

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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Los Angeles, CA 90050
<http://www.highlandparknc.com>
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CALIFORNIA



DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT

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January 15, 2015

Mayor Garcetti

Members of the City Council

200 N. Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council represents over 60,000 Los Angeles stakeholders who reside, own property, or conduct business in our neighborhood. There is increasing concern here, as in other areas of Los Angeles, about the state of the homeless in our city and, especially, that the plight of the over six thousand homeless veterans given we owe these men and women a debt we can never repay for their service to their country.

In 2009, the Obama Administration committed to ending veteran homelessness in the U.S. by the end of 2015 and, more recently, Mayor Garcetti pledged to end veteran homelessness in Los Angeles in 2015. Furthermore, the VA in March of 2014 committed to find permanent solutions for chronically homeless veterans.

Under one of the last Acts passed by President Lincoln, a care home for disabled American volunteers was established in 1887 on 300 acres donated by Senator John P. Jones and Arcadia Bandini de Stearns Baker, later expanded to 520 acres and including the veterans' cemetery, a hospital and numerous outbuildings.

In 2013, U.S. District Judge James Otero ruled in favor of several public interest law groups who had filed on behalf of homeless and mentally disabled veterans that the VA had illegally leased some of this land to outside interests, including to UCLA for a baseball stadium. By law any VA land-sharing agreement must specifically provide healthcare resources for veterans. While this is on appeal, far too many of our veterans remain uncared for on our streets.

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council respectfully requests that the Los Angeles City Council direct the City of Los Angeles with all of its resources and the Veterans Affairs to immediately open a large-scale Crisis Humanitarian Relief Project on available portions of the West Los Angeles property for the purpose of housing and caring for these thousands of disabled and homeless veterans.

Sincerely,

Monica Alcaraz, President
Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council