



**VA GREATER LOS ANGELES
HOMELESS VETERAN
REPORT CARD**

PREPARED BY VETS ADVOCACY

June 1, 2017



ABOUT VETS ADVOCACY

Vets Advocacy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit created as part of the landmark settlement in the *Valentini v. Shinseki* litigation, a class-action brought on behalf of homeless and disabled veterans to end the scourge of veteran homelessness in Los Angeles. Vets Advocacy serves as an advocacy organization to sustain the promises and commitments made in the *Valentini* settlement agreement to Los Angeles' population of vulnerable veterans, including the revitalization of the 388-acre West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs campus. The board of Vets Advocacy consists of representatives of the *Valentini* plaintiff class, veteran advocates and veterans:

- Gary Blasi – Professor of Law Emeritus, UCLA School of Law and Special Counsel to the Opportunity Under Law Initiative at Public Counsel
- Daniel Garcia – Former Commissioner of Los Angeles City Planning Commission, Los Angeles Police Commission, Los Angeles Airport Commission, and the Los Angeles Redevelopment Agency; Decorated Army combat veteran with service in Vietnam
- ADM Michael G. Mullen, USN (Ret.) – Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Ronald Olson – Name Partner, Munger, Tolles & Olson, LLP
- Robert (Bobby) Shriver, III – Activist, Attorney, and Producer



Executive Summary

In the wake of news that the Los Angeles County homeless veteran population has spiked 57% in the 2017 homeless count compared to the prior year, Vets Advocacy publishes this report card regarding the status of the efforts by the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VA) to revitalize the 388-acre West LA VA campus and ensure a home for every veteran in the Los Angeles area.¹

The need for swift, aggressive, and immediate action to implement the master plan at the 388-acre West LA VA campus could not be more dire. Yesterday, LA's homeless services authority reported a 57% year-over-year spike in homeless veterans in the 2017 homeless count, from roughly 3,071 to 4,828 homeless veterans, rolling back all gains achieved in 2015.² This 57% spike is a clear injustice considering the fact that the Greater LA VA promised two years ago to create a master plan that dedicates 388 acres of unused land at the West LA VA campus to ensure every homeless veteran in Los Angeles has a safe, secure, and decent permanent home. We agree with the *LA Times* Editorial Board that “the accumulation of delays holding back the master plan’s implementation is disturbing.”³

Today’s report card recognizes that the Greater LA VA has made some progress on its promise of change and revitalization at the West LA VA campus. The agency worked to prepare a Draft Master Plan, wound down some of the illegal leases, and began the process of preparing the campus for revitalization. But change at the West LA VA campus is too slow, and the pace of change is slowing as well, with unjustified delays and inadequate staffing to achieve the irreversible momentum former Secretary of the VA Robert McDonald envisioned two years ago. In addition, the Greater LA VA has failed to fulfill key public commitments it has made since the settlement of the *Valentini* litigation. The Greater LA VA needs to accelerate the implementation of the Draft Master Plan, the termination of all non-veteran-centric leases, and compliance with the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016 and must hold itself more accountable to its public commitments.

Specifically, today’s report card analyzes progress or the lack thereof with respect to key public commitments required of the Greater LA VA since the *Valentini* settlement agreement:

- *Illegal Leases*: The mandate in the Valentini settlement agreement was for both the VA and Vets Advocacy to “develop an exit strategy for those non-VA entities now

¹ See Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, Data Summary, Los Angeles County, <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=1353-homeless-count-2017-countywide-results.pdf>.

² See Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 2016 Homeless Count Results Los Angeles County and LA Continuum of Care, <https://documents.lahsa.org/Planning/homelesscount/2016/factsheet/2016-HC-Results.pdf>.

³ See The Times Editorial Board, *Los Angeles Times*, “Let’s get this housing for homeless veterans built already,” May 29, 2017, available at <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-va-permanent-housing-20170529-story.html> (the “Editorial”).



located at VA's West LA campus.”⁴ In some instances, the Greater LA VA has failed to publicly disclose the final lease agreements or compliance reports and has failed to meaningfully engage with Vets Advocacy.

- *Master Plan*: The Greater LA VA has demonstrated clear deficiencies with respect to the implementation of the Draft Master Plan. Progress on the implementation of the Draft Master Plan has slowed, with the implementation of the initial phase of 480 units of supportive housing being delayed by 18 months. Moreover, the Greater LA VA has shown signs of implementing the master plan on an ad-hoc, piecemeal basis, with developments planned building-by-building, rather than programmatically pursuant to the Draft Master Plan. The Draft Master Plan envisioned the revitalization of a full-service veteran community, not single-site housing projects.
- *Building 209*: Building 209 is still not in service as permanent supportive housing.
- *Federal Advisory Committee Act*: On May 24, 2017, Secretary Shulkin established the Community Veteran Oversight and Engagement Board as was required by the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016. The Secretary must now work to immediately appoint members to the CVOEB in compliance with the legislation.
- *HUD-VASH Program*: Despite repeated promises, there is still not a consolidated tracking system to report a veterans' progress, or lack thereof, toward housing from the moment the Greater LA VA identifies his/her date of homelessness.

While the focus of today's report card is the Greater LA VA, Vets Advocacy agrees with the *Los Angeles Times* Editorial Board that “one important thing missing from this project is the voice of new Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin.”⁵ As did the Editorial Board, we urge Secretary Shulkin to “make his commitment to [the Draft Master Plan] clear and then do everything within his power to facilitate it.” With the recent 57% spike in LA County's homeless veteran population, there's no time to spare.

⁴ See Principles for a Partnership and Framework for Settlement, dated as of January 28, 2015, by and Between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Representatives of the Plaintiffs, available at https://www.aclusocal.org/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/012815-West-Los-Angeles-California-Principles-for-Partnership-Framework-for-Settlement-Executed.ocr_.pdf (hereinafter, the “Principles for Partnership”).

⁵ See the Editorial.



Introduction

Los Angeles remains the capital of veteran homelessness in the United States. Over 4,800 veterans are homeless in Los Angeles County according to the official 2017 homeless count.¹ When the Los Angeles County homeless veteran population was 4,016 according to the 2015 homeless count, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) entered into a written agreement with representatives and advocates of homeless veterans promising to end the scourge of veteran homelessness once and for all in the region.² The VA’s commitment centered on the revitalization of the 388-acre West LA VA campus, at the corner of Wilshire Blvd. and Sepulveda, with the development of up to 1,200 homes in less than three years for homeless veterans.

Since entering into that written agreement over two years ago, which settled the *Valentini v. Shinseki* litigation, the VA has made some progress on its promise of change and revitalization at the West LA VA campus. The agency worked to prepare a Draft Master Plan, wound down some of the illegal leases on the campus, and began the process of preparing the campus for revitalization into a vibrant, safe, and service-rich veteran community. But change at the West LA VA campus is moving too slowly, and the pace of change is slowing as well, with unjustified delays and inadequate staffing to achieve the irreversible momentum Secretary McDonald envisioned two years ago. In addition, the VA has failed to fulfill key public commitments it has made since the settlement of the *Valentini* litigation. The VA needs to accelerate the implementation of the Draft Master Plan, the termination of all non-veteran-centric leases, and compliance with the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016 and must hold itself more accountable to its public commitments. Vets Advocacy submits the following report card on the VA’s progress at the West LA VA campus and managing certain aspects of the HUD-VASH homeless veteran housing program in Los Angeles.

Background

The Lawsuit

On June 8, 2011, Greg Valentini, an Army veteran who had served in Afghanistan and Iraq, filed a class action lawsuit as lead plaintiff against Eric Shinseki, then Secretary of the VA, and Donna M. Beiter, then Director of the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System. Mr. Valentini and his fellow named plaintiffs – Adrian Moraru, Jane Doe and Chris Romine – represented a class of homeless and disabled veterans who had suffered years of governmental neglect following their service to our country. Their lawsuit focused on VA’s misuse of nearly 388 acres located approximately five miles from the Pacific Ocean in West Los Angeles. They were joined in the suit by Vietnam Veterans of America and Carolina Winston Barrie, a descendant of

¹ See Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 2017 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, Data Summary, Los Angeles County, <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=1353-homeless-count-2017-countywide-results.pdf>.

² See Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, 2015 Homeless Count Results, County of Los Angeles, available at <https://documents.lahsa.org/Planning/homelesscount/2015/factsheet/LACounty.pdf>; see also the Principles for Partnership.



one of the two distinguished families that had deeded this land to the federal government in 1888. The site was deeded to serve as a permanent soldier's home for disabled war veterans. By 2011, however, VA was no longer accepting residents at the West LA Campus, and meaningful portions of the land were being illegally leased for commercial use or not being used at all.

The *Valentini* litigation sought, among other things, to right these wrongs and specifically to reduce the number of homeless veterans by restoring the West LA VA campus to its historic purpose as a Soldiers' Home. Four years of hard-fought litigation followed, with the VA inexplicably defending its illegal leases on the campus without any benefit to veterans and no apparent line of sight to a resolution. But a turning point came with an order from a federal judge that shifted the balance of power in favor of the *Valentini* plaintiffs. On August 29, 2013, Judge James Otero decreed eleven leases on the West LA Campus to be "unauthorized by law and therefore void." The eleven leases included the leases for the baseball stadium of the University of California – Los Angeles, a \$20 million athletic complex funded primarily by wealthy families at the Brentwood School, and a laundry facility for a Marriot hotel. There were also land use agreements for parking for a bus company and a dog park. Los Angeles was at the time (and remains) the capital of veteran homelessness in the United States.

The Settlement and the Partnership Between the VA and Vets Advocacy

After entry of this federal court order, another turning point came with the appointment of Robert A. McDonald as the Secretary of the VA in July 2014. Secretary McDonald and lawyers and advocates for the *Valentini* plaintiffs together envisioned a path to partnership between VA and plaintiffs' representatives. On January 28, 2015, Secretary McDonald and the plaintiffs' representatives entered into a historic settlement of the *Valentini* litigation. In the settlement, VA and the plaintiffs' representatives pledged to cooperate and work together in good faith to coordinate preparation of a new master plan for the West LA Campus. A key purpose of the plan would be to restore the West LA VA campus to its historic purpose as a "Soldiers Home," with a focus on homeless veterans and underserved populations such as female veterans, aging veterans and those who are disabled. As part of the settlement, the plaintiffs' representatives undertook to form a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation to work with VA, local, state and other federal authorities, and community stakeholders to help meet the objectives and goals of the settlement. That nonprofit corporation is Vets Advocacy, which is the organization issuing today's report card.

The partnership between the VA and Vets Advocacy led to a number of positive developments for the campus and the veteran community. After the VA took a first step in creating an initial draft master plan for the campus that was rejected as inadequate, Vets Advocacy financed the completion of the master plan by engaging the planning firm Johnson Fain. The VA received over 1,000 public comments regarding the master plan. To help the VA solicit comments, Vets Advocacy formed a platoon of well-informed and active veterans and conducted a community education and engagement program. The community engagement program for the master plan was unprecedented for the VA, leading to more comments in response to a VA solicitation for comments in the Federal Register than any prior VA solicitation. The public comment period demonstrated the enormous public interest in the revitalization of the West LA VA campus. The



VA and Vets Advocacy cooperated to review and respond to the trove of public comments by revising the initial draft master plan accordingly or otherwise responding through the Federal Register.

The Draft Master Plan and the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016

In January 2016, Secretary McDonald adopted a Draft Master Plan for the West LA VA campus that was historic, ambitious, and reflective of a strong new commitment at the agency.³ The Draft Master Plan called for the development of 1,200 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans, a focus on three high need veteran subpopulations of the chronically homeless, the aging, and women, and necessary service enhancements. The Draft Master Plan established a phasing schedule that included an initial phase of development, with 490 units within 30 months after the passage of requisite federal legislation. All leases that are not determined to be veteran-centric would be terminated as soon as possible, and veteran-centric leases became part of the land use plans under the Draft Master Plan, subject to alternative uses. There was an express acknowledgement that the Draft Master Plan required further study and elaboration, preconceiving the creation of a final master plan that would be more detailed and implementable.

Nearly eight months after Secretary McDonald's adoption of the Draft Master Plan, the President signed into law the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016.⁴ This legislation recognized the sad history of waste, abuse, and miscarriages of justice in LA's VA system and underscored the need to put the veterans and their families first. The legislation permitted the Secretary to implement the Draft Master Plan by giving him new powers to enter into leases if and only if such leases principally benefit veterans and their families. The leases under the legislation must benefit veterans and their families directly, not through the mere generation of revenue for veteran programs. Further, all rents and fees charged to the tenants pursuant to leases created by the legislation would be reinvested exclusively for the renovation and maintenance of the land and facilities at the campus.

After adoption of the Draft Master Plan and passage of the legislation, the VA and Vets Advocacy saw a clear need to update the partnership established by the *Valentini* settlement agreement. On January 12, 2017, they entered into a Restatement of the Settlement Agreement, the terms of which were approved by Secretary Bob McDonald.⁵ In the agreement, both sides acknowledged the productive relationship created by the initial *Valentini* settlement agreement. They agreed to share information with each other in a timely manner that is pertinent to the revitalization of the West LA VA campus and to provide access to personnel and consultants involved in the revitalization of the campus. Further, both parties agreed to cooperate and coordinate in providing similarly relevant information to veterans.

³ See Draft Master Plan, available at <https://www.losangeles.va.gov/MasterPlan/> ("Draft Master Plan").

⁴ See West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016, Pub. L. No. 114-226 (2016), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5936> ("West Los Angeles Leasing Act").

⁵ See Restatement of Settlement Agreement, dated as of January 12, 2017, by and between Vets Advocacy and the VA.



Post-Master Plan Community Engagement and Accountability

After the historic public comment process involving the Draft Master Plan, the VA made a commitment in the Draft Master Plan to continue to engage veterans and other stakeholders through a Los Angeles Region Community Veteran Engagement Board (the “CVEB”).⁶ The CVEB is part of the MyVA Community programs to empower veteran advocates, service providers, veterans, and stakeholders to have a voice and continue the community engagement process. The VA established a steering committee in March 2016 to develop a framework for creating a CVEB in the Los Angeles region. In June 2016, after soliciting nominations and conducting public elections, the VA established a provisional CVEB to draft and adopt a charter for the permanent CVEB and appoint members to the permanent CVEB. The permanent CVEB commenced its activities in January 2017. A West LA VA Master Plan Communications Subcommittee was further established to continue community outreach and engagement regarding the implementation of the Draft Master Plan. That subcommittee has commenced its activities with the selection of its initial members and adoption of an official charter.

During the public comment period for the Draft Master Plan, Vets Advocacy heard repeatedly from the veteran community that there needed to be greater accountability, transparency, and oversight over the VA’s activities on the campus. The veteran community had expressed a severe lack of trust in the VA and of accountability to the local community. After a coordinated lobbying effort involving the Secretary of the VA and Vets Advocacy, Congress responded positively and the President signed the legislation. The legislation provided for a Community Veterans Oversight and Engagement Board to be created within 180 days of passage of the legislation, with the power to advise the Secretary of the VA regarding implementation of the master plan.⁷ In early 2017, based on advice from the VA’s Office of General Counsel, it was determined that the CVEB would not satisfy the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, meaning a new and different board would need to be created. On May 24, 2017, the Secretary of the VA established the CVOEB with the adoption of its official charter. The Secretary hasn’t appointed anybody to the CVOEB yet.

The Report Card

Methodology

Vets Advocacy’s core mission is to advocate for the veteran community, particularly the interests of homeless and disabled veterans represented by the *Valentini* plaintiffs. Vets Advocacy values its partnership with the VA, but the need to fulfill its mission is paramount. Vets Advocacy has engaged with the VA on several fronts. These engagements can be productive and fruitful. For example, tremendous benefits emerged when the VA and Vets Advocacy cooperated to finance and complete the Draft Master Plan and conduct community outreach and engagement

⁶ See Los Angeles Regional – Community Veterans Engagement Board, available at lar-cveb.org; see also Community Veterans Engagement Board, available at <https://www.losangeles.va.gov/cveb/>.

⁷ See West Los Angeles Leasing Act.



during the public comment period. But more recently, the engagements and cooperation have yielded less benefits. Despite Vets Advocacy's patience and commitment to partnership, the VA has proven it lacks the resolve to restore the West LA VA campus to its historic purpose as a Soldiers Home with all necessary speed to match the pace of veteran homelessness. Progress has slowed when it comes to terminating leases that are not veteran-centric, implementing the Draft Master Plan in a timely and effective manner, and complying with key mandates in the federal legislation.

We submit the following report card evaluating the progress of change at the West LA VA campus. The focus of the report card is on the key commitments to the veteran community made in the *Valentini* settlement agreement, the Draft Master Plan, and the federal legislation. The report card covers the progress made in the following key areas:

- Termination of the remaining non-veteran-centric leases at the West LA VA campus.
- Implementation of the Draft Master Plan and completing a more detailed master plan.
- Conversion of Building 209 to permanent supportive housing.
- Implementation of the Community Veteran Oversight and Engagement Board as a federal advisory committee.
- Implementation of the HUD-VASH program in the Los Angeles region.

This report card is submitted in the spirit of partnership with VA and with the shared goal of serving those we sent to war on behalf of our country.

Evaluation Criteria

For each key area, we evaluated the VA by asking three questions:

1. Did the VA comply with its public commitments and mandates?
2. Was the VA's compliance timely and adequate?
3. Was the VA reasonably transparent, open, and accountable to the public, including Vets Advocacy, in the course of its compliance?

After determining the quality of the VA's performance in each key area on the basis of the above criteria, we assigned the following grades:

- Excellent: VA's compliance was significantly ahead of schedule and exceeds expectations, and the VA exceeded expectations in being transparent, open, and accountable to the public.
- Satisfactory: VA's compliance was approximately on schedule and was adequate, and the VA met expectations in being transparent, open, and accountable to the public.
- Needs Improvement: VA's compliance was untimely and/or inadequate, and the VA failed to be transparent, open, and accountable to the public.



- Failing: VA's compliance was significantly off schedule and significantly lacking, and the VA failed to be transparent, open, and accountable to the public.

For purposes of our evaluation, the relevant public commitments and mandates are contained in the following key documents:

- the judgment entered by the federal district court;
- the *Valentini* settlement agreement;
- the written strategy for homelessness prepared pursuant to the *Valentini* settlement agreement;
- the Draft Master Plan;
- the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016; and
- the restated *Valentini* settlement agreement.

The Report Card

Key Area	Grade	Narrative Description
Illegal Leases	Needs Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In August 2013, a federal district judge had decreed the following leases to be unauthorized and void: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The March 1, 2010 agreement with Brentwood Schools, and any amendments thereto; ○ The March 17, 2000 agreement for laundry services, which was assigned to Sodexo Marriot Laundry Services on May 10, 2001, and any amendments thereto; ○ The May 1, 2001 agreement with UC Regents, and any amendments thereto; ○ The August 10, 2006 agreement with Twentieth Century Fox Television, and any amendments thereto; ○ The August 24, 2007 agreement with Veterans Park Conservancy, and any amendments thereto; ○ The August 6, 2010 agreement with Westside Breakers Soccer Club, and any amendments thereto; ○ The July 15, 2002 agreement with Westside Services, LLC, and any amendments thereto; ○ The July 6, 2006 agreement with TCM, LLC, and any amendments thereto; ○ The filming agreements which the DVA has entered into with various third parties at various times.¹³ • In the <i>Valentini</i> settlement agreement, the VA agreed that both VA and Vets Advocacy would both “develop an exit strategy for those non-VA entities now located at VA’s West LA campus whose use of property at VA’s West LA campus does not both: (a) comply with applicable law; and (b) fit within the New Master Plan references in Paragraph 3.”¹⁴

¹³ Judgment, *Valentini v. Shinseki*, available at https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=2417123243486243079&hl=en&as_sdt=6&as_vis=1&oi=scholar.

¹⁴ Principles for Partnership.

Key Area	Grade	Narrative Description
		<p>As of today:</p> <p>UCLA, Brentwood School, and the City of LA Leases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>UCLA</i>: In December 2016, the VA enter into a 10-year lease with UCLA, granting land for UCLA’s Jackie Robinson baseball stadium in exchange for \$300,000 per year in rent and \$1.35 million per year in in-kind benefits. The in-kind benefits include a new Family Resource and Well-Being Center, a Homeless Mental Health and Addiction Center, a UCLA Veterans Legal Clinic sponsored by its School of Law, and a veterans internship program. ○ <i>Brentwood School</i>: In November 2016, the VA entered into a 10-year lease with the Brentwood School for its \$20 million athletic complex. The Brentwood School agreed to pay \$1.76 million per year in rent and in-kind services. ○ <i>City of Los Angeles</i>: In September 2016, the VA entered into a 3-year revocable license with the City of Los Angeles for the park formerly known as Barrington Park. The City of LA agreed to invest \$350,000 in the park and employment for veterans, to rename the park the Barrington Veterans Park, and to give veterans priority access. • The VA demonstrated significant deficiencies regarding the negotiations of the leases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ While Vets Advocacy and other representatives of the <i>Valentini</i> plaintiffs engaged with UCLA representatives during the long period of lease negotiations, Vets Advocacy did not participate directly in the VA-UCLA negotiations. In addition, the VA made clear that it was not seeking and did not need the approval of Vets Advocacy for the final lease. ○ The VA failed to comply with the promise in the <i>Valentini</i> settlement agreement to develop a lease exit strategy together with Vets Advocacy. The VA has failed to be transparent and inclusive of public stakeholders in the negotiation and drafting process and has failed to make the executed leases publicly available.

Key Area	Grade	Narrative Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The VA has failed to make publicly available information regarding whether the tenants under the land use agreements have complied with their obligations, including the payment of rent and the provision of in-kind benefits. ○ Despite these shortcomings, Vets Advocacy hopes that the in-kind benefits being provided by the tenants, including legal services, health and mental health services, and other resources, will be meaningful and valuable to the populations they are intended to serve – vulnerable veterans. Vets Advocacy expects to monitor and evaluate this as the benefits are rolled out to make sure they serve not the constituencies of the tenants, but vulnerable veterans, as is required by the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016. ○ The VA has violated the commitment it made in the Restatement of the Settlement Agreement to give Vets Advocacy timely updates regarding the implementation of the Draft Master Plan, which would include all leases on the campus. The VA has failed to provide Vets Advocacy with updates and status reports with respect to establishing, implementing, and delivering any of the in-kind benefits to veterans. <p>American Red Cross and Westside Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A federal district judge voided the Westside Services land use agreement and the VA has determined the American Red Cross land use agreement does not fit within the Draft Master Plan. ● VA has demonstrated significant shortcomings in terminating these agreements, with terminating activities having stagnated significantly. The VA decided to condemn the Westside Services possessory interest in early 2016, but has now agreed to a voluntary termination by the end of 2017 – nearly two years later. VA has failed to keep Vets Advocacy apprised of the status and progress of these land use agreements or their termination. For example, the VA failed to make available to the public, including Vets Advocacy, the terms of the voluntary termination of the Westside Services lease.

Key Area	Grade	Narrative Description
		<p>Breitburn Oil & Gas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VA and Breitburn Oil have amended a prior lease to provide for the relocation of its pipe storage to make way for the columbarium expansion project and for donation of all revenue to a transportation program run by Disabled American Veterans. • VA has yet to finalize the DAV-Breitburn agreement. While VA has failed to reach agreement with DAV, VA unilaterally reached agreement with Breitburn, without any feedback from Vets Advocacy. The relocation of the columbarium to the Breitburn location is inconsistent with the Draft Master Plan.
Master Plan Implementation	Failing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Draft Master Plan has been slow and has failed to comply with the timeline set forth in the Draft Master Plan. The Draft Master Plan provided for implementation of the first 490 units of permanent supportive housing within 30 months after passage of the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016.¹⁵ In a recent project status report made available to the public, the VA recently revealed an astonishing delay of eighteen months, expecting to complete the initial phase within 48 months after passage of the legislation.¹⁶ The reasons for the delay remain unclear. There has been little to no public outreach and engagement regarding the delay. There has been no effort to mitigate the delays or develop contingency plans. The VA failed to inform Vets Advocacy of the delays or seek its advice for ways to mitigate the delay. The delay is unacceptable in light of the 57% spike in veteran homelessness last year. Further, the purported reason for the delay – the need for an environmental review – does not square with the fact that such environmental review could have happened more quickly. The first environmental scoping meetings are expected to occur in early June, eight months after passage of the legislation. • The number of permanent supportive housing units to be built in the initial phase of implementation has been inexplicably downsized. The Draft Master Plan provided for 210 permanent supportive housing units within 24-30 months after passage of the legislation. The VA has recently stated it will be providing only

¹⁵ See Draft Master Plan.

¹⁶ See VA, West Los Angeles Draft Master Plan, dated April 21, 2017, available at <https://www.losangeles.va.gov/masterplan/documents/DMPDeck.pdf> (the “April Update”).

Key Area	Grade	Narrative Description
		<p>160 permanent supportive housing units within this timeframe instead, without explaining the rationale for this reduction.¹⁷ Moreover, the VA has recently stated the initial phase of implementation will be downsized from 490 to 484 units of permanent supportive housing.¹⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VA has failed to demonstrate progress in consummating a transfer of the CalVet State Home from the State of California to the federal government. A portion of the CalVet State Home under the Draft Master Plan is set to become an integral part of the Town Center for the campus community, and another portion is set to be converted to a nursing home under the care and control of the VA or a VA operator. There were initial discussions with the State of California to effectuate the transfer that is vital to implementation of the Draft Master Plan, but those discussions have stalled. VA has provided no recent updates or status on the CalVet State Home to Vets Advocacy or members of the public. • The VA has achieved some progress in implementing the Draft Master Plan. The VA is expected to put in service 54 permanent supportive housing units shortly (though far slower than we would have liked, as stated below) and states it is scheduled to put 100 more permanent supportive housing units by January 2018 (though 50 less units than promised in the same time frame according to the Draft Master Plan).¹⁹ • The VA has provided very little information regarding the environmental review required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The VA has stated that such review will commence after the date it initially expected.²⁰
Building 209	Needs Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building 209 was one of the first buildings identified by then-Mayor Bobby Shriver as a potential housing site when he began his lobbying efforts to revitalize the West LA VA Campus. Progress has been inexcusably slow. The story of Building 209 is a symbol of the great fear many have of the VA's inability to implement the master plan in a timely and effective manner. • The VA began the conceiving of Building 209 as homeless housing roughly ten

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

Key Area	Grade	Narrative Description
		<p>years ago. In 2010, local elected leaders, including members of Congress, earmarked \$20 million for the development project. It took five more years to complete the renovations of Building 209, and even then, the building was slated not for permanent housing, but for Compensated Work Therapy, a residential VA program for homeless veterans.²¹ Building 209 opened in June 2015 as Compensated Work Therapy, nearly eight years after conception, five years after funding, and three years after the commencement of construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the Draft Master Plan calls for the opening of Building 209 as permanent supportive housing within a year after enactment of the legislation, it should not have taken so long. Moreover, as of the publication of this report, Building 209 has yet to be opened as permanent supportive housing. Moreover, the fact that the VA is touting the imminent opening of Building 209 as permanent supportive housing as a sign of progress underscores the VA's misguided policy of developing the campus building-by-building. The VA has made a public commitment to revitalize the entire campus as a community, not seeking quick wins by fixing a single building in a ten-year timeframe.
Federal Advisory Committee Act	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016 provides that the Secretary of the VA must establish the Community Veteran Oversight and Engagement Board (CVOEB) within 180 days after enactment of the legislation.²² On May 24, 2017, Secretary Shulkin established the CVOEB. The Secretary must now work to immediately appoint members to the CVOEB in compliance with the legislation.

²¹ See Draft Master Plan.

²² See West Los Angeles Leasing Act.

Key Area	Grade	Narrative Description
HUD-VASH Program	Needs Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there are many facets to the Housing & Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program, Vets Advocacy has focused on the need for public display of housing data related to the program in Los Angeles. The VA has failed to publish performance metrics regarding the HUD-VASH program. Such metrics could include, but are not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of HUD-VASH applications in GLA's region • Program enrollment by Housing Authority • Reasons for denial into the HUD-VASH program • Tracking system following identification of homeless veterans that would report time periods at each stage toward housing placement or the failure to achieve housing placements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zip codes to evaluate successful placements • Case Worker: Veteran Ratios • Landlord incidents • Eviction notices (if any) <p>VA has failed to disclose such data to the public, making it impossible for the public to evaluate VA's performance. Vets Advocacy strongly urges the VA to publish metrics on the performance of the HUD-VASH program in LA County through its own publicly-accessible dashboard.</p>