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***ROSENDAHL FIGHTS COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF VA PROPERTY  
Councilman Wins Local Advisory Panel Support for Community, Veteran Position***

**LOS ANGELES-** Standing up for veterans and for his constituents, City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl is rallying support for a ban on commercial development at the West LA Veterans Administration campus.

Rosendahl won unanimous support this week from the CARES Local Advisory Panel for no commercial use or development of the sprawling VA property, which the federal government has been eyeing for more than a decade as a potential source of revenue.

“This is sacred, hallowed ground,” Rosendahl, an army veteran, said. “It is intended to benefit veterans. Sacrificing it to commercial development would betray our veterans, and would needlessly subject Westside communities to even more traffic gridlock.”

The CARES panel, of which Rosendahl is a new member, is a community-based advisory panel to the VA. Formed several years ago, the group met for the third time this week to consider proposals for use of the campus. Hundreds of veterans and Westside residents turned out to object to commercial use of the property, and to demand that the VA engage in a formal Master Plan process.

Both groups applauded Rosendahl’s efforts.

"What Councilmember Rosendahl did was very heroic and desperately needed," said Jackie Freeman, Co-Chair for Veterans Coalition for Veterans Land. "The Coalition is supportive of the Councilmember's efforts to ensure that there are only direct services to veterans at the VA campus. Any commercialization would hinder that goal."

"Citizens for Veterans' Rights stands strongly behind the leadership of Councilmember Bill Rosendahl," Keith Jeffreys, President, Citizens for Veterans' Rights said. "His motion guides the CARES process toward providing veterans with the best possible services at the VA."

The Rosendahl motion complements federal efforts by Senator Diane Feinstein and U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, who have been pushing legislation that would forbid commercial development of the property.

The panel also approved a second Rosendahl motion, calling for the investigation of existing commercial, or "enhanced use" leases at the VA Property. The VA has entered into several such leases at the property, including lease agreements with Enterprise Rental Car and Fox Entertainment Group.

While urging the VA to halt commercial development, Rosendahl praised James Nicholson, the outgoing secretary of veteran affairs, for recently designating three buildings for homeless services and 16 acres of campus land for the Veterans Park Conservancy, breaking ground on the Fisher House, and approving construction of a columbarium at the national cemetery for the cremated remains of veterans.

The designation of the buildings for homeless services, conceived and championed by Santa Monica City Councilman Bobby Shriver and strongly supported by Rosendahl, will allow for the WLA VA's highly regarded Comprehensive Homeless Center, led by William L. Daniels, MSW, LCSW, to design and implement long-term therapeutic supportive services for chronically homeless veterans.

The Fisher House provides temporary housing for the families of patients receiving medical care at the VA. The project, which broke ground during the summer, was strongly supported by Rosendahl.

"Secretary Nicholson did the right thing by veterans," Rosendahl said. "I thank and applaud him for his leadership."

Rosendahl also complimented Feinstein, Waxman, and County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky for their efforts to help protect the VA property.

The West Los Angeles Veterans property encompasses approximately 388 acres, on the north and south sides of Wilshire Boulevard, west of the 405 freeway. In 1888, the land was deeded to the federal government for exclusive use of veterans.

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