



TRUE INTENT USA



NHDVS



**LAND MEANT FOR VETERANS SINCE
1888 MISUSED: URGENT ACTION
NEEDED TO PROTECT HOMELESS
VETERANS FACING ILLEGALLY
REPURPOSED LAND.**

The West Los Angeles VA Land Racket

History

The west LA VA, formally known as the Pacific Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS), was established in 1888 on nearly 1,000 acres of donated lands.

These lands included a reservoir with water rights, and beachfront property that was to serve as a "pavilion and beach house for the exclusive enjoyment of the residents of the Home". The deeds specifically state that the "U.S. Government is to permanently maintain the properties as a Home for disabled Veterans". There was a total of 10 NHDVS branches throughout the USA as agreed to by acts of Congress and President Lincoln in 1865. The Pacific Branch Home peaked in its intended use after the civil and Indian wars by housing nearly 5,000 disabled Veterans.

In the 1900s, the Sawtelle community began to encroach on the Home and the acreage began to decrease. Soon after, California and the city of Santa Monica usurped the beachfront property, converting it into a public parking space. By 1954 the Home was whittled to 696 acres; today the Home is 388 acres and much of it is being illegally used for non-Veteran purposes.



Valentini v. Shinseki

In June 2011, with the help of the ACLU SoCAL, unhoused disabled Veterans filed a class action lawsuit against Dept. of VA Sec. Eric Shinseki and the director of the VA Greater LA Healthcare System. The suit argued that the VA's benefits program discriminates against Veterans who are unhoused as a result of their severe mental disabilities, because they cannot access the medical, mental health and other services to which they are entitled. The suit also argued that the land was not being used as the deed from 1888 intends—for the specific purpose of providing a Home for disabled Veterans. While hundreds of disabled homeless Veterans were dying on sidewalks, some literally outside the west LA VA, the VA was leasing property to private companies like Enterprise Rent-A-Car for parking space, and Sodexho Marriott for their laundry facilities.

On August 29, 2013, the Honorable S. James Otero, from the U.S. Central District Court of CA,

"ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that the following agreements entered into by the

Department of Veterans Affairs ("DVA") concerning parcels of land and facilities located on the DVA's West LA Campus are unauthorized by law and therefore void:

- **The March 1, 2010 agreement with Brentwood Schools,..;**
- **The March 17, 2000 agreement for laundry services, which was assigned to Sodexo Marriot Laundry Services ...;**
- **The May 1, 2001 agreement with UC Regents (UCLA Research and Baseball),...,**
- **The August 10, 2006 agreement with Twentieth Century Fox Television,...;**
- **The August 24, 2007 agreement with Veterans Park Conservancy,..;**
- **The August 6, 2010 agreement with Westside Breakers Soccer Club,..;**
- **The July 15, 2002 agreement with Westside Services, LLC,...;**
- **The July 6, 2006 agreement with TCM, LLC,...;**
- **And others**

Soon after this ruling, pro-bono attorneys took over the case, and in 2015, they convinced the Court to vacate its judgement in favor of a "Master Plan", not enforceable in any court. The Master Plan called for the VA and stakeholders to find "the most effective use of the campus for veterans, particularly for homeless veterans, including underserved populations, such as female veterans, aging veterans, and those who are severely physically or mentally disabled." The Master Plan called for 490 units of housing by 2019, to which only 54 units were ever rehabilitated.

West LA VA Contracting Officer Pleads Guilty to Federal Charges after Taking nearly \$300,000 in Bribes

In January 2018, Ralph Tillman pleaded guilty to accepting bribes from Westside Services, LLC, a parking lot operator for UCLA, Brentwood Theater, and a country club. Westside Services, LLC was allowed to defraud the VA for more than \$13 million over 10 years. Westside Services, LLC should have been evicted in 2013 under Honorable S. James Otero's ruling.

Office Of Inspector General's Audit of the West Los Angeles VA

In September 2018 the OIG found more than 60% of the VA's land-use agreements were illegal or improper. Some of the agreements included contracts with:

- 1. Association for Parrot C.A.R.E. - Operated Serenity Park, a parrot sanctuary**
- 2. Barrington Parking Lots - Two parking lots (3.9 acres) managed by Westside Services, LLC adjacent to a Brentwood shopping center.**
- 3. Brentwood School - A 21-acre athletic campus for a private school with a \$50,000 yearly per kid tuition and an average \$50 Million in yearly revenue**
- 4. Breitburn - Oil drilling leases on the campus since the 1960s.**
- 5. City of Los Angeles - Veterans' Barrington Park - a 12-acre public park consisting of two softball fields, a dog park, and a parking lot.**
- 6. The Shakespeare Center of Los Angeles - License allowed the use of the Japanese Garden and adjacent parking lots for professional productions of plays open to the public. Tickets for a production in June 2018 ranged from \$1,500 to \$5,000. In exchange for the land use, Veterans that requested tickets to a production entered for free.**

1. **Westside Breakers Club** - A youth soccer organization used MacArthur field without a written land use agreement.
2. **Bandini Foundation Golf Course** — A 9 hole public golf courses.

Veterans Row

In early 2020, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the west LA VA shuttered its doors and ceased services to unhoused Veterans. The encampment of unhoused Veterans outside the VA gates, which has historically plagued San Vicente Blvd just north of Wilshire Blvd, grew exponentially; peaking at nearly 60 Veterans and family members (to include minors and seniors) camping on the curb at any given night. The National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Coalition (NHDVS Coalition) and the dozens of organizations they rallied, stepped-up while the VA stepped down. The NHDVS Coalition and its allies assisted over 350 Veterans and their loved ones survive the pandemic by providing crucial life saving support. The support included matching Veterans with housing and medical services, facilitating non-perishable food donations, providing hot meals to include BBQs, monthly deliveries of needful supplies, sanitary services, and moral boosting events such as comedy shows, all to help Veterans' Row survive nearly 2 years on the street. Unfortunately, not all our brothers survived, seven died on Veterans Row awaiting their services; one Veteran died the night before he was to be housed.



Secretary of the VA, Denis Richard McDonough, Visits Veterans Row

In October 2021, the NHDVS Coalition succeeded in gaining the attention of the Secretary of the VA. After walking Veterans Row, he vowed to fight Veteran homelessness. In early November 2021, Veterans Row was allowed to move onto VA property, about 60 yards from their original location, into the Care, Treatment, Rehabilitation, Service program (CTRS). The Veterans are now in 8'x8' "tiny structure" with no running water, toilets, or the ability to lock their structure. The Veterans are also subjected to property searches and pat downs every time they enter the CTRS encampment. It is also reported that they do not have keys to their structure, visitors are not allowed, the showers are only open for a few hours a day (if they work), staff is insensitive, the grounds are not ADA compliant making it nearly impossible for Veterans in wheelchairs to move about the encampment, and hot chow is rarely provided. On Sep. 9, 2022, a massive fire destroyed 16 tiny structures and damaged an additional 6. The CTRS Veterans that were forced to evacuate reported that the fire extinguishers spread the fire since they were the wrong kind; emergency exits were not usable since they are a 2'x2' flaps near the ground and the elderly and disabled were unable to crouch, crawl and or fit

THROUGH THE SPACE; DEBRIS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS BETWEEN THE STRUCTURES MADE THE FIRE SPREAD QUICKLY; FIRE FIGHTERS WERE UNABLE TO EXTINGUISH THE BLAZE SINCE THE ENCAMPMENT LACKS SUFFICIENT FIRE HYDRANTS.



SANTA MONICA CITY COUNCIL VOTES TO HAVE THE CITY ATTORNEY CONDUCT A TITLE REVIEW OF THE 1888 DEED OF THE BEACH FRONT PROPERTY DEEDED TO DISABLED VETERANS ON JUNE 28, 2022, AFTER A PETITION FROM THE NHDVS COALITION, THE SANTA MONICA CITY COUNCIL VOTED TO RESEARCH THE VALIDITY OF THE DEED, AND IF THE LAND, WHICH CURRENTLY SERVES AS A PUBLIC PARKING LOT, IS INDEED BEING USED AS THE DEED STATES, "SPECIFICALLY AND PERMANENTLY FOR THE HEALING AND ENJOYMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES."



THE NEW MASTER PLAN OF 2022 AND SECTION 705 OF THE PACT ACT OF 2022 AS A RESULT OF THE OLD MASTER PLAN, (NOW REFERRED TO BY THE VA AS THE DRAFT MASTER PLAN), ONLY 54 HOUSING UNITS OF THE INTENDED 490 UNITS WERE BUILT. UCLA CONTINUES TO OPERATE AND INCREASED THEIR HOLDINGS BY BUILDING A SECOND PRACTICE BASEBALL STADIUM, THEY ALSO CURRENTLY OCCUPY NEARLY A DOZEN BUILDINGS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES OR ARE KEPT EMPTY. BRENTWOOD SCHOOL CONTINUES TO OPERATE A 20-ACRE LUXURY SPORTS COMPLEX FOR K-12 GRADES. BANDINI GOLF COURSE CONTINUES TO OPERATE AND IS KNOWN IN THE BRENTWOOD COMMUNITY AS "LA'S BEST KEPT SECRET" DUE TO ITS \$9 FEE. BREITBURN OIL CONTINUES TO OPERATE. CALTRANS CONTINUES TO OPERATE. CITY OF LOS ANGELES - VETERANS' BARRINGTON PUBLIC PARK CONTINUES TO OPERATE, THE DOG PARK TOO. PUBLIC PARKING LOTS CONTINUE TO OPERATE. IN ADDITION, LA METRO IS NOW OPERATING ON THE HOME AND IS CURRENTLY BUILDING A PUBLIC TRAIN STOP WITH ONE THOUSAND PARKING SPACES IN TIME FOR THE 2028 OLYMPICS. THE NEW MASTER PLAN CALLS FOR ONE BRENTWOOD DEVELOPER TO DEVELOP 700 ACRES OF THE NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS. THEY WILL HAVE THE HONOR OF BUILDING A PUBLIC DOWNTOWN BRENTWOOD CENTER, TO INCLUDE A PROMENADE WITH RETAIL SPACE, BIKE LANES, PARKS, AND THEATERS. THEY ALSO INTEND TO BUILD 1200 UNITS OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING OVER 10 YEARS, WITH 120 UNITS READY PER YEAR. THE PUBLIC RETAIL SPACES ARE SCHEDULED TO OPEN BEFORE ANY HOUSING,

The developer and the current illegal land occupiers managed to get Sec. 705 entered into the newly enacted PACT Act, without anybody's knowledge in an overnight session. The PACT Act that was signed into law is not the act that Veterans Service Organizations like the VFW and American Legion agreed to. Section 705 states that"

"(2) (A) The Secretary may enter into an enhanced-use lease on or after the date of the enactment of this paragraph only if the Secretary determines— ...

"(1) the lease will enhance the use of the leased property by directly or indirectly benefitting veterans; or ...

"(iii) provide services or benefits that indirectly support veterans.".

(b) EXTENSION OF MAXIMUM TERM OF ENHANCED-USE LEASE.—Section 8162(b)(2)

of such title is amended by striking "75 years" and inserting "99 years". "99year leases to entities that indirectly support Veterans, such as Brentwood School and UCLA baseball, is outright land theft and immoral. In 2021, Los Angeles County had an estimated 3,900 unhoused Veterans and our nation had over 40,000. Since the lawsuit and the OIG audit finding these entities illegal, they have not built any single unit of supportive housing for Veterans. The entities that are currently indirectly supporting Veterans, now wish to do so for the next 99years. On top of that, more entities are planning to lease 380acres of the remaining 388acres left of the Nation Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

Action Items-how you can help!

1. Contact your State Attorney General and demand they review the evidence at the following websites. Demand they help disabled Veterans regain their National Home.

1. @Nhdvs on instagram
2. www.trueintentusa.org/va-news
3. Valentini v. Shinseki | ACLU of Southern California (aclusocal.org)
4. For further information please contact
5. Ryan Thompson at: rt@nhdvs.net
6. Francisco Juarez at: westsideservice@yahoo.com
7. Ruben Ventura at: rubenv@trueintenrusa.org