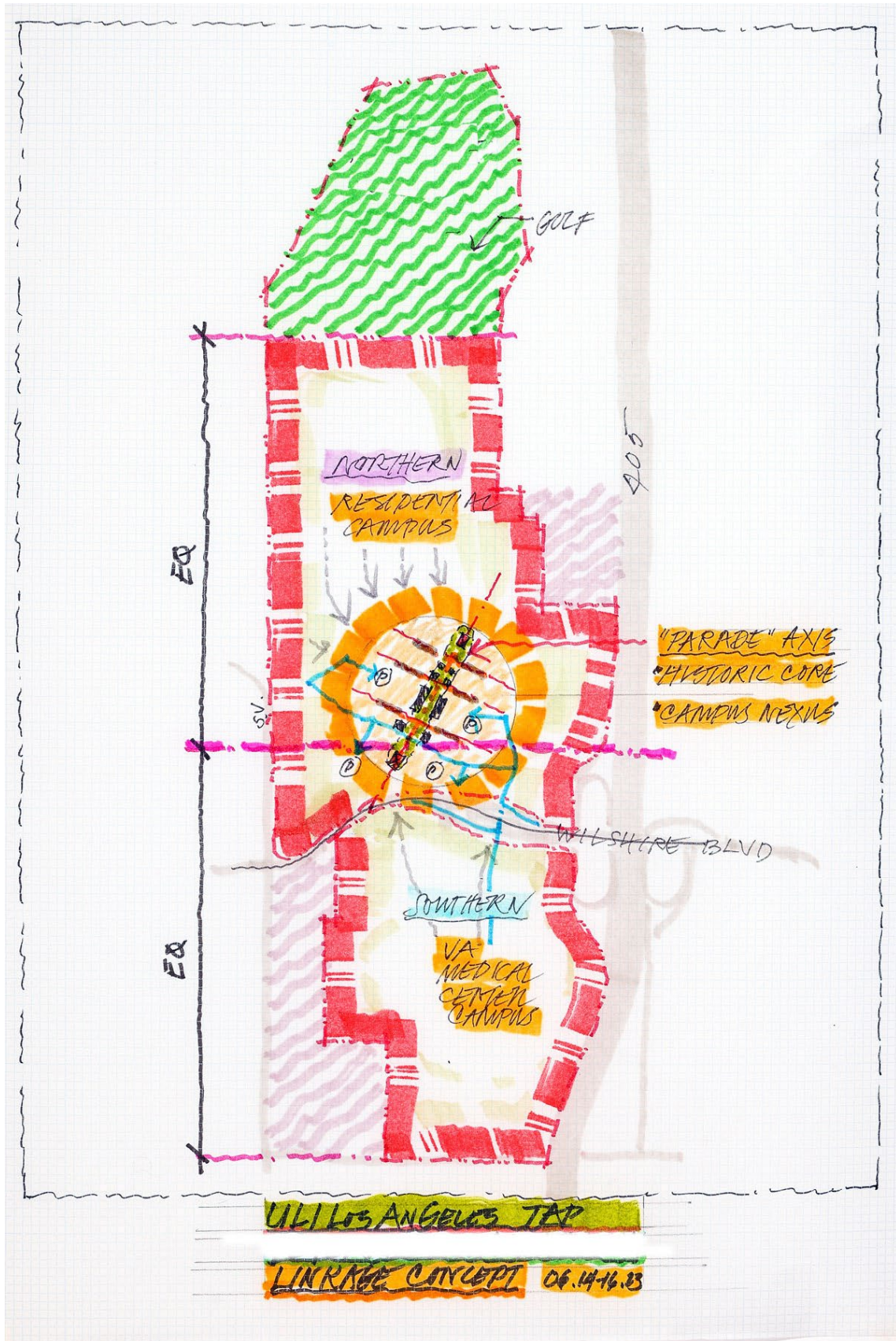
A Campus that truly serves the communal needs of the Veterans will be enriched by the physical environment, facilities, and programs that foster support and well being. The Town Center, conceived of as a heart of the Campus and center of community life must be sensitively defined and easily identified. The TAP Panel has redefined the Town Center, to function more effectively, as “The Commons”.

The Commons establishes three distinctive sub-districts, The Quad, Parade Ground, and Chapel Square. Each sub-district is identified by a characteristic defining element of the historical Campus and provides appropriate spaces for identifiable activities and programs such as gathering, celebrating, and welcoming. Together, the three sub-districts create a more easily navigable and functional Campus and, more importantly, can provide Veterans with an environment that supports their emotional and physical health and re-integration with the larger community.

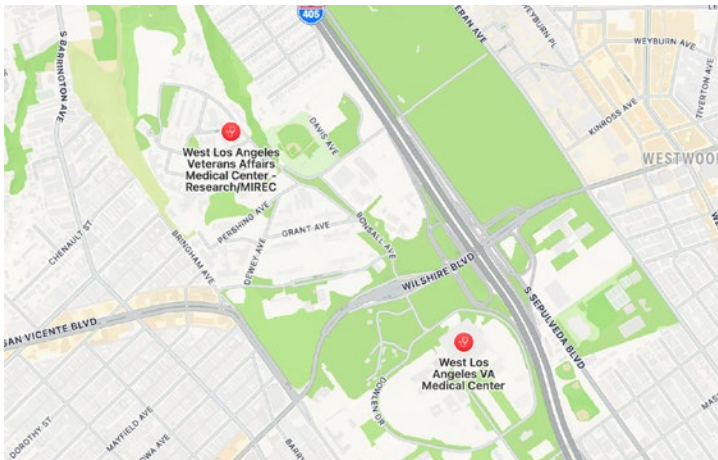
Implementation of the Commons includes program recommendations that support a viable and vibrant commercial offering that can successfully serve the Veteran community. Engagement with Veterans as part of developing on Campus services, programs, and business is expected to continue and is indispensable to ongoing governance.



Concept diagram of The Commons



II. INTRODUCTION: REIMAGINING THE TOWN CENTER



WLA VA Location Map



Historical aerial photographs

THE VA CAMPUS

Campus Development

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System's (VAGLAHS) West Los Angeles (West LA VA) Campus, a significant Los Angeles landmark, fronts both sides of Wilshire Boulevard, one of the City's great streets. It is adjacent to the 405 Freeway in the Brentwood/Westwood communities. The 388 acre Campus was established in 1887 as a home for disabled Veterans on land donated by the U.S. Senator John

P. Jones (Nevada), Robert Baker, and Arcadia Bandini Stearns de Baker to the United States.

Known as the Pacific Branch of the National Home of Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, the Campus evolved throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Expansion of the medical facilities in the colonial revival style followed the end of World War 1 with another wave of development upon the establishment of the Veterans Administration in 1930. During the latter period, buildings were predominantly characterized by the Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival styles.

Over time, medical activities were primarily concentrated on the southern portion of the West LA Campus (south of Wilshire Boulevard, referred to as the South Campus). The remaining buildings and open parcels of land on the northern portion of the West LA Campus (north of Wilshire Boulevard, referred to as the North Campus) began to suffer from lack of use, investment and upkeep. Non-Veteran focused commercial uses were introduced to the West LA Campus, resulting in a shift from its core and historical mission. A lawsuit was brought forth by various stakeholders, including local Veteran advocates and descendants of relatives of the original land donors, challenging the government's use of the West LA VA Campus. That resulted in the 2015 Principles for a Partnership and Framework for Settlement (Principles).

The West LA Campus provides a full continuum of healthcare services to Veterans under the Veterans Health Administration arm of the Veterans Affairs. This includes medical care and research, Community Living Centers (nursing home graduated care), and residential domiciliary treatment programs for substance use disorder, severe mental health, and chronic homelessness.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Park Service included the West Los Angeles VA Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014 for its contribution to the “development of a national policy for Veteran health care” and as a “tangible manifestation of the federal government’s commitment to the health care of Veterans of World War I, which resulted in the nation’s largest network of hospitals.” The West Los Angeles VA Historic District was also found significant for the quality of its Mission Revival architectural style, which reflected both the national taste for reviving Colonial-era styles and a local desire for reflecting local history and context in architecture. The designated West Los Angeles VA Historic District includes 66 contributing buildings and structures, as well as site plan, landscape features, and streetscapes extending over four discontinuous areas of the WLA Campus. The Streetcar Depot and Wadsworth Chapel are also individually designated at the national level. According to the LA Conservancy, “Architect Stanford White was credited with designing the original Shingle style wood frame barracks, which influenced J. Lee Burton’s designs for the Streetcar Depot (1890) and Wadsworth Chapel (1900).”



Historic Streetcar Depot, WLA VA North Campus

Governance and Legal Obligations

Governmental Requirements

The VA Campus is a federal property and, therefore, not regulated by local land use codes although in most cases it does conform with the County of Los Angeles requirements. Fire facilities are not located on Campus. Fire services are provided by the City as the closest facility.

2015 Principles for a Partnership and Framework for Settlement (Principles)

This agreement, upon the 2015 resolution of the lawsuit, outlines initial objectives for engaging with stakeholders and expanding needed services to Veterans associated with the use of the WLA VA Campus. Draft Master Plan 2016 was in response to the Principles and part of the VA’s strategy to address Veterans’ homelessness in the region.

West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016 (Public Law 114-226) (WLA Leasing Act):

This act governs the terms and structure of land use agreements which impacts the land utilization. In particular, leases must address and fulfill the need to provide VA with consideration that “principally benefits Veterans and their families”.

2022 Principal Developer (PD) Enhanced Use Lease (EUL)

The EUL agreement requires West Los Angeles Veterans Collective, LLC (WLAVC) to finance, design, develop, rehabilitate, construct, manage, maintain, and operate at least 900 units of supportive housing that principally benefits Veterans and their families on the WLA VA Campus for homeless and at-risk Veterans consistent with Master Plan 2022.

MASTER PLAN ASSESSMENT

2016 Town Center Master Plan Observations

The Draft Master Plan 2016 was developed as part of the VA's strategy to address Veterans' homelessness in the region and to expand needed services to Veterans associated with the use of the West LA Campus. The TAP Panel made the following observations of the Town Center created by the 2016 Master Plan:

Strengths

- Traditional and easily understood Town Center configuration
- Identifiable public space
- Location at the nexus of roadways
- Resolves the conflicts of existing road network
- Proximity to housing
- Frames the promenade, a significant open space
- Provides a pedestrian bridge across Wilshire
- Supports a strong Veteran community organization and understanding of clients

Weaknesses

- Distance and lack of visibility from Campus entrance (for non-residents)
- Lack of wayfinding and signage
- Absence of a sense of place and Campus center or "heart"
- Connections to the larger community are inadequate
- Overscaled open space
- Program is too broadly distributed
- Parking shortage
- Demolishes historic Building 13 and other historic contributors
- May require additional consideration for response to sustainability issues
- Mixed use is not allowed under ground lease
- Requires land swap with the State of California



2016 Illustrative Master Plan

2022 Town Center Master Plan Observations

The needs of the Principal Developer and the immediate priority for housing drove the revisions to the 2016 Draft Master Plan. The 2022 Master Plan made significant changes to the organization of vehicular circulation, Town Center public space, and existing building disposition. The TAP Panel made the following observations of the Town Center created by the 2022 Master Plan:

Strengths

- Preserves historic Building 13
- Respects recently implemented utility infrastructure
- Recognizes the promenade, a significant and historic open space
- Proximity to new housing
- Retains existing roads

Weaknesses

- Town square location is hidden and not visible to the outside community
- Town Center is distant from the Campus entrance
- Parking may be limited
- Demolishes historic contributors
- Overscaled open space
- Absence of defined open spaces magnified by use of single story buildings
- Mixed use is not allowed under the ground lease
- Program uses in basements restricts access to building users only
- Community and public spaces are inadequate
- Wayfinding for internal residents and external visiting Veterans is confusing



2020 Illustrative Master Plan

III. CLIENTELE: A COMMUNITY OF VETERANS

VISION STATEMENT

To create an inviting, human scaled, mixed-use town center that prioritizes visual beauty, connects to and builds community, respects regional history, reflects local core values, embraces sustainable principles, evokes a sense of place, is informed by contextual forces, and produces a legacy of enduring pride for the residents of the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Campus and all Veterans in the Southern California region.

WHO IS THE CLIENTELE?

Those Veterans who live here:

- Veterans

Those who work here:

- Veterans
- Hospital Staff
- VA Staff

Those Veterans that come here:

- Veterans from the region
- Veterans' families

Those that live or work nearby:

- UCLA faculty, students, and staff
- Neighborhood residents
- Neighborhood employees



Informal Gathering Space, WLA VA North Campus



Fort Belvoir

	Veterans Who Live on Campus	Those Who work on Campus	Veterans/Families from Region	Residents and Community Members
FOOD & BEVERAGE				
Grocer				
Restaurants, Canteen				
Farmers Market				
HEALTH & WELLNESS				
Doctor/Dentist				
Gym				
VETERAN SERVICES- MISSION & PURPOSE				
Information Hub				
Workforce Development				
Transportation				
Legal Services				
Reintegration				
Financial Literacy				
Communal Work Space				
Post Office/ Library				
Business/ Entrepreneurial Training				
CIVIC USES				
Veteran Appreciation				
Volunteer Opportunities				
Celebrations				
Cultural Events				

Users in addition to Veterans living on Campus

WHAT ARE THE INTERESTS OF THE VETERAN COMMUNITY?

Those Veterans who live here:

- Market-Uses
- Grocer
- Food & Beverage
- Services (Dentist, Eyecare, etc.)
- Health & Wellness
- Veteran Services – Mission & Purpose
- Information Hub
- Workforce Development
- Transportation
- Legal Services
- Reintegration
- Financial Literacy
- Communal Work Space
- Post Office / Library
- Business / Entrepreneurial Training

Those staff who work here:

- Market-Uses
- Food & Beverage
- Health & Wellness

Those Veterans that come here:

- Market-Uses
- Food & Beverage
- Health & Wellness (Dentist, Eyecare, etc.)
- Veteran Services – Mission & Purpose
- Information Hub
- Workforce Development
- Transportation
- Legal Services
- Reintegration
- Financial Literacy
- Communal Work Space
- Post Office / Library
- Business / Entrepreneurial Training

Those that live or work nearby:

- Market-Uses
- Food & Beverage
- Farmers Market
- Civic Uses
- Veteran Appreciation
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Celebrations
- Cultural Events

GLA CERS Capacity Summary – June 2023

Facility / Provider	Capacity	Percent Occupied	Notes
West Los Angeles (WLA):			
<i>Medical Beds</i>			
Building 217 - Domiciliary	151	70%	
Building 214 – Domiciliary*	106	76%	13 Female Veterans. Rooms temporarily closed due to engineering/plumbing issues.
<i>Emergency Shelter</i>			
CTRS	125	93%	Tiny shelters, not beds. Total 140 tiny shelters, but only 119 tiny shelters are functional (repairs), including 6 daily drop-ins.
Safe Parking (Service Provider CP)	50	28%	Parking spaces, not beds. Daily in and out
<i>WLA Transitional Housing Beds</i>			
A Bridge Home (Service Provider CLA)*	100	29%	
Building 116 (Service Provider ND)*	161	55%	Capacity and percent for three bed models combined (low demand, bridge, & clinical)
HCHV-ND Oasis Women	18	50%	
<i>Permanent Supportive Housing Units</i>			Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) apartment units
Building 205	67	7%	EUL
Building 207	59	100%	EUL
Building 208	53	51%	EUL
Building 209	54	91%	EUL
Total WLA:	944	584	
Sepulveda:			
<i>Permanent Supportive Housing Units</i>			
Buildings 4/5 (Service Provider ND)	50	100%	EUL
Total Sepulveda:	50	50	
Community Beds:			
Project-Based Voucher (PBV) (Non-VASH) SAACC	1,267	88%	Community HUD-VASH Vouchers.
Western	98	92%	
Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Bridge Housing	32	75%	
Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Bridge Housing	138	32%	Short-term stay for Veterans with identified housing destination
GPD Clinical Treatment	193	38%	Emphasis on mental health & substance abuse treatment
GPD Low Demand	293	77%	Engaging chronically homeless with history of treatment failures
GPD Service Intensive	208	55%	Supportive housing environment for transition to permanent housing
GPD Transition-in-Place	5	60%	Transitional residences that convert to permanent housing
GPD-Special Needs Women	5	60%	
Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Contract	260	54%	Harm-reduction approach to keep high-risk Veterans safely housed before housing placement
Total Community:	2,499	1,829	

WHAT IS THE DEMAND POTENTIAL?

The Commons is expected to support nearly 35,000 square feet of market-driven retail by 2033.

The demand is driven by:

Those Veterans who live here:

- **2023** - 944 on campus (233 in permanent supportive housing) with an additional 396 in CalVet State Home
- **2033** - 2,352 (1,641 in permanent supportive housing) with additional Veterans in CalVet State Home

Those who work here:

- 5,000 Employees
- Hospital and service providers on north and south Campus

Those Veterans who come here:

- 280,000 Veterans across Los Angeles County
- Veterans and their families

Those that live or work nearby:

- 241,900 households within 5-miles

WHAT IS THE DEMAND (PHASING) OPPORTUNITY OVER TIME?

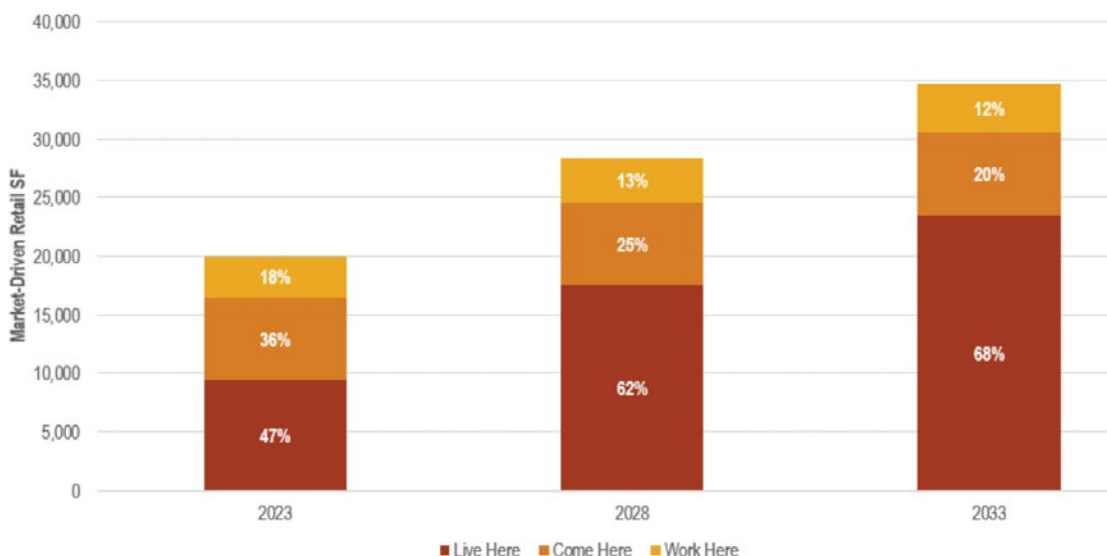
Demand potential today will continue to grow over the long-term as more housing is built on campus.

Short-Term

Today, a majority of commercial demand comes from offsite Veterans. Assuming the 280,000 Veterans in Los Angeles County spend 1% of their total restaurant spending at the Commons, there is demand for an approximately 7,000 SF restaurant at the Commons. However, a restaurant alone will not draw offsite Veterans to the Campus. The presence of a suitable commercial setting with Veteran services is necessary to create long-term successful ventures.

Long-Term

In the long term, when planned housing is fully built on the Campus (2033), the majority of commercial demand will come from the Veterans who live onsite. The commercial demand will shift to grocery, followed by restaurants, commercial services, and health and wellness.



PROGRAM: HOW ARE THE VETERANS SERVED?

Program

Retail: Small Market, PX, Pharmacy, Pet Care, Military Gifts, Post Office

Dining: Coffee House, Diner, Restaurant, Commissary

Services: Legal, Financial/Business, Social, Healthcare

Conveniences: Salon, Barber Shop, Laundry, Dry Cleaning,

Recreation & Fitness: Outdoor, Indoor, Gym, Cornhole

Medical Services: Dental, Eyecare

Arts: Creative Center, Makerspace, Music, Drama

Education: Continuing Education, Library

Vocational Training/Maker Space: Rental Library for Kitchen Equipment and Tools

Co-work Space

Civic and Convening

Farmers Market & Crafts Market

Hospitality: Hotel

Programmed Space: Movie, Performance



Photo by Philadelphia Citizen

PARTNERING WITH VETERAN-RUN AND VETERAN-SERVING BUSINESSES

All the commercial spaces on campus, including retail, food and beverage, and services are expected to focus on Veterans as the primary clientele. There is a unique opportunity to support Veteran-run businesses providing appropriate services for both the Veterans who live on campus and those that come from the region. These businesses, by the nature of their service or product, resonate with Veterans, making them excellent candidates as long-term tenants as well as supporting Veterans' employment. In order to assist with long-term success, businesses can be phased to scale up so that experience and customers can be gained over time. One example is a cafe that may start as a food truck or pop-up before becoming more permanent. A focus on Veteran-run businesses increases the assurance that the Campus and the Commons/Town Center principally benefits Veterans.

Other potential WLA VA Campus programs and services such as StoryCorps' Military Voices Initiative would be a unique and valuable resource. It provides a platform for Veterans, service members, and military families to share their stories so that the community can honor their voices, amplify their experiences, and let them know that they are heard. An important Veteran-serving program, The Los Angeles Public Library, can provide services for the Veterans on campus and one that has specifically been requested during the outreach conducted by the Principal Developer.



Temporary Bookstore



Veteran-run Businesses

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: VETERAN HOTEL

Introducing a new program offering on the North Campus, a hotel for Veterans and their families, taps into a national demand pool for hospitality. In the short term, it can supplement the current housing options by satisfying emergency housing needs for homeless Veterans. In the long term, it will be an affordable option for Veterans and their families, encouraging them to interact with one another while visiting the region, augment retail demand for commercial uses at the Commons, and provide jobs and job-training opportunities for on-campus Veterans.



Marines Memorial Hotel, San Francisco

IV. THE 2023 PLANNING APPROACH: THE COMMONS

Factors for Success

The Commons will be successful when it fulfills the following:

- Creates a place for onsite Veterans to connect with the larger community
- Provides socialization, services, and educational opportunities for on and off site Veterans
- Encourages employees who work here to stay here and use services on Campus
- Utilizes best practices of relevant campuses and Veteran resources
- Enhances awareness and rewrites the story for the WLA VA Campus
- Pays it forward



Star Fountain Plaza, WLA VA North Campus

Key Drivers

Based on the understanding of the Veterans' point of view, the stakeholder interviews, the assessment of the 2016 and 2022 master plan and industry best practices, the following guiding principles have driven the planning recommendations in this report.

- **Listen** - The Veterans' voices are fundamental to the plan
- **Create spaces** that spur **purpose and meaning**
- Planning should not impede **implementation of critical housing**
- Provide a clientele-**appropriate and realistic program**, principally serving Veterans
- **Enhance campus entry, wayfinding, and links** to transit and south campus
- Provide **public/private zones**, limiting public intrusion into private areas by supporting those experiencing homelessness
- **Resolve conflict** from existing **roadway** grids
- Prioritize **open space** in design considerations
- Provide a **pedestrian friendly** environment with internal circulation/micro transit options



Site Analysis

V. CONCEPT: THE COMMONS



Japanese Garden, WLA VA North Campus



Vegetable Gardens, WLA VA North Campus

PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES

The following principles provide underlying guidance for promoting the quality of future master plans and recommendations that provide direction on the growth and development of the VA Campus.

The Power of Place

- Engage and build community
- Analyze the context holistically
- Establish an urban framework
- Begin with landscaped spaces and furnished streetscapes
- Make it mixed-use
- “Contain” spaces
- Create harmony and accommodate dissonance
- Emphasize Landmarks; Provide Nodes; Create Districts; Connect with Paths; Contain with Edges
-Kevin Lynch
- Emphasize psychographics over demographics
- Make it sustainable and resilient
- Integrate environmental graphics, site amenities, and art

Sustainability and Resilience

Incorporating the following principles will make the Campus more energy efficient, sustainable, and adaptive to climate change.

Shade design

- Natural shading, trees
- Solar canopy
- Moveable shading for paths
- Creative shading
- Hydration stations
- Passive design + building orientation

Local food + zero waste

- Farmers Market
- Community garden
- On-site composting
- Lending library (kitchen equipment, tools)
- LED path lighting for safety and placemaking

Electrification + Renewables

- Electric mobility (slow speed vehicles and shuttles)
- EV charging infrastructure
- DERs (solar + battery, microgrids, geothermal, district energy)
- Access funding through Infrastructure Investment + Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act
- Prioritize VA infrastructure funds
- Pedestrian and bike connectivity

Resilience Hubs: Building(s) on-site designed to provide services and programming everyday, but also during a disruption or recovery period

Cooling Centers: Programming that provides spaces for respite on hot days (movie theaters, indoor eating)



Examples of climate appropriate design



Resilience Community Workshop

CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW: CELEBRATING VETERANS' LIVES

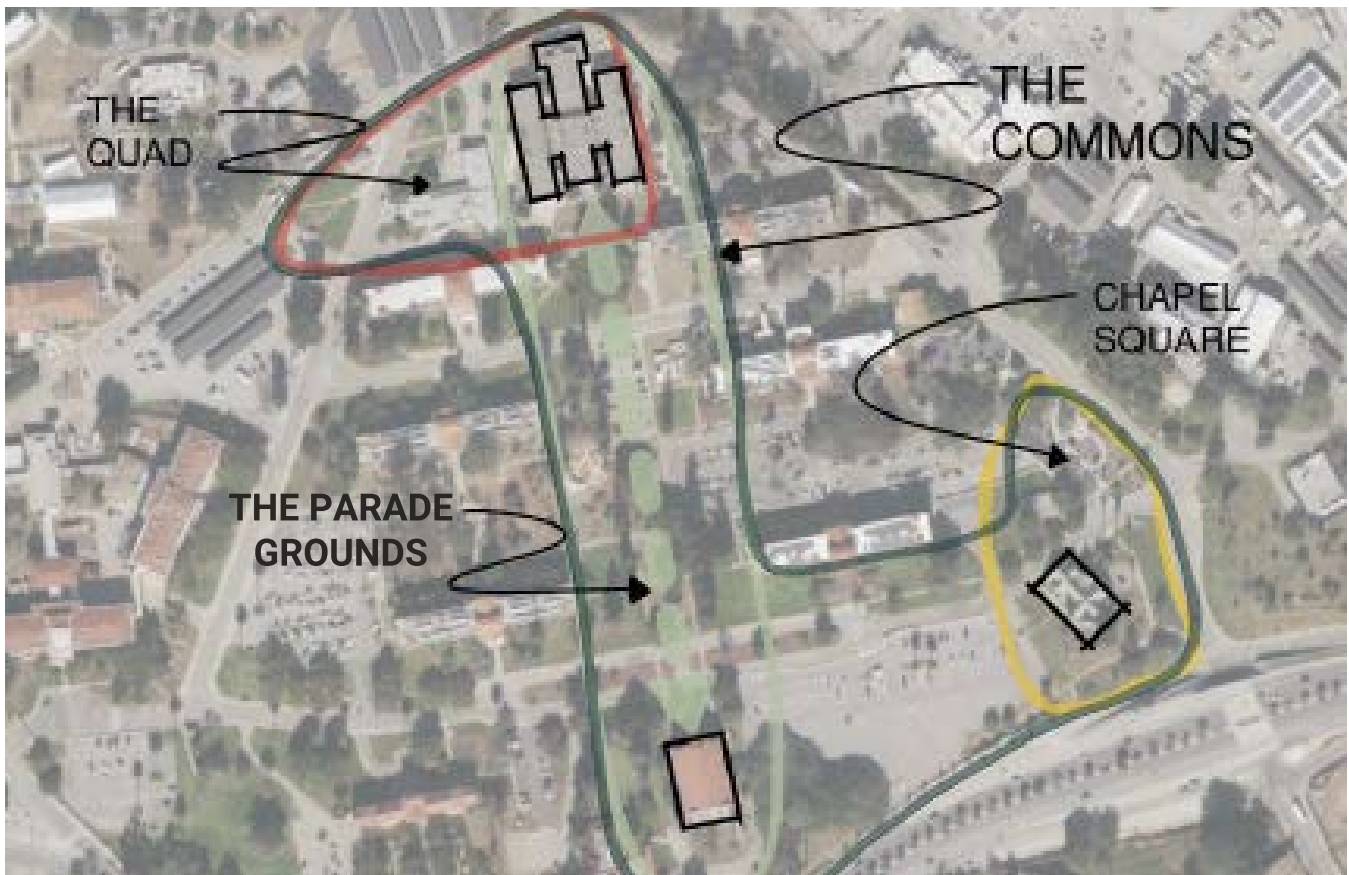
The Commons is a fresh new vision for the North Campus Town Center. The design concept establishes a framework for the North Campus by establishing three distinctive areas/sub-districts, each including a characteristic defining landscape or architectural element of the historical Campus. By providing easily located anchors, these elements create newly recognizable Campus nodes that support identifiable activities and engage the market. These three sub-districts are:

- **The Quad**
- **The Parade Ground**
- **Chapel Square**

The three sub-districts, implemented in phases over time, reinforce the power and importance of “place” by strengthening wayfinding on the campus and celebrate the history of the Campus by recommending the adaptive reuse of three landmarked buildings:

- **Building 13**
- **Wadsworth Theater**
- **Wadsworth Chapel**

Placemaking and wayfinding improvements are not limited to the interior of the Campus. The concept provides for a clear identity and access from Wilshire Boulevard, the front door of the North Campus, thus welcoming visitors from off campus.



Concept Diagram

THE QUAD, PARADE GROUND, CHAPEL SQUARE

The 3 sub-districts improve the experience of the Campus for all:

- Strengthens wayfinding
- Uses existing historical and landscape assets as focal points
- Creates a unique district character and function as a setting for Veteran serving programs and commercial uses



Concept Diagram



Building 13 at The Quad



The Promenade at the Parade Ground



Wadsworth Chapel at Chapel Square



Wilshire Boulevard at the WLA VA Campus



Existing Entry, WLA VA North Campus

The Commons: Site Access and Entry

Access to the site is improved by the proposed Chapel Square sub-district acting as the front door to the North Campus. The Chapel itself clearly identifies the North Campus to those coming from Wilshire Boulevard. Chapel Square orients all visitors to the North Campus.

- Creates a welcoming and iconic entry experience
- Access to the site is improved by Chapel Square as the front door.
- Frames views to the historic campus elements and “public” destinations
- Respects and buffers “private” zones for housing



The Quad

The Quad is the heart of the North Campus and it is an identifiable and demarcated public gathering place for the overall community of Veterans for whom it serves. The character defining feature of The Quad is adaptively reused Building 13. The Quad open space is well-defined by buildings on all four sides and bounded by a proposed new building with ground floor retail/services and housing above that activates and contains the space..



Fort Irwin



Gathering in parking lot 7



The Quad Concept Diagram



Development Parcelization Plan

The Quad and 2022 Master Plan Comparison

In contrast to the 2022 Master Plan Town Center, the newly conceived Quad is now framed by multi-story buildings to create an outdoor room. Access to the Quad is now provided by well defined roads and pedestrian routes as part of the Commons. Specific revisions include:

- The road system to the west is changed to allow for more efficient parcelization.
- Building 17 is retained as in the 2022 Master Plan and adaptively reused as a hotel/restaurant which activates The Quad



Blue denotes current ULI Commons iteration. Red denotes changes from 2022 Master Plan

Parade Ground

The promenade is re-named Parade Ground, honoring Veterans' service, bringing attention to the historic open space, and creating an important link from the public facing North Campus entry with access to The Quad and beyond. The Parade Ground now:

- Celebrates the original formal axis and maintains the historic landscape element
- Prioritizes the pedestrian over vehicular traffic (road is now service or golf cart only)
- Connects the promenade with the entries to two historic buildings, the Wadsworth Theater and Building 24, and engages their proposed uses into the larger campus uses.
- Improves pedestrian paths on either side of the promenade and integrates adjacent building entries.
- Provides a framework and an infrastructure for temporary events
- Becomes a future site for services and commercial development if needed in addition to the Quad



Parade Ground Concept Diagram



The Promenade



Historic Postcard of the Chapel

Chapel Square

Chapel Square is the third sub-district on the North Campus and provides a formal area for welcome and orientation.

- The restored chapel is an iconic marker at the entrance to the North Campus
- New buildings form the perimeter of a welcome plaza and allow pedestrians, bikes, and vehicles to pass through to other destinations on Campus. Potential uses may include a Welcome and Orientation Center and historical exhibits.



Chapel Square Concept Diagram

Veteran Hotel

Adaptively reused historic Building 13 is proposed as a Veterans Hotel. Its location brings visitors into The Quad and Parade Ground and activates the space by adding a lively element with 24/7 activities. It will serve as a key community destination and focal point on the West LA Campus. It is highly desirable to adaptively reuse this historic structure to accommodate new uses, however, it is recognized that the renovation and/or hotel concept may prove to be economically infeasible.



Building 13, Proposed Hotel Floor 1



Building 13, Proposed Hotel Floor 2

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The day to day management and governance of the physical campus and programs is complex and discussion was limited within the parameters of the TAP. The critical issues addressed by the Panel include:

- Add the Commons into the existing Principal Developer master development EUL or separate the Commons into new master development area and initiate a RFP process to select a new master developer for Commons
- Designate a recognized VA “champion” from VA to work with the master developer(s) to advocate for the project and eliminate roadblocks
- Confirm that the existing governance, for example, HOA/CC&Rs and oversight board, is adequate long-term
- Evaluate the existing Principal Developer land parcel release schedule timing

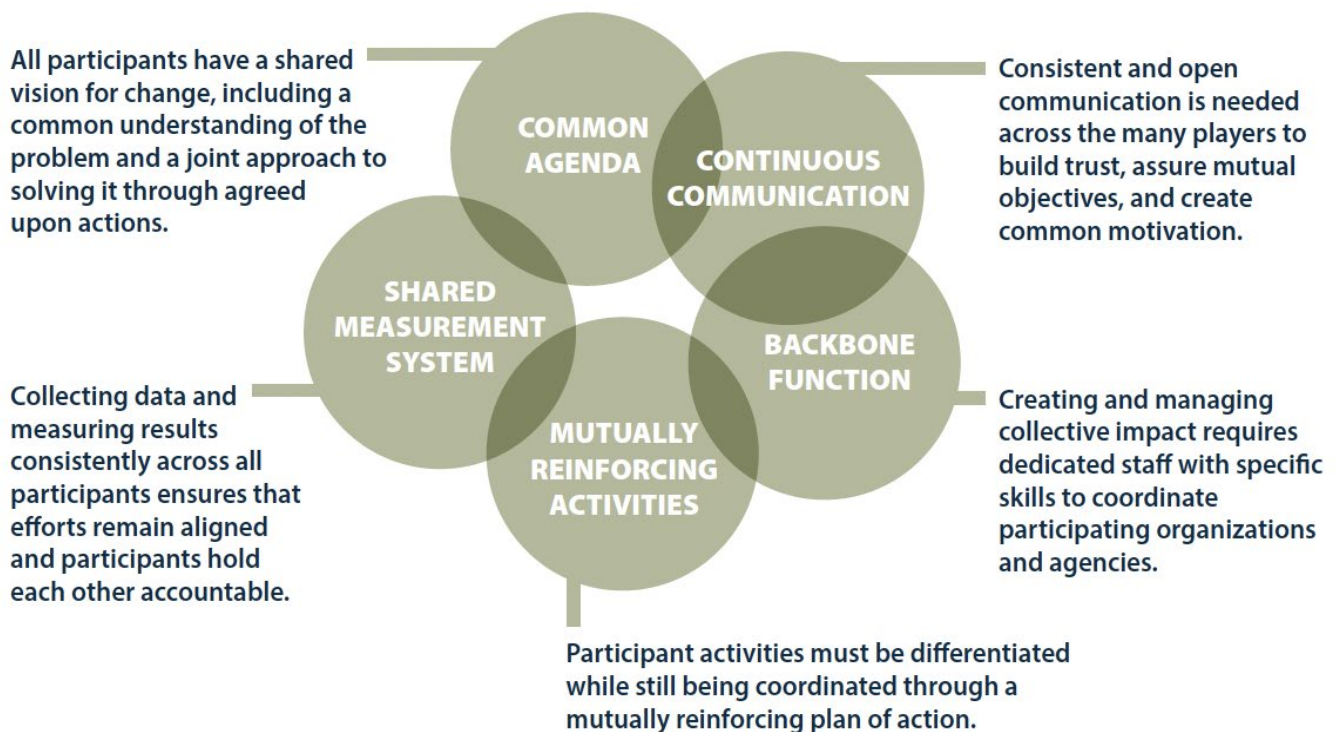


WLA VA Campus

VETERAN ENGAGEMENT

Continuing and robust engagement with Veterans is a critical part of planning and operating the Campus. Specific engagement is needed for:

- Attracting additional and diverse Veterans' voices by canvassers and printed announcements at the Medical Center and service centers
- Tapping into the Southland Veterans community and getting their collaboration/guidance/investment in the Commons businesses
- Engaging Veterans in a pop up center that welcomes, informs, and gathers information for The Commons while it is being developed
- Working with the Veterans Collective to therapeutically normalize how the Commons operates within the community
- Responding to previous Veterans' comments and requests, for instance, engaging the Public Library to operate a satellite branch or the Book Bike.
- Listening to the Veterans



LEGAL

The legal issues of the Campus are complicated and politically charged. In the planning of the Town Center, the most critical issue is use so that the newly conceived Commons has the right mix of activities and business to succeed economically and socially. The Panel is recommending at the next stage, the legality of the following uses, are determined or new Federal legislation is pursued regarding the ability to develop:

- Alternative uses such as hotels
- Mixed-use such as retail combined with housing



FINANCING

The financing strategy for housing is being implemented but that for the commercial and mixed-use development need additional planning. Existing West LA lease revenues (e.g., Brentwood School, UCLA) should remain locally to support West LA Campus redevelopment. Given the constraints with conventional financing, the Panel recommends developing a Commons financing strategy leveraging a variety of sources including:

- Philanthropic and private grants
- Federal / state / local grants, incentives, tax credits
- Naming rights / signage and graphics / corporate sponsorship



Heroes Golf Course, WLA VA North Campus



Rose Garden Bench, WLA VA North Campus

OPERATIONS

The operations of the North Campus, similarly to the other aspects of implementation, are broad and complex. While the Panel had limited ability to address the intricacies of the issues, the following are recommendations pertinent to The Commons/Town Center:

- Use the HOA to fund common area operating costs
- Select a qualified master retail operator to manage new retail and services at The Commons
- Understand the role of VA Canteen and VA Canteen's ability to sublease to Vet-owned retailers
- Assess the ability to integrate a volunteer program into retail/services operations
- Evaluate the ability to transition non-medical personnel and office uses from South Campus to North Campus to increase foot traffic and support new commercial uses
- Ensure adequate security/public safety costs are included in operating budget for Commons North Campus



Canteen, WLA VA North Campus



WLA VA North Campus

VII. CONCLUSION

NEXT STEPS

The TAP recommendations have the opportunity to become the foundation of the next iteration (2025) of The VA WLA Campus Master Plan Update.

Certain themes became evident during the TAP Panel's discussions that will have an important impact on the success and quality of the Campus redevelopment and specifically on the new Town Center, The Commons. Most importantly, this included the priority of the Veterans' voice as well as the development program and housing, quality of open space, wayfinding and identity, and sustainability among others. The actions needed to address future planning include:

- Any plan revisions/updates should not impede the progress of increasing permanently supportive housing on the North Campus.
- Assess PEIS implications related to Commons' alternatives
- Conduct a comprehensive mobility and parking plan
- Accelerate the historic tree survey
- Increase the focus on open space/landscape including a landscape master plan
- Evaluate outdoor thermal comfort, site energy needs, and potential future technologies
- Improve site access
- Evaluate and enhance wayfinding and identity
- Create design guidelines - site planning, architecture, open space, sustainability, signage
- Incorporate social programming to support mission purpose
- Listen to the Veterans



WLA VA North Campus

VALUE FOR OUR VETERANS

The North Campus will be a home for over 2,000 Veterans and a destination for many more. The recommendations of the TAP Panel will lead to a Campus that better supports Veterans' needs with improved Campus physical conditions, new and implementable programs, and efficiently and appropriately managed resources. The Campus will be a place that honors and cares for Veterans and a place that affirms the public's pride.

- Creates a more welcoming, responsive, supportive, and uplifting environment.
- Provides social, clinical, vocational, financial, and legal Veteran-related services on North Campus.
- Engages Veterans with programs and facilities for continuing education, creative outlets, maker studios and similar activities.

- Adds easily accessible basic retail, Veteran services, and health providers.
- Widens options for food and beverage outlets from coffee houses to restaurants.
- Partners with Veteran-run businesses offering jobs and entrepreneurship training
- Offers social spaces for resident Veterans to interact with one another as well as with offsite Veterans.
- Becomes a regional magnet for Veteran connection, camaraderie, and collaboration.
- Honors the service of all Veterans - from the Civil War to the present day and beyond.
- The Campus communicates the community's pride and thanks to those who serve



VIII. APPENDIX

RESOURCES

Websites:

StoryCorps Military Voices Initiative

<https://storycorps.org/discover/military-voices/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System Draft Master Plan 2022-2027

<https://www.va.gov/greater-los-angeles-health-care/programs/va-west-los-angeles-campus-master-plan/>

West Los Angeles VA National Register Historic District Landscape, 2018

https://draft-master-plan-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/media/uploads/2018/12/06/WLA_Landscape_Survey_Report.pdf

West LA Veterans Collective, West LA VA North Campus Community Plan

https://draft-master-plan-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/media/uploads/2021/08/19/21-0818_WLAVA_Community_Plan_ALL_CHAPTERS_v7.pdf

Whatever Happened to the Old Soldier's Home at West LA VA?

<https://www.va.gov/greater-los-angeles-health-care/stories/whatever-happened-to-the-old-soldiers-home-at-west-la-va/>

Books:

Guidara, Will, *Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power of Giving People More Than They Expect*, Optimism Press, 2022.

Klinenber, Eric, *Palaces for the People; how social infrastructure can help fight inequality, polarization, and the decline of civic life*, Crown Publishing Group, 2018.

Marcus, Clare Cooper, *House as a Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home*, Conari Press, 1995

Murthy, Vivek H., *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*, Harper Wave, 2020.



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(VAGLAHS)

Vets Advocacy



PANEL



TAP Panelists (From left to right)- FRONT ROW: Emily Williams, Lisa Cahan Davis, Sandra Kulli, Claudia Carol, Brian Jones, Marty Borko, Sabrina Bornstein, Walter Maynard MIDDLE ROW: Daviad Abasta, Roberto Vazquez, Bob Gardner, Diana Skidmore, Ron Altoon, Neal Payton, BACK ROW: Tony June, Nicholas Stefanoni, Alan Freeman, Alfred Fraijo, Jerome Champion, Murray McQueen



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