

## CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219  
VOICE (415) 904-5200  
FAX (415) 904-5400  
TDD (415) 597-5885



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original staff report](#)

# F8b

June 9, 2015

To: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Parties

From: Mark Delaplaine, Manager, Energy, Ocean Resources and Federal Consistency  
Joseph Street, Environmental Scientist

Subject: **Addendum to CD-0003-15 – San Francisco Veterans Affairs  
Medical Center Long Range Development Plan, Phase 1**

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This addendum provides correspondence received by staff in response to the above-referenced staff report and staff's responses to comments, which are hereby also incorporated into staff's proposed Commission findings. This correspondence does not change staff's recommendation that the Commission **concur** with CD-0003-15.

### Correspondence Received

- E-mail from C. K. Wai to Joseph Street, Coastal Commission, June 2, 2015
- E-mail from Raymond Holland to Joseph Street, Coastal Commission, June 5, 2015
- Letter from Julie Burns, Friends of Land's End, Richard Corriea, Planning Association for the Richmond, Amy Meyer, People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Jason Jungreis, Coalition to Save Ocean Beach, and Thomas Kuhn, Friends of Sutro Park, to Coastal Commission, June 8, 2015

### Staff Response to Comments

In the attached correspondence, the public commenters urge the Commission to object to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) consistency determination. These requests are based on several points. Commission staff provides the following summary and response to each of these points and hereby amends its proposed Commission findings to include these responses:

#### *The Consistency Determination is Premature*

In the attached correspondence dated June 5, 2015, Mr. Raymond Holland asserts that the VA's consistency determination for the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center (SFVAMC) Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), Phase 1, is premature for the following reasons:

- (1) The LRDP is incomplete, the 2014 LRDP is still a draft, and it is not clear on which version of the LRDP the consistency determination would be based;
- (2) The Programmatic Agreement between the VA, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), executed in January, 2015, has not been fully performed and a final Finding of Effect (FOE) has not been issued;
- (3) No Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been issued for the proposed project, and the comments and suggestions submitted on the March 2015 Supplemental Draft EIS have not yet been reviewed and acted upon;

The latter point, on the absence of a Supplemental Final EIS, is echoed in the attached letter, dated June 8, 2015, submitted by Ms. Julie Burns and co-authors on behalf of five organizations. Ms. Burns' letter also asserts that the proposed replacement of the existing on-campus water tower with underground tanks will require engineering and geotechnical investigations, and that a consistency determination is premature until those studies have been completed.

The VA's consistency determination is based on the current version of the LRDP, dated January 31, 2014. The VA does not characterize this version of the LRDP as a "draft", but it does note that the LRDP is a living document that can and will be updated from time to time as its needs and development plans for the SFVAMC campus evolve. In the meantime, the VA has formally submitted a consistency determination for this current version for the Commission's review, triggering the Commission's review responsibilities, and there is no ambiguity as to which version is being reviewed. In the event that substantive changes are made to the LRDP and/or the development projects contained within the LRDP in the future, the VA would be required to submit additional consistency determinations to the Coastal Commission for federal consistency review under the Coastal Zone Management Act. The 2014 LRDP is the latest in a series of SFVAMC actions that have been reviewed by the Commission, and it is anticipated that this process will continue in the future.

The VA and SHPO initiated formal consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act on May 11, 2012, and on January 9, 2015, issued a Programmatic Agreement outlining reasonable measures to mitigate adverse impacts on historic properties. In addition, the SHPO has formally concurred (as of July 13, 2013) with the VA's Finding of Effect. Implementation of the mitigation measures identified by the SHPO will satisfy the requirements of Coastal Act Section 30244 for the protection of historic resources.

Under the consistency regulations (15 CFR 930.37), the Commission cannot hold up its review pending finalization of an EIS. Commission staff has reviewed all comments submitted on the SDEIS. In addition, if future project changes occur, the Commission can review them under the federal consistency "reopener" procedures. Also, the Commission is not a party to any settlement.

As a recent change in the VA's development plans for the SFVAMC campus, the water tower is not a part of the project subject to the consistency determination before the Commission. Replacing it with underground tanks may, depending on its impacts, be subject to separate federal consistency review by the Commission at a future date.

*Parking at the SFVAMC is Inadequate; Parking Spill-over into Surrounding Areas Will Impede Coastal Access; the VA's Parking Analysis is Flawed;*

The attached correspondence from Mr. Holland, Ms. Burns and co-authors, and Mr. C. K. Wai (June 2, 2015), makes the following points on the issue of on-campus parking and the adverse effects of parking “spill-over” on coastal access and recreation:

- (1) Existing parking facilities at the SFVAMC are inadequate to meet current demand, as evidenced by a 700 vehicle parking deficit identified in the August 2012 Draft EIS for the 2012 iteration of the LRDP;
- (2) The VA should be required to eliminate the existing on-campus parking deficit before construction of any new buildings;
- (3) The number of new parking spaces provided by Phase 1 development is insufficient, and thus inconsistent with the Coastal Act Section 30252 requirement that new development provide adequate parking facilities;
- (4) Parking spill-over from the SFVAMC campus into surrounding recreation areas results in conflict for parking between visitors seeking coastal access and SFVAMC personnel, impeding coastal access and recreation; Phase 1 development will aggravate this problem;
- (5) The parking and traffic analyses contained in the 2014 Supplemental Draft EIS are flawed because (a) the VA projected future parking demand based only on its own employees, and neglected other campus users, such as interns, residents and researchers from other institutions; (b) the off-campus area considered in the analyses was of insufficient size and cannot be considered a “representative sampling”.

The comments summarized above highlight long-standing concerns over the effects of overflow parking from the SFVAMC on the surrounding community. There have been times in the past when these on-site parking deficiencies have raised legitimate Coastal Act access and recreation concerns. However, Commission staff believes that the proposed Phase 1 development does not raise these concerns, and would reduce parking needs.

The proposed project consists of the VA's Phase 1 long range development plan, which would add new buildings and facilities, including parking structures, to the existing campus. The Commission's role is to assess the consistency of the proposed project with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act, not to correct historical problems in the baseline condition that are not being exacerbated by the proposed project. Thus, with respect to consistency with section 30252 of the Coastal Act (“The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast . . .”), the question facing the Commission is limited to whether Phase 1 development would generate additional demand for parking that cannot be absorbed by the existing or proposed on-campus supply, resulting in overflow into public parking spaces in the coastal zone at times and in such a manner that it would interfere with public access to the coast. Information provided by the VA and its traffic and parking consultant indicates that the net number of parking spaces created during Phase 1 development (306 spaces) would exceed the projected increase in parking demand (132 spaces) during peak weekday hours, and that there is no shortage of on-campus parking during weekends and holidays when

demand for coastal access is greatest. The new development proposed under Phase 1 of the LRDP includes adequate new parking to accommodate the new demand generated by the project, would not exacerbate (and would partially alleviate) existing parking shortfalls, and would not interfere with public access to the coast through parking overflow into adjacent coastal zone recreation areas.

As described in the Supplemental Draft EIS (and in more detail in the Transportation Impacts Study, attached to the SDEIS as Appendix E), the VA's approach for projecting the future parking demand generated by Phase 1 development was not dependent on specific estimates of the number of VA employees versus employees or students of other institutions using the campus at any given time. Rather, Phase 1 parking demand was projected based on "parking-demand rates" related to the type (e.g., hospital, office, research building, nursing home) and area (in square feet) of the new buildings and facilities proposed to be added during Phase 1 development. For example, a hospital of a specific square footage was assumed to generate a specific demand for parking (in spaces). The land use-based parking demand-rates used were taken from several Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) publications that aggregate empirical data for parking demand collected from a nationwide sampling of different land uses and building types. The parking-demand rates were then adjusted to account for San Francisco-specific transportation mode splits (i.e., transit, bicycling, walking, etc., vs. automobile travel) provided by City guidelines.

#### *Phase 1 Development Does Not Protect Coastal Views and Scenic Resources*

The attached correspondence from Mr. Wai and Ms. Burns and co-authors argues that the proposed development is inconsistent with Coastal Act Section 30251 because it would significantly alter coastal views. In particular, Phase 1 structures, including a five-story, 110,000 square-foot research facility (Building 40) and a relocated water tower, would "dramatically" and "radically" impact views from Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) parklands, including the Marin Headlands, and would loom over the California Coastal Trail in the Land's End area of GGNRA.

As shown in **Exhibit 8** (p. 3) of the staff report, which depicts the view looking southwestward from the Presidio near the Golden Gate Bridge, SFVAMC structures are at present partially visible, through a screen of vegetation, from points north. A post-project simulation of the same view shows minor changes to the SFVAMC "skyline", with Building 40 and the relocated water tower visible above the trees. However, at this distance of approximately two miles, the visual effect of the project is slight, with no scenic features obscured or significantly degraded. Alterations to the views from Marin County vantage points, three or more miles distant from the SFVAMC, would be even less significant. As noted in Ms. Burns' comment letter, the VA now proposes to remove, rather than relocate, the water tower, which would eliminate concerns about its visual impact. The El Camino del Mar trail, which comprises a local segment of the California Coastal Trail, runs through the Land's End parkland in close proximity to the SFVAMC campus. As shown in **Exhibit 8** (p. 1), Building 40 and the Building 211 parking structure would be visible when looking inland from portions of the trail. However, it is also evident that the campus is situated inland from and well above the elevation of the trail, and would not interfere with ocean and coastal views from Land's End trails. The simulations

provided in **Exhibit 8** do not depict the new trees the VA has proposed to plant along the campus perimeter, which, with time, would partially screen and soften views of the new buildings.

*Phase 1 Development Would Disturb Natural Habitat and Recreational Areas*

In the attached correspondence, Mr. Wai suggests that increased traffic, noise and human presence related to the new development could disturb natural habitats, vegetation and species. Ms. Burns and co-authors cite Coastal Act Section 30240(b), the policy governing development adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA) and parks and recreation areas, and argue that (a) the proposed extensions of the Building 209 and 211 parking structures to near the SFVAMC fence line would have a significant adverse impact on the aesthetic, recreational, and historic values of adjacent GGNRA parklands, and (b) that the placement of these buildings should come no closer to the fence line than they do at present.

No ESHA or sensitive species have been identified within the SFVAMC campus or in the coastal zone parklands immediately adjacent to the campus. Phase 1 development would not extend beyond the SFVAMC fence line, and would not directly or indirectly impede public recreational access to coastal areas. As discussed above, Commission staff does not believe that the new buildings that would be visible from adjacent GGNRA parklands would significantly degrade their aesthetic value.

**ATTENTION :  
MR. STREET**

**RECEIVED**  
**JUN 02 2015**  
CALIFORNIA  
COASTAL COMMISSION

Consistency Determination  
CD-0003-15  
Dept. of Veterans Affairs  
San Francisco  
Long Range Dev. Plan for  
VAMC, Fort Miley  
City & County of San Francisco  
Item No: F8b  
Agenda No: 8 b

C.K. Wai  
10 Seal Rock Drive  
S.F. CA. 94121-1437  
June 2, 2015

**OPPOSITION TO COASTAL STAFF RECOMMENDATION  
CONCURRING WITH THE CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION  
FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER  
LONG RANGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN PHASE I**

Dear Coastal Commissioners:

The SFVAMC's Parking and Traffic studies on only 3 blocks area were insufficient size and were inadequate representative sampling. The validity of the studies was questionable. The parking deficit is 700 spaces and the proposed 306 spots are not sufficient to be consistent with Coastal Act Sect. 30252 (4) "providing adequate parking facilities." The deficiency "Interferes with the public right of access to the sea" per Coastal Act Sect. 30211. It will impede public recreational access to the coastal areas of the Golden Gate Recreational Areas by SFVAMC's staff and invitees taking up public parking spaces.

The proposed expansion dramatically and permanently alters the coastal views from the Federal Protected Parkland looking south from Marin County. It therefore violates the intent of the Coastal Act. Sect. 30251 "to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms...."

The increase in traffic, noise, and human presence at the SFVAMC can further disturb the natural habitat, both vegetation and animals. It will deprive human recreational opportunities and that is inconsistent with Coastal Act Sect. 30210

I strongly object to such extensive project. Please vote NO on SFVAMC's LRDP. Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,  
C.K. Wai

P.S. Thank you Mr. Street for talking to me and for distributing my letter to the Commissioners.

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**From:** [Raymondsnf@aol.com](mailto:Raymondsnf@aol.com) [Raymondsnf@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 05, 2015 10:15 PM  
**To:** Street, Joseph@Coastal  
**Subject:** Comments and Suggestions, Proposed Consistency Determination (CD-0003-15)

Dear Mr. Street:

The following are my comments and suggestions with regard to the draft of a "Consistency Determination" (CD-0003-15) that your office has been asked to propose to the Commission for adoption at its meeting of June 12<sup>th</sup> with regard to Phase 1 of the "Long Range Development Plan" (LRDP) for the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center's (SFVAMC's) Fort Miley Campus.

Until two months ago, I was the President of the Planning Association for the Richmond, one of San Francisco's largest neighborhood organizations. For over 40 years, PAR has been and still is concerned with the multitude of plans that have been proposed by the SFVAMC to expand both the number and size of buildings on its 29.2-acre campus at Fort

The fact that a "phased consistency determination" is being recommended for adoption implies that sufficient information already exists for the Commission to determine the consistency of Phase 1 of the SFVAMC's LRDP with "the enforceable policies of the California Coastal Management Program".

Because:

- The LRDP is still incomplete (e.g., it is not clear if the proposed determination would be based on the SFVAMC's August 2010 *DRAFT* Institutional Master Plan, on its June 2012 *DRAFT* LRDP, on its January 2014 *DRAFT* LRDP or on some other *DRAFT* of that still-evolving plan);
- the consistency of any draft of that plan with the Finding of Effect (FOE) that is required for it under section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act* and with a *FINAL DRAFT* of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is required for it by the *National Environmental Policy Act* cannot possibly be determined until:
  - the Programmatic Agreement that was executed by the SFVAMC, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and California's Historic Preservation Officer in December of 2014 and January of 2015 has been fully performed and an FOE issued (no date for that issuance has even been estimated yet); and
  - all comments and suggestions that were submitted by May 8<sup>th</sup> of 2015 with regard to the Supplemental *DRAFT* Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) that was issued in March of this year have been reviewed and acted upon;

such a determination would be very premature because everything associated with the LRDP (i.e., the LRDP itself, the EIS, the FOE, etc.) is not even drafted yet or is still in draft form.

However, if you decide to proceed with a proposed Phased Consistency Determination for adoption next Friday, I would strongly suggest it be "conditional" and that it address the following "major federal decisions" that should have already been made.

1. For more than thirty years, the SFVAMC has consistently under-estimated the number of dedicated parking spaces demanded by those with work sites on the SFVAMC's Fort Miley Campus and the number of parking spaces either on the campus or in nearby parking lots under temporary lease arrangements. It is highly improbable that temporary leases for nearby parking lots will any longer be available. As documented in the SFVAMC's initial Draft Environmental Impact Statement of August 2012, the result has been an average of at least 700 "spill-over vehicles" have been parked in one of the two parking lots of the nearby Palace of Legion of Honor Museum and in the adjacent Outer Richmond District residential neighborhood. Those impacts have been very adverse.

Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the SFVAMC be required to eliminate completely that continuing deficit in on-campus parking spaces (with Building 211, it has now been lowered from 700 to about 500) BEFORE construction of any new buildings (other than parking facilities) be permitted and that, when new construction is permitted to start, that increased demand for on-campus parking spaces be provided *ad seriatim* and in a manner that is consistent with the Historic Design Guidelines that have been adopted.

2. In the most recent Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the SFVAMC again ignored the continuing deficit in on-campus parking spaces and projected the increased demand for additional spaces based only on its own employees. Since the SFVAMC is also a teaching facility and is one of the nation's leading research facilities, the appropriate basis for projecting future demand should always include the employees of the UCSF who are interns or residents and of the Northern California Institute for Research and Education (NCIRE) who are essential to its research activities. The two sets of employees combined approximate the number of SFVAMC employees.

As a result, it is recommended that all projections of demand for parking on the SFVAMC's Fort Miley Campus always be based on the aggregate number of employees of the SFAMC, the UCSF, the NCIRE and other collaborating organizations combined.

3. In addition, it is also recommended that each of those employers be required to use their own labor-management agreements as one of the primary methods for mitigating any unavoidable environmental impacts that result from any continued off-campus parking. For some curious reason, that manner of mitigation has never been mentioned in any of the SFVAMC's Environmental Impact Statements.

I would be more than happy to discuss with you or anyone else the background for these three alternate "Phased Consistency Determinations" that I am proposing instead.

Sincerely,



Raymond R. Holland  
747-23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94121-3736  
1-415-668-8914

Cc: Julie Burns, FOLE  
Amy Meyer, P4GGNRA  
Jason Jungreis, CSOB  
Tom Kuhn, FOSP  
Richard Corriea and Directors, PAR

P.S.: I will be unable to attend the Commission's June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting in Newport Beach. If the email addresses of all Commissioners, Alternates for the Commissioners and the four non-voting members of the Commission are readily available, would you please provide them to me? Thank you.

## Street, Joseph@Coastal

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**From:** Julie Burns <julieburns@sealrock.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 08, 2015 4:13 PM  
**To:** Street, Joseph@Coastal; Delaplaine, Mark@Coastal  
**Cc:** Richard Corriea; a7w2m@earthlink.net; Jason Jungreis; Thomas Kuhn; Ron Miguel; Raymondsnf@aol.com; C.K. Wai; FoxSDuggan@aol.com; Eric Mar; john.rahaim@sfgov.org  
**Subject:** CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO VETERANS AFFAIRS LONG RANGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN CD-0003-15, Item F8b  
**Attachments:** Coastal Commission Submission 06082015.pdf

The attached represents our submission in opposition to the Consistency Determination for the SF VAMC Long Range Development Plan, on the agenda for the Coastal Commission's meeting on Friday, June 12, 2015 in Newport Beach. These organizations are stakeholders in protecting the Coastal Zone resources adjacent to the SFVAMC, including natural and historical resources of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and ensuring continual access to coastal resources for residents and visitors alike.

Our organizations include:

**osition: Opposition**

- Planning Association for the Richmond (PAR), San Francisco's largest member-supported neighborhood organization
- Friends of Lands End (FOLE)
- People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area (PFGGNRA)
- Friends of Sutro Park (FOSP)
- Coalition to Save Ocean Beach (CSOB)

These organizations have been actively engaged for years – in some cases, decades – with both the Department of Veterans Affairs/SFVAMC and the National Park Service, as well as the City and County of San Francisco.

We also support the comments submitted separately by Raymond Holland, former PAR President and C.K. Wai, Richmond District Resident.

Please contact me with any questions.

Julie Burns, Ph.D.

**Seal Rock Research**

San Francisco

+1.415.666.3092 direct +1.415.666.3060 main +1.415.341.6060 mobile

[julieburns@sealrock.com](mailto:julieburns@sealrock.com)

Agenda Item: F8b  
Application #: CD-0003-15  
Julie Burns, for five organizations listed below  
Position: Opposition

**FROM:** Planning Association for the Richmond (PAR)  
Friends of Lands End (FOLE)  
People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area (PFGGNRA)  
Friends of Sutro Park (FOSP)  
Coalition to Save Ocean Beach (CSOB)  
**RE: Consistency Determination CD-0003-15**  
Department of Veterans Affairs, San Francisco  
Long Range Development Plan for the SF Veterans Affairs Medical Center

### **Background**

The five organizations submitting these comments are advocates for the integrity of the neighborhoods and national park lands surrounding the San Francisco VA Medical Center (SFVAMC), including the Coastal Zone and its resources.

**Legal Status.** In March, 2006, two of our organizations, the Planning Association for the Richmond (PAR), San Francisco's largest member-supported neighborhood organization, and Friends of Lands End (FOLE) filed a **Complaint against the Department of Veteran Affairs** with the United States District Court (Northern California) stipulating the SFVAMC was in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA).

The Complaint was settled on June 6, 2008. Terms of the Settlement Agreement (SFVAMCCB06B02321-SBA) enjoin the SFVAMC from proceeding with development until the completion of an Institutional Master Plan (IMP) – subsequently renamed the Long Range Development Plan – and a full and final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). **The latter has not yet been delivered.**

### **Our Position**

We oppose the Consistency Determination for the SFVAMC for two reasons:

- The SFVAMC Long Range Development Plan is **not consistent with the enforceable policies of the California Coastal Management Program (CCMP).**
- Any Consistency Determination for or against the SFVAMC would be **premature** prior to the issuance of the Court-ordered Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Currently, a Draft Supplemental EIS has been made available for public comment. The SFVAMC has not released a final EIS as required by the Settlement Agreement.

Our organizations have been engaged with the SFVAMC for many years regarding development on the Fort Miley Campus. We recognize the SFVAMC as a nationally important institution for health care, research and education, and support it in its missions. We are concerned with the conservation of the values of the Coastal Zone and its national parklands, cultural and historical resources (including those on the Historic Register), recreational resources, and the residential neighborhood that provides access to – and in some cases lies within – the Coastal Zone.

## **Support for our Position**

Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act (<http://www.coastal.ca.gov/fedcd/cach3.pdf>) cites several factors we have used to determine whether or not the SFVAMC LRDP is consistent with the Act.

### ***Section 30221 Oceanfront land; protection for recreational use and development***

Our overarching interest is the protection of the national park lands for the kinds of use and development appropriate to a national park as well as access to the California Coastal Trail, a state resource.

### ***Section 30240 Environmentally sensitive habitat areas; adjacent developments***

**Section (b)** *Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.*

**West Fort Miley:** The present garage buildings, 209 and 211, do not impact West Fort Miley because they are well back from the border between the SFVAMC and National Park Service properties. However, the proposed extensions of these garages to the fence line of West Fort Miley, and the proposed five- to six-story heights, will have a significant adverse impact on the aesthetic, recreational, and historic values of that portion of the GGNRA. The placement of these buildings should not come closer to the fence line than they do today. This matter has been raised in the comments submitted on the Draft Supplemental EIS (DSEIS).

### ***Section 30251 Scenic and visual qualities***

*The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.*

By these criteria, both Building 40 and the Water Tower fail the consistency test.

**Building 40.** Phase I of LRDP includes a five-story building devoted to research (110,000 gsf) in the northwest corner of the SFVAMC campus. Such a building would radically impact views from NPS parklands on the Marin Headlands, would loom over the California Coastal Trail, and is adjacent the North Slope slide area.

**Water Tower.** At a public meeting seeking comments on the DSEIS (April 14, 2015), we noted that maps in the DSEIS show that the SFVAMC intends to move its water tower, S-206. Maps show its new location at the north corner of the fence with NPS's West Fort Miley. A photo simulation shows the tower would be very prominent. Its height would have a significant adverse effect on the Golden Gate in general and West Fort Miley in particular.

Also, we note that the location would permanently obstruct a gate that provides the best possibility of a level access for SFVAMC patients and other people with physical impairments into the West Fort Miley parklands. There is no site analysis for this change and no evidence that the SFVAMC sought to avoid this adverse effect.

On June 3, 2015, our groups learned from the NPS that the SFVAMC is proposing to replace the water tower with underground tanks. While this sounds like a solution that would have less impact on the scenic and visual qualities of the Coastal Zone, engineering studies should be done and reviewed before a Consistency Determination. Tanks would be in sandy soil and in a slide area boundary which could impact NPS as well as the integrity of the North Slope, the site of a massive stabilization project in 2011. Until engineering and hydrogeological data is available, a vote on the Consistency Determination is premature.

#### ***Section 30253 Minimization of adverse impacts***

*New development shall (5) where appropriate, protect special communities and neighborhoods which, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses.*

The former West Fort Miley Military Reservation (listed on the National Register of Historic Places) serves 10,000 students a year with a ropes course and outdoor educational programs. An octagonal house, the only one of three in this area on public land, was formerly the property of the historic Marine Exchange. The NPS Lands End Trail (part of the California Coastal Trail) and the USS San Francisco Memorial are popular destinations for visitors from around the world. **The proposed LRDP would have an adverse impact on these resources.**

Conflict for parking between visitors seeking coastal access and SFVAMC staff (some of whom park near the SFVAMC, then take the University of California-San Francisco shuttle to other UCSF sites) is a serious problem that will be aggravated by the LRDP. **As the SFVAMC acknowledges, the LRDP does not mitigate the parking deficit, and will have an adverse impact.**

#### **Summary**

The coastal resources of the Lands End area routinely feature in "top ten" or "best" lists and have been lauded recently in the *Los Angeles Times* (January 16, 2015), *Town and Country* (February 2015), outdoor writer Tom Stienstra (*SF Chronicle*) and many others, as well in social media. For a flavor of the importance of this area, consider its Yelp reputation <http://www.yelp.com/biz/lands-end-trail-san-francisco>.

The proposed Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) has the potential to dramatically and permanently alter the viewshed of the Coastal Zone from federally-protected parklands of the GGNRA in San Francisco and Marin. It would also affect permanently their recreational use. The GGNRA and the California coast are resources of national interest; the GGNRA is a national and international icon; and it is the intent of the 1976 Coastal Act to protect the integrity of the Coastal Zone for its visual qualities and for recreation.

The Coastal Commission staff has not been able to base its evaluation on the information contained in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to the SFVAMC's LRDP. The DSEIS is still in draft status. Nor does the staff have information about the replacement of the water tower with underground tanks.

We therefore feel it is premature for the Coastal Commission to make a Determination on the LRDP's consistency with the Coastal Act until it has up-to-date necessary information. We also must oppose the Consistency Determination because of the damage that would be caused by projects that would affect the quality of our national parklands and Coastal Zone.

**//Signed//**

Julie Burns, Co-Chair, Friends of Lands End [julieburns@sealrock.com](mailto:julieburns@sealrock.com)

Richard Corriea, President, Planning Association for the Richmond [sfparpresident@gmail.com](mailto:sfparpresident@gmail.com)

Amy Meyer, Chair, People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area [a7w2m@earthlink.net](mailto:a7w2m@earthlink.net)

Jason Jungreis, Esq., Coalition to Save Ocean Beach [jasonjungreis@gmail.com](mailto:jasonjungreis@gmail.com)

Thomas Kuhn, Chair, Friends of Sutro Park [tom@tomkuhn.com](mailto:tom@tomkuhn.com)

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219  
VOICE (415) 904-5200  
FAX (415) 904-5400  
TDD (415) 597-5885



# F8b

Filed:	4/8/15
60 <sup>th</sup> Day:	6/7/15
75 <sup>th</sup> Day:	6/22/15
Staff:	J. Street-SF
Staff Report:	5/22/15
Hearing Date:	6/12/15

## STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

<b>Consistency Determination No.:</b>	<b>CD-0003-15</b>
<b>Federal Agency:</b>	<b>Department of Veterans Affairs</b>
<b>Location:</b>	San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center Fort Miley Campus, 4150 Clement Street, City and County of San Francisco.
<b>Project Description:</b>	San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center Fort Miley Campus Long Range Development Plan, Phase 1.
<b>Staff Recommendation:</b>	Concurrence

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## SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has submitted a consistency determination for the San Francisco VA Medical Center (SFVAMC) Fort Miley Campus (Campus) Long Range Development Plan (LRDP<sup>1</sup>). The LRDP is a comprehensive plan created to guide the development of the 29-acre SFVAMC Campus located at 4150 Clement Street in the City of San Francisco. The LRDP outlines the construction of new buildings, demolition of old buildings,

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Not to be confused with the same term and acronym used in Commission review of State University LRDPs under to Section 30605 of the Coastal Act.

and retrofitting of existing buildings that would occur through the year 2027. The LRDP would support the SFVAMC's mission to be a major primary and tertiary healthcare center which provides cost-effective and high-quality care to eligible veterans in the SF Bay Area and North Coast of California.

As submitted, the LRDP consistency determination outlines a near-term phase (Phase 1) and a long-term phase (Phase 2), with two location alternatives for Phase 2; one at Fort Miley and the other in Mission Bay in eastern San Francisco. Since the two alternate locations for Phase 2 would result in varying degrees of impact, and because the VA has not made a final determination as to which location will be selected, a "phased" review of this consistency determination is appropriate. Therefore, the Commission's review of the VA's consistency determination will only be for Phase 1 activities within the LRDP. The standard of review for this project is consistency to the maximum extent practicable with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

The SFVAMC Campus is surrounded by Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) lands to the north, west, and east, and by the outer Richmond District residential neighborhood to the south. Implementation of Phase 1 development activities would increase parking demand during weekday peaks periods by 132 parking spaces. Since most of the parking in the surrounding area is free, unmetered, parallel parking, off-campus parking by additional employees and users of the medical facility has the potential to affect public access to the coastal zone and nearby GGNRA lands. However, Phase 1 development includes construction of a new parking structure that would provide a net increase of 306 parking spaces on Campus, which would accommodate the parking demand increase generated by Phase 1 development. Therefore, the staff recommends the Commission find the project consistent with Coastal Act public access and recreation policies (Section 30210, 30211, 30212.5 and 30252).

All of the planned development for Phase 1 would take place within the existing SFVAMC Campus development footprint, consistent with the height, materials, colors, and massing of the existing development. Some of the new structures would be visible from outside Campus through vegetation along trails within GGNRA lands. While this new development would alter the scenery of the area, portions of the trails affected are not primary destinations for hikers. The VA would mitigate permanent and temporary visual impacts by planting native trees along the Campus borders and implementing best management practices during construction to screen construction equipment. No creeks, wetlands, open water bodies, federally listed species, or environmentally sensitive habitat areas would be affected by the Phase 1 improvements. Implementation of the LRDP would limit impervious surfaces primarily to existing already impervious sites, resulting in minimal impacts to the site's runoff conditions. The VA would include low impact development techniques, comply with the San Francisco Public Works Code, and implement a storm water pollution prevention plan to reduce any potential impacts to water quality. Therefore, the staff recommends the Commission find the project consistent with the visual and water quality policies of the Coastal Act (Section 30251 and 30231).

Staff therefore recommends that the Commission **concur** with the consistency determination for Phase 1 of the LRDP.



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## **EXHIBITS**

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## **I. FEDERAL AGENCY’S CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has determined the project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the California Coastal Management Program (CCMP).

## **II. MOTION AND RESOLUTION**

### **Motion:**

*I move that the Commission **concur** with consistency determination CD-0003-15.*

Staff recommends a **YES** vote on the motion. Passage of this motion will result in an agreement with the determination and adoption of the following resolution and findings. An affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present is required to pass the motion.

### **Resolution:**

*The Commission hereby concurs with consistency determination CD-0003-15 by the Department of Veterans Affairs on the grounds that the project is fully consistent, and thus consistent to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of the California Coastal Management Program.*

## **III. APPLICABLE LEGAL AUTHORITIES**

### **Phased Review**

As submitted, the SFVAMC Campus LRDP consistency determination outlines a near-term phase (Phase 1) and a long-term phase (Phase 2), with two location alternatives for Phase 2. The first Phase 2 alternative, involving building demolition and new construction at the Ft. Miley Campus, has the potential to affect public access to the coastal zone because it would increase the number of employees on campus and create new parking demand. However, the actual number of new personnel, and thus the severity of any future Campus parking shortage or spill-over into coastal recreation areas, remains unknown. During the implementation of Phase 1, the VA will have the opportunity to collect new information on Campus use, commute patterns, and parking behavior which will help constrain the potential effects of Phase 2. The second Phase 2 alternative, which would create a new SFVAMC location at Mission Bay, would be far outside the Commission’s coastal zone and would not affect coastal resources or public access. Because two Phase 2 location alternatives, with varying potential for coastal zone effects, remain under consideration, and because the implementation of Phase 1 would allow for the development of new information relevant to Phase 2, a phased review of this consistency determination is appropriate. The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) allows (and encourages) “phased federal consistency reviews” in cases where federal decisions to implement an activity are also made in phases. Section 930.36 (d) of the CZMA implementing regulations provides:

*(d) Phased consistency determinations. ... In cases where federal decisions related to a proposed development project or other activity will be made in phases based upon developing information that was not available at the time of the original consistency determination, with each subsequent phase subject to Federal agency discretion to implement alternative decisions based upon such information (e.g., planning, siting, and design decisions), a consistency determination will be required for each major decision. [15 CFR Section 930.36(d)]*

When reviewing federal agency long range plans, the Commission typically relies on this provision; among other benefits of this type of phased review are that: (1) it provides the federal agency, in advance of specific project or plan implementation, notice of what issues are likely to arise under the CCMP; and (2) it provides the Commission with an overall planning context within which to review specific plans or projects subsequently proposed.

As such, the Commission is only reviewing the LRDP's Phase 1 activities through this consistency determination. The Commission expects that the VA will continue to coordinate the implementation of its LRDP with the Commission, to enable further Commission review of a supplemental consistency determination for Phase 2 activities in the event Phase 2 would affect the coastal zone.

## **IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS**

### **A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has submitted a consistency determination for the San Francisco VA Medical Center (SFVAMC) Fort Miley Campus (Campus) Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). The LRDP is a comprehensive plan created to guide the development of the 29-acre SFVAMC Campus located at 4150 Clement Street in the northwest portion of San Francisco (see **Exhibits 1 – 3** for the project location). The LRDP outlines the construction of new buildings, demolition of old buildings, and retrofitting of existing buildings that would occur through the year 2027. The LRDP would support the SFVAMC's mission to be a major primary and tertiary healthcare center which provides cost-effective and high-quality care to eligible veterans in the San Francisco Bay Area and north coast of California. The proposed development and modifications included within the LRDP would help the SFVAMC meet necessary seismic safety requirements and the needs of veterans in the area over the next 20 years.

The existing SFVAMC Campus occupies approximately 1 million square-feet and includes an inpatient hospital building, an outpatient clinical building, research buildings, two hotel<sup>2</sup> buildings, a community living center, administrative/office buildings, storage, 10 surface parking lots, two parking structures, and a helipad (**Exhibit 4a**). The SFVAMC has identified in its LRDP a deficiency of 589,000 square-feet of building space. All new development would be designed to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certification,

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<sup>2</sup> Overnight, shared accommodations for eligible Veterans receiving health care services.

the VA's sustainability goals as outlined in its VA Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan, and VA seismic design requirements (VA Directive H-18-8) in compliance with Executive Order 12941.

The LRDP is laid out in two phases, a near-term phase (Phase 1) to be completed by 2020, and a long-term phase (Phase 2) to be completed by 2027, as outlined below:

- **Phase 1 (near-term, 2014 – 2020):** New construction or expansion of 14 buildings, including research and administrative facilities, an emergency operations center, and patient welcome center and drop-off area, an expanded mental health clinic and psychiatric intensive care unit, new and expanded parking garages; seismic retrofitting of 7 buildings<sup>3</sup>; relocation of an existing water tower; and demolition of 4 existing buildings, removal of 4 modular trailers, and reductions of existing surface parking lots. Phase 1 work would result in a net of 152,200 new gross-square-feet of facilities space and 232,252 new gross-square feet of parking garage space on the Campus (see, amounting to a net increase of 306 on-campus parking spaces. **Exhibit 4b** provides details on Phase 1 development. The Building 211 parking garage and emergency operations center (previously reported to the Commission as ND-012-11) was completed in July 2014.
- **Phase 2 (long-term, 2020 – 2027):**
  - **Alternative 1 - Ft. Miley campus option:** New development of an ambulatory care center (Bldg. 213), comprising 170,000 gross-square-feet of new patient-serving and associated facilities (see **Exhibit 4c** for details on Phase 2 Alternative 1 development).
  - **Alternative 2 - Ft. Miley, alternate schedule:** Same as Alternative 1, except that three of the seismic retrofit projects listed under Phase 1 would take place during Phase 2.
  - **Alternative 3 – Mission Bay campus option:** Same as Alternative 1, except that the ambulatory care center would be built off-site in the Mission Bay area of San Francisco.

The SFVAMC Campus is surrounded by Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) lands to the north, west, and east, and by the outer Richmond District residential neighborhood to the south (**Exhibit 2**). The west side of the SFVAMC Campus is located within the coastal zone boundary (**Exhibit 3**); however, because the Campus is on federal land the entire site is considered “excluded” from the coastal zone. Development included in the LRDP could nevertheless have potential impacts on resources within the coastal zone. Activities proposed at the Mission Bay location in Alternative 3 of Phase 2 are within or affecting the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission’s (BCDC’s) area of jurisdiction and are not subject to review by the Coastal Commission. In the event that Alternative 3 is chosen for Phase

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<sup>3</sup> Under a second alternative (see Phase 2 discussion), three of the seismic retrofit projects would be delayed under Phase 2.

2 and development is proposed within BCDC's jurisdictional area, a consistency determination would need to be submitted to BCDC prior to finalization.

## **B. OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS AND CONSULTATIONS**

### **Section 106 Consultation – State Historic Preservation Office**

The VA engaged in a formal consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for historic, cultural and archaeological resources at the project site. The consultation concluded in January 2015 with the execution of a programmatic agreement between the VA, SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

### **Construction General Permit – San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board**

The VA is required to apply for coverage under the statewide Construction General Permit and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for construction-related pollutants and storm water discharges to a small drainage system on the north side of the SFVAMC Ft. Miley Campus. Most of the Campus, however, discharges storm water to the City of San Francisco's combined sewer system (see below).

### **San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Permits**

The SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus operates under an Industrial Class I Wastewater Permit (Permit No. 10-06550; effective June 18, 2010) issued by SFPUC under Article 4.1 of the San Francisco Public Works Code, which regulates the quantity and quality of discharges to the City's combined sewer system. This permit requires the implementation of a site-specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that describes SFVAMC's storm water management program and includes procedures to reduce or eliminate pollution related to storm water runoff. The existing SFVAMC SWPPP and wastewater permit will be updated as needed prior to the proposed Phase 1 development. Since much of the SFVAMC Campus drainage system discharges to the City combined sewer system, the VA must also apply for a Construction Site Runoff Control Permit from the SFPU, in accordance with Article 4.2 of the Public Works Code. This permit requires the preparation of either an erosion and sediment control plan (ESCP) or submission of an SWPPP covering construction-related discharges. It is anticipated that a single SWPPP for construction activities, fulfilling both state and local requirements, will be prepared for the entire Campus.

## **C. PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION**

Coastal Act Sections 30210, 30211 and 30212.5 state:

*Section 30210: In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.*

*Section 30211: Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.*

*Section 30212.5: Wherever appropriate and feasible, public facilities, including parking areas or facilities, shall be distributed throughout an area so as to mitigate against the impacts, social and otherwise, of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.*

Coastal Act Section 30252 states (in part):

*The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing nonautomobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation, (5) assuring the potential for public transit for high intensity uses such as high-rise office buildings, ...*

The SFVAMC Campus is surrounded on three-sides by a contiguous system of parklands including the Land's End and Fort Miley areas of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and the City-owned Lincoln Park (see **Exhibits 2 and 3**). An access road to Fort Miley through the SFVAMC Campus may be temporarily closed during construction periods included in Phase 1 of the LRDP. While this road is occasionally used to access the GGNRA parklands, it is not a primary entry point, and multiple other access points exist. The VA intends to maintain this road as an open access way to the maximum extent feasible during Phase 1 construction. However, if closures are needed, notice would be posted two weeks in advance of the closures. As this is not the primary entry or access way to the park, and notice of closures would be posted, temporary closure would not significantly inhibit public access to GGNRA lands.

Phase 1 of the LRDP would result in an increase in parking demand of 132 spaces during the weekday peak period as projected in the *Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the SFVAMC LRDP* (Suppl. Draft EIS). Prior to implementing the LRDP, the SFVAMC Campus contained two parking structures (Building 209 and Building 212) and 10 surface parking lots, providing 1,253 total parking spaces (see **Exhibit 5a**). Field observations conducted by the VA have shown that these facilities were filled to capacity during weekday peak periods (typically morning and midday), with occupancies at or near 100 percent. Supplemental on-site valet parking services operated by the VA were also well-used, but have capacity to accommodate additional vehicles. On-site parking occupancy rates during the evening peak period were significantly lower, at approximately 30%. Off-campus parking in the vicinity of the SFVAMC Campus also exists in the form of unmetered parallel parking on city streets, and farther afield, in public parking lots serving GGNRA recreational attractions such as Sutro Baths, Sutro Heights Park and Land's End. VA field observations reported in the Suppl. Draft EIS indicate that on-street parking use within a few blocks of the VA ranged from 80 – 100% during weekday peak hours.

The SFVAMC is located in a dense urban area which provides alternative methods of transportation including transit services, taxis, bicycles, and foot travel. The VA estimates that at

present approximately 40% of its SFVAMC staff commute to the Campus using public transportation. Additionally, the VA operates free commuter shuttle services for employees and patients that serve approximately 1,285 people per day. These alternative modes of transportation will continue to be available in the future, and the VA expects that transportation options other than single-occupancy vehicles will continue to be used by a large fraction of SFVAMC employees, patients, and visitors. As discussed in the Supplemental Draft EIS, planned future expansions in municipal bus service has the potential to increase transit ridership among SFVAMC personnel.

In past consistency determinations, the Commission has expressed concern over the adequacy of parking for the SFVAMC and coastal recreational impacts caused by the use of off-site parking on adjacent GGNRA lands by employees and users of the medical facility. In the late 1980s, the SFVAMC constructed a 4-level parking structure (Building 209) to provide additional parking. When reviewing a later project for the development of a District Counsel office building, the Commission noted that, due to fees charged for parking within Building 209, as opposed to free parking within and surrounding the medical center, the use of the structure remained low and the parking problems in the surrounding area persisted (CD-026-91). The Commission nevertheless concurred with the VA's consistency determination, as legislation prohibited the VA from allowing free use of the parking structure, finding the development consistent "to the maximum extent practicable" with the Coastal Act access and recreation policies. At present, the VA charges relatively low parking fees of \$1 per day, or \$12.50 per month, which would not be a major deterrent to on-campus parking.

Phase 1 of the LRDP includes the construction of a 377-space, 5-level parking garage (Building 211) on an area previously occupied by a surface parking lot (Parking Lot J). The Commission has already authorized this parking garage through concurrence with a VA negative determination (ND-012-11), and this project was completed in July of 2014. Future Phase 1 projects include the expansions of the existing Building 209 and 211 parking garages, which would create an additional 250 parking spaces. Other new building construction and expansion projects would result in the loss of existing parking spaces (from surface lots D, E, H, J, K and L), but in aggregate, Phase 1 would result in a net increase of 306 on-campus parking spaces. This net addition of parking spaces is well in excess of the projected growth in peak hour parking demand of 132 spaces, and appears adequate to accommodate the proposed Phase 1 development without exacerbating off-campus parking shortages or impeding public recreational access to the coastal areas of GGNRA.

Some Campus parking spaces would be unavailable during Phase 1 construction in order to accommodate construction vehicles and to allow space for temporary modular structures that would be used as work spaces while certain buildings are being seismically retrofitted. This loss of spaces from surface parking lots during construction would be mitigated by the availability of new parking spaces in the Building 211 structure and, as needed, the provision of temporary on- and off-site parking with the use of shuttle and valet services, and the promotion of rideshare, carpool, mass transit vouchers, and work schedule change programs during project construction. The VA's proposed mitigation of potential parking impacts during the construction period is described in more detail in Mitigation Measure TRANS-2 from the Supplemental Draft EIS, provided here as **Exhibit 6**.

In relation to the remainder of Phase 1 development, the Commission further finds that both temporary and permanent impacts to parking demand resulting from Phase 1 construction would be met by the LRDP planning and mitigation measures, including a net increase of 306 new parking spaces, which would be sufficient to meet the projected increase in parking demand of 132 spaces from Phase 1 development. Moreover, future parking demand would be greatest during weekday peak hours, when the largest number of VA employees is on Campus. Peak recreational parking demand, in contrast, occurs during weekends and holidays, when ample on-campus is available for the relatively small number of employees who must access the Campus.

Therefore, the Commission finds that Phase 1 of the LRDP would not adversely affect parking availability for coastal recreation and would be consistent with Coastal Act policies 30210, 30211, 30212.5, and 30252. The Commission expects the VA to continue to coordinate with the Commission in its long-term planning efforts, to ensure that adequate parking and transportation options for employees and users of the medical facility will continue to be available to assure that Phase 2 development would not affect access to the coastal zone and nearby GGNRA lands.

#### **D. VISUAL RESOURCES**

Coastal Act Policy 30251 states:

*The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.*

All of the planned development within Phase 1 of the LRDP would take place within the existing SFVAMC Campus development footprint. The Campus is already substantially developed with medical and research buildings, parking structures, and parking lots that are partially visible to the surrounding area. All of the new proposed development would be consistent with the height of the current development on Campus, with no building height exceeding the height of the tallest existing building (Building 2). All new structures would also be built with materials, colors, and massing consistent with the existing SFVAMC development (See **Exhibit 7**).

New buildings located in the central portion of the Campus would be mostly screened from views outside of Campus by existing buildings. New buildings located on the western end of Campus would be screened by existing buildings, dense vegetation and other landforms, and would not be visible from outside of Campus. New buildings located near the eastern and northern portion of the Campus adjacent to GGNRA lands would be visible through existing vegetation and would alter the physical surroundings experienced by visitors in this area (**Exhibit 8**). While this development would alter the scenery of the area, especially to those hiking along the El Camino del Mar trail, these areas are not primary destinations for hikers, but



rather are areas hikers usually pass through on their way to more scenic GGNRA lands. To help mitigate impacts to surrounding views the VA will plant native, drought-resistant trees along the perimeter of the Campus to further screen the new buildings.

The presence of construction equipment would also result in minor temporary visual impacts; however, the VA would implement best management practices (BMPs), such as screening construction staging areas, to limit this impact. Construction activities would be limited to daylight hours, which would minimize any construction lighting impact.

The Commission therefore concludes that Phase 1 of the LRDP would protect scenic coastal views, minimize landform alteration, be consistent with the visual character of the surrounding area, and be consistent with the visual resources policy of the Coastal Act (Section 30251).

#### **E. WATER QUALITY**

Coastal Act Section 30231 states:

*The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.*

No creeks, wetlands, open water bodies, federally listed species, or environmentally sensitive habitat areas are located within or adjacent to the SFVAMC Campus. Implementation of Phase 1 of the LRDP would increase the impervious surfaces on the Campus by approximately 4% (0.69 acres). The increase in impervious surfaces would result in minimal impacts to the site's runoff conditions as the project would occur primarily on existing impervious sites. The VA would also implement low impact development techniques to infiltrate, evaporate, and detain storm water to maintain the pre-development storm water runoff conditions. Any development within the LRDP would require compliance with the San Francisco Public Works Code which regulates the quantity and quantity of discharges into the sewer system. In addition, most storm water and wastewater from the project site would be treated at the Oceanside Water Pollution Control Plant prior to discharging into the Pacific Ocean. Lastly, the VA will develop and implement a storm water pollution prevention plan to reduce any project related pollution of surface water through construction activities.

The Commission therefore finds Phase 1 of the LRDP consistent with the water quality policy of the Coastal Act (Section 30231).

## **APPENDIX A: SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS**

Consistency Determination CD-0003-15 (Department of Veterans Affairs, San Francisco VA Medical Center Long Range Development Plan, 2015).

Consistency Determination CD-026-91 (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2-story, 9,900 square-foot District Counsel office building at the Fort Miley Medical Center).

Negative Determination ND-012-11 (Department of Veterans Affairs, 5-level parking structure on an existing parking lot).

Department of Veterans Affairs, *Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center Long Range Development Plan*, March 9, 2015 (AECOM).

Department of Veterans Affairs, *San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center Long Range Development Plan*, January 31, 2014.

Department of Veterans Affairs, *Draft Environmental Impact Statement San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center Long Range Development Plan*, August 17, 2012 (AECOM).

Department of Veterans Affairs, *Seismic Design Requirements* (VA Directive H-18-8), August 2013.

Department of Veterans Affairs, *Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan*, June 2010.

Executive Order 12941, *Seismic Safety of Existing Federally Owned or Leased Buildings*, Federal Register Vol. 59, No. 232, December 5, 1994.



Source: Data provided by SFVAMC Engineering Service in 2010

### Location of SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus in San Francisco



## Project Location – Neighborhood Context

Source: SFVAMC Long Range Development Plan, 2014





Source: Base layer from SF County; coastal zone boundary layer from California Department of Transportation TSI/GIS Data Branch, 2009; data compiled by AECOM in 2014

### Coastal Zone Boundary



Source: VA, 2014

**SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus Layout, 2012  
(Prior to Long Range Development Plan)**





Source: VA, 2014

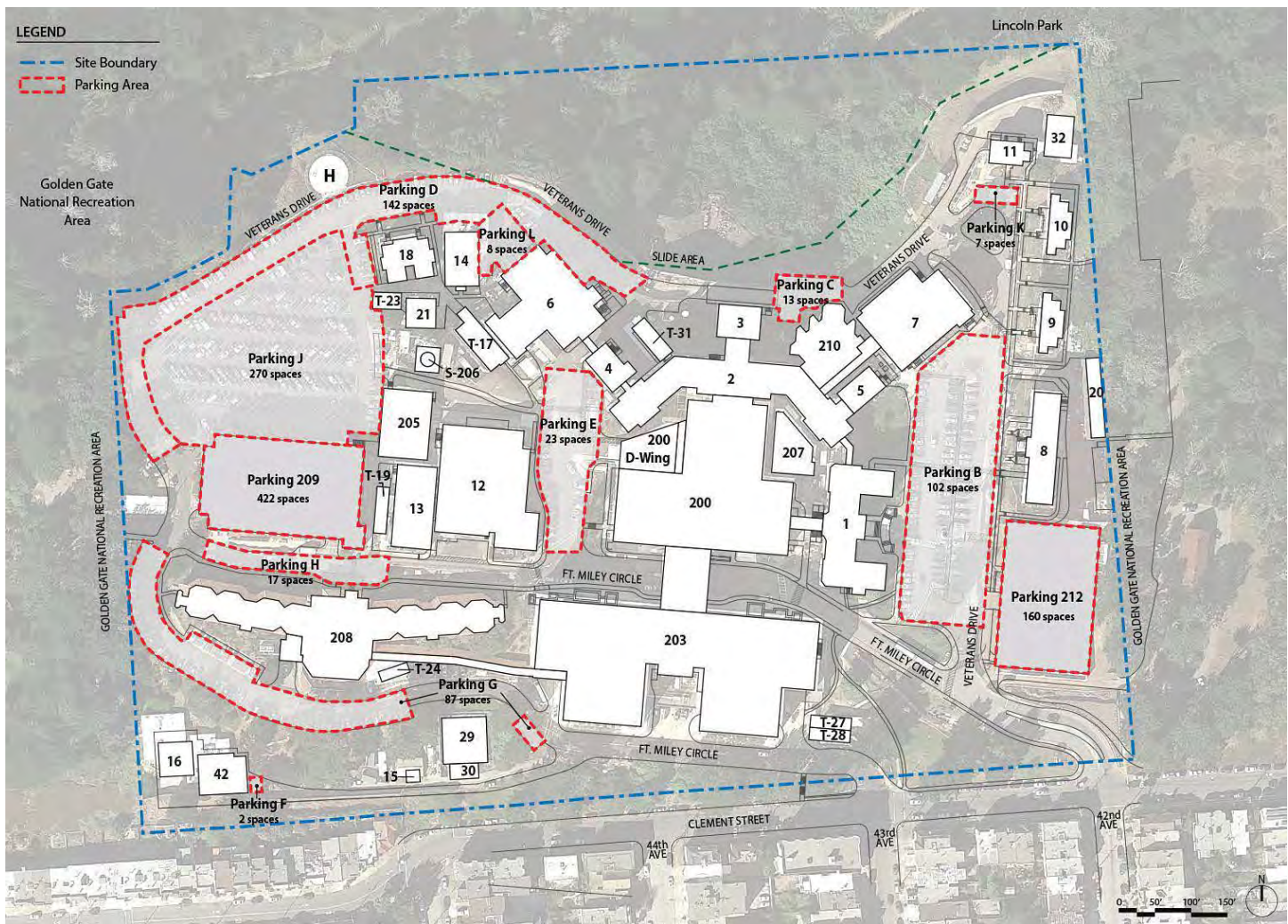
### Alternatives 1 and 3 (Phase 1) Footprint and Concept Plan through 2020—SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus



Source: VA, 2014

### Alternative 1 Long-Term (Phase 2) Footprint and Concept Plan through 2027—SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus





**Table 3.13-6: Existing Off-Street Parking Supply at the SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus (2012)**

Facility	Configuration	Function/User	Capacity (spaces)
Building 209	Structure	Employee/Visitor	422
Building 212	Structure	Patient	160
Lot B	Surface lot	Patient/Visitor	102
Lot C	Surface lot	Employee	13
Lot D	Surface lot	GSA/Employee	142
Lot E	Surface lot	Patient	23
Lot F	Surface lot	Employee	2
Lot G	Surface lot	Employee	87
Lot H	Surface lot	Patient/Visitor	17
Lot J	Surface lot	Employee	270
Lot K	Surface lot	Employee	7
Lot L	Surface lot	Employee	8
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,253</b>

Notes: GSA = General Services Administration; SFVAMC = San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center  
 Reflects status as of 2012, as reported in the SFVAMC Long Range Development Plan. Some facilities listed have since been permanently or temporarily closed or restriped/reconfigured as a result of construction activities, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, or other factors.  
 Sources: VA, 2014a and 2014c

(From SFVAMC Supplemental Draft EIS, Chapter 3.13)



## New Parking Facilities – Phase 1



Source: SFVAMC Supplemental Draft EIS, Chapter 3.13

### LRDP Phase 1 Changes in Parking Supply (to 2020):

- Building 211 Garage + extension + 377 spaces
- Building 209 Extension + 250 spaces
- Surface Lot Removal - 321 spaces

*Net Gain → 306 spaces*

g: **Mitigation Measure NOI-1:** VA will monitor exterior noise levels at on-site receptors located closest to a particular construction site for a 24-hour period at the onset of each major phase of construction (e.g., demolition, trenching, structure erection). If noise levels are found to exceed 55 dBA Ldn, VA will implement additional measures to reduce noise levels at affected on-site receptors as a result of construction noise. These additional measures may include but are not limited to relocating occupied patient beds to other areas of the SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus, installing temporary acoustic attenuating features/barriers, preventing the line of sight between the receptor in question and noise source, and providing in-room sound-masking equipment (e.g., white noise).

h: **Mitigation Measure NOI-2:** The preexisting condition of all buildings within a 50-foot radius of construction areas (where large construction equipment would be utilized) will be recorded in the form of a preconstruction survey. The preconstruction survey will determine conditions that exist before construction begins and will be used to evaluate damage caused by construction activities. Fixtures and finishes within a 50-foot radius of construction activities susceptible to damage will be documented photographically and in writing before construction. All buildings damaged will be repaired to their preexisting condition.

i: **Mitigation Measure NOI-3:** Vibration levels will be monitored at the nearest interior location of adjacent medical structures containing vibration-sensitive equipment to monitor potential impacts from construction related to this alternative. In the event that measured vibration levels exceed 65 VdB and would disturb the operation of sensitive medical equipment, additional measures will be implemented to the extent necessary and feasible. These measures include providing notice to equipment operators to coordinate regarding the timing of construction activities showing vibration levels above 65 VdB, possibly temporarily relocating the sensitive equipment, and/or installing isolation equipment (i.e., vibration-dampening mounts).

j: **Mitigation Measure NOI-4:** VA will retain the services of a qualified acoustical consultant to conduct an additional site-specific noise study to evaluate and establish the appropriate ambient noise levels at the proposed off-site medical research facility for a detailed HVAC and emergency-generator noise reduction analysis. The recommendations of the acoustical consultant will include specific equipment design and operations measures to reduce HVAC and emergency-generator noise to acceptable levels for exterior and interior noise levels as specified in the San Francisco Noise Control Ordinance.

k: **Mitigation Measure TRANS-1:** SFVAMC will use only a combination of the three haul truck routes identified below for LRDP construction-related activities:

- From points north of the Campus: U.S. 101 → SR 1 (Veterans Boulevard/Park Presidio Boulevard) → Geary Boulevard → Point Lobos Avenue → 42nd Avenue or 43rd Avenue
- From points south of the Campus: I-280 → SR 1 (Junipero Serra Boulevard/19th Avenue/Crossover Drive/Park Presidio Boulevard) → Geary Boulevard → Point Lobos Avenue → 42nd Avenue or 43rd Avenue; or, alternatively, U.S. 101 (Bayshore Freeway/Central Freeway) → Mission Street → U.S. 101 (Van Ness Avenue) → Geary Boulevard → Point Lobos Avenue → 42nd Avenue or 43rd Avenue
- From points east of the Campus: I-80 → U.S. 101 (Central Freeway) → Mission Street → U.S. 101 (Van Ness Avenue) → Geary Boulevard → Point Lobos Avenue → 42nd Avenue or 43rd Avenue

Use of alternative routes, particularly through the surrounding neighborhoods, is actively discouraged. SFVAMC and its construction contractors will monitor truck arrivals and, if necessary, implement a queue abatement program to ensure that haul trucks do not queue up and idle on the Campus or on adjacent or nearby streets.

l: **Mitigation Measure TRANS-2:** SFVAMC will conduct supplemental surveys of parking occupancy several weeks after completion of Building 211 to determine the utilization of the new parking structure and overall occupancy of on-site facilities throughout the day. The survey will also consider on-street parking in the surrounding area to estimate how much spillover demand has been “recaptured” on the site as a result of the increased parking supply. As construction plans for



specific LRDP projects are developed, construction contractors will work with SFVAMC to compare their own estimates of construction-related traffic and parking demand to the estimated parking capacity and surveyed occupancy levels, to determine whether additional temporary measures are required to mitigate expected parking constraints.

Should these coordination efforts indicate that construction activities could result in a major parking deficit on the SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus, SFVAMC will implement measures to ensure that construction-related parking demand, as well as any associated parking loss in on-site parking capacity required to accommodate construction-related activities, does not result in additional spillover into the surrounding neighborhood beyond current conditions.

Potential programs (or other measures deemed necessary and adequate to ensure that spillover parking demand into the surrounding neighborhood does not increase beyond current conditions) could include the following:

- **Expand the Campus's valet parking program.** Upon completion of Building 211, the valet parking program could be made permanent and expanded to include the new parking structure. Based on the estimates provided in the LRDP, Building 211 would provide a total of 461 marked spaces, but a valet parking program for this structure could provide approximately 140 additional spaces, based on the 30 percent increase in parking efficiency documented in field surveys of parking occupancy in Building 209.
- **Require general contractors to establish carpool/vanpool programs and encourage transit use.** Because some construction workers reside outside of San Francisco, a vanpool service could be tailored to meet worker needs by operating as a "commuter shuttle" to major transit facilities, such as the BART station at Civic Center or 16th Street/Mission. To encourage transit use among construction workers, the contractor could provide free or discounted transit passes. A vanpool service could also be implemented in conjunction with a remote (i.e., off-site) "park-and-ride" facility, affording construction workers some of the convenience of a private vehicle and reducing some of the construction-related traffic effects in the immediate vicinity of the Campus. SFVAMC could work with its contractor to negotiate with the relevant property owners and parking operators in the area to lease spaces in an off-site surface lot or parking structure for a fixed period of time. The vanpool service could be contracted out to a third-party service provider.
- **Require general contractors to optimize staging-area needs and coordinate vendor arrival schedules.** In the development of construction plans, contractors should be required to optimize site utilization and schedule arrivals to minimize the associated traffic and vehicle parking impacts on the Campus community and surrounding neighborhoods.

m: **Mitigation Measure TRANS-3:** SFVAMC will implement temporary strategies to ensure ADA compliance while Lot B is in use for modular swing space. Potential strategies could include temporarily striping ADA spaces in other parking facilities on the Campus, such as Building 212, or implementing valet parking at the traffic circle outside the Patient Welcome Center for patients and visitors requiring ADA accommodations.

n: **Mitigation Measure WH-1:** SFVAMC will implement the following measures to avoid potential effects on nesting birds and bats, should potential nesting or roosting habitat be identified within 150 feet of the proposed development area:

- Removal of shrubs, trees, or any vegetative cover will be conducted outside of the breeding season, roughly from September to January 31 (breeding season is typically February through August).
- Should vegetation removal be required during the breeding season (approximately March through August), a qualified biologist will conduct a survey for native nesting birds and bats no earlier than 14 days before the removal of trees, shrubs, or buildings. The biologist will determine the time period that the results will remain valid, based on the seasonal timing. The area surveyed will include all locations of vegetation or building removal, as well as areas within 150 feet.
- If no active nests or roosts are found, no further action is required. If an active nest or roost is discovered in the areas to be cleared, or in other habitats within 150

*Before Phase 1  
Construction*



Source: VA, 2014

**Aerial Perspective of 2012 SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus**

*After Phase 1  
Completion*



Source: VA, 2014

**Aerial Perspective of SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus Buildout at the End  
of Alternative 1 Short-Term Projects in Mid-2020**

\*Note: The relocated water tower, visible on the far left (west) of the post-project view, has been eliminated from the project. The tower will be removed from the Campus.



A – Before Project (2012)



B – After Project (2020)



**Southeastward View of SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus from GGNRA  
(El Camino del Mar trail).**

**(A) Before Phase 1 construction; (B) After Phase 1 construction**

*Source:* SFVAMC Supplemental Draft EIS, Chapter 3.1





**Southward View of SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus from GGNRA  
(Land's End-El Camino del Mar trail junction).**

**(A) Before Phase 1 construction; (B) After Phase 1 construction**

*Source: SFVAMC Supplemental Draft EIS, Chapter 3.1*





A – Before Project (2012)



B – After Project (2020)

**Southwestward View of SFVAMC Fort Miley Campus from GGNRA (SF Presidio, Lincoln Blvd near Ft. Scott).  
(A) Before Phase 1 construction; (B) After Phase 1 construction**

*Source:* SFVAMC Supplemental Draft EIS, Chapter 3.1

\*Note: The water tower relocation (shifted west, A->B) has been eliminated from the proposed project. The tower is now proposed to be removed entirely.