



## Addressing the Proposed 70 Bed Montevideo Veterans Home

### Key Messages

- Minnesota currently has five Veterans Homes (Fergus Falls, Hastings, Luverne, Silver Bay, and Minneapolis) providing a total of 860 beds in the entire state.
- **Mandatory Characteristics to Construct and Operate a New Veterans Home in a Community:**  
Federal law requires a minimum separation between state Veterans Homes to qualify for Federal Funding 38 CFR 59.40 (b). Based on current operations of five existing homes and the relationship with the Federal Veterans Administration for support and services, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs- Minnesota Veterans Home (MDVA-MVH) experience requires Veterans Homes be reasonably accessible to veterans' medical facilities. Therefore, MDVA-MVH recommends the following characteristics be met by each Minnesota community to serve as a site for a new Veterans Home:
  - Be at least 100 minutes calculated travel time from existing Veterans Homes (Federal requirement).
  - Be within 60 minutes calculated travel time based on reasonable travel time for residents and staff of an existing Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) or a Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) (MDVA-MVH requirement).
  - Have an acute care hospital licensed by the State of Minnesota (MDVA-MVH requirement).

**Only 17 Minnesota communities, including Montevideo, meet these mandatory requirements.**

**Minnesota Potential Bed Capacity for New Beds: 144**

**Montevideo has a complete plan in place to build and support operations  
of the next Veterans Home in our community.**

**Our community has purchased land, committed over \$5,000,000 to the project  
and is ready to serve as the next location for a Minnesota Veterans Home.**

**\*\*Montevideo's Full Proposal Can Be Found Online at [WWW.MONTEVIDEOMN.ORG](http://WWW.MONTEVIDEOMN.ORG)\*\***



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## Executive Summary

The issue facing the City of Montevideo is the ongoing challenge of attempting to gain state approval for the construction and operation of a Veterans Home. Throughout the 10 years that the City of Montevideo has been vying for a Veterans Home, there have been numerous cities that have proposed a new veterans home in their community but, eventually, have fallen by the wayside for different reasons.

*Meeting the federally required minimum demographic and operational characteristic requirements will make a good institution, but the community must make it a home.*

The Minnesota State Legislature and the Governor are the entities that approve the addition of a new state Veterans Home in a Minnesota community. Their approval includes bonding for construction and ongoing operational costs. After state approval, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs submits an application to

the federal government for their share of the project cost. After legislative approval at the federal level, the state is able to proceed forward with the construction and operation of the new Veterans Home.

In 2008 (in response to numerous communities vying for a Veterans Home), the Department of Veterans Affairs conducted a 'Community Identification's Study for a New Minnesota Veterans Home' to determine the selection of sites within the state that would show the optimal benefit to veterans and to the State of Minnesota. Seventeen communities, which included Montevideo, met the minimum demographic and operational characteristic requirements.

While numerous communities vie for a Veterans Home to be placed in their community, the most important thing to acknowledge is that a Veterans Home is someone's home. Meeting the federally required minimum demographic and operational characteristic requirements will make a good institution, but the community must make it a home.

Each community is responsible for preparing and annually updating their proposal that is presented to the State Legislators and Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. This is done in order to expand on the community's unique benefits beyond the Federal and State Governments requirements. For example, City Council President Marvin Garbe explained that



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“Montevideo’s unique proposal includes raising five million dollars to go towards the state share of the project and a community ‘neighborhood’ home structure that also targets women and Native American veterans” (Garbe, 2017).

Another issue that has been questioned is the need to construct Veterans nursing home beds when local nursing home facilities are not 100% full. Currently, the Federal VA, under their State Veterans Home Program, only participates in construction activity and provides per diem payments for care in state owned Veteran’s homes. This prevents the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs from adding small units to pre-existing long term care (LTC) facilities in communities. Community nursing homes can apply to their local VA Hospital for contract nursing beds under a different federal program.

Veterans Homes provide opportunity for Veterans to receive specialized care and a comradery with residents in the Home. For many veterans, military service and operational deployment lead to a strong sense of identity and belonging. For clinicians working with veterans, demonstrating an understanding of the military experience can greatly enhance the therapeutic alliance and the delivery of effective treatment (Mental Health Advice Book, n.d.). Veterans are more likely to engage with health care practitioners whom they feel understand, or seek to understand

their health problems within the context of their military service (Mental Health Advice Book, n.d.).

A veteran’s military experiences may have taken place many years in the past or more recently, and they may have been deployed on different types of operations (Mental Health Advice Book, n.d.). Some military members may not have participated in deployments that involved war or peacekeeping duties but may have, nonetheless, been deeply affected by experiences such as humanitarian deployments or training accidents. Regardless of their timing or nature, a veteran’s experiences can have a lasting and profound influence. There are at least two readily identifiable reasons for this enduring impact. First, most veterans join the service as young adults, an important time in life for shaping values, beliefs and attitudes. Because they were socialized into military culture at a time when they were malleable, many will have adopted military values and ideals as their own. Second, during service, many of the highest impact experiences will have occurred during times of extreme stress, in some cases during life-threatening situations. What is learned under these conditions can be resistant to change because it is associated with survival (Mental Health Advice Book, n.d.).



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*It is estimated that if the state approved a Veterans Home project today, the home would not be able to be occupied for another four and a half years.*

There is a range of service-related experiences that may need to be considered when working with a veteran (Mental Health Advice Book, n.d.). While some of these experiences can help protect a veteran from the impact of stress and health problems, they can also lead to tension, particularly in a civilian setting. Others can contribute to, or exacerbate health problems. These experiences do not apply to all veterans, but having a medical staff cognizant of Veteran specific issues can ultimately determine the difference between productive and unproductive care.

The process of gaining approval for the construction and operation of a Veterans Home in Montevideo has not been quick. Minnesota Legislature approves initial and ongoing costs, the community, along with the Minnesota Department of Veterans

Affairs, must complete a Federal application for funds. At that time, the project would be placed on a federal list for funding approval. It is estimated that if the state approved a Veterans Home project today, the home would not be able to be occupied for another four and a half years.

Montevideo has a complete plan in place to build and support operations of the next state Veterans Home. Our community has purchased land, committed over five million dollars to the project and is ready to serve as the next location for a Minnesota Veterans Home.

## Introduction and Problem Statement

The State of Minnesota has five Veterans Homes with care ranging from skilled to domiciliary (MNDVA Staff, 2017). The current waiting list to receive 1 of the 860 beds in a Minnesota Veterans Home includes roughly 1,500 individuals. An increasing number of disabilities are connected to military service and often require more skilled nursing care. Our state's aging population will continue to put more strain on the state's Veterans Homes.

According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs statistics Veteran Population Model 2011 (Office of Planning Staff, n.d.), which estimates living Veterans in Minnesota from 2010-2040, there are an estimated 386,598 Veterans. Of these,



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about 42% (162,924) are under the age of 60 and 58% (223,674) are over the age of 60.

The five current Veterans Homes have a total of 860 beds. The State of Minnesota has a potential bed capacity of 144 new beds that is considered an unmet need in our state by the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs. Montevideo is proposing construction of a new 70 bed Veterans Home in order to fill a portion of this unmet need.

## Background: The History of the Issue and Its Context

The first Minnesota Soldiers' Home (also known as a Veterans Home) was established in 1887 in Minneapolis by the Minnesota Legislature. The purpose of this home was to assist in the care of Civil War veterans and other soldiers who had fought in armed conflict and who did not have the means to care for themselves and were in need of assistance (MNDVA Staff., n.d.). The home originally provided domiciliary care and attended to only minimal medical needs.

As they did back in 1887, Minnesota's veterans still deserve the best possible services to meet their needs within the context of the finite resources of the State of Minnesota and the US Government (MNDVA Staff., n.d.). Minnesota's five veteran's homes are run by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and currently provide 860 beds for skilled nursing care, domiciliary care, and Adult Day Center services. A federal cap on state veteran's home beds in the state of Minnesota is set at 1058. The state has an unmet need of 144 beds.

In 2008, this unmet need prompted the state to look into the creation of a new Veterans Home within the state. As directed by the Minnesota Legislature, Minnesota Laws 2008, Chapter 363, Article 8, Section 3, Subdivision 1, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, Minnesota Veterans Homes (MDVA-MVH) authorized a study in 2009 to establish criteria for the site selection of future Minnesota Veterans Homes (Engan Associates & Ulteig, 2009). The selection of appropriate communities was to be based on optimal benefit to veterans and to the State of Minnesota.





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*Important characteristics established by the state and federal government to consider in the selection of a site for a new Veterans Home include (Engan Associates & Ulteig, 2009):*

- 1. Mandatory characteristics,*
- 2. Demographic and operational characteristics, and*
- 3. Community assets.*

## **Mandatory Characteristics**

Federal law requires a minimum separation between state Veterans Homes to qualify for Federal Funding 38 CFR 59.40 (b). Based on current operations of five existing homes and the relationship with the Federal Veterans Administration for support and services, MDVA-MVH experience requires Veterans Homes be reasonably accessible to veterans' medical facilities. Therefore, MDVA-MVH recommends the following characteristics be met by each Minnesota community to serve as a site for a new Veterans Home (Engan Associates & Ulteig, 2009):

- Be at least 100 minutes calculated travel time from existing Veterans Homes (Federal requirement).
- Be within 60 minutes calculated travel time based on reasonable travel time for residents and staff of an existing Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) or a Veterans Administration

Medical Center (VAMC) (MDVA-MVH requirement).

- Have an acute care hospital licensed by the State of Minnesota (MDVA-MVH requirement).

*A total of only twenty-seven Minnesota communities meet these mandatory requirements:*

- Aitkin
- Aurora
- Bagley
- Bemidji
- Blue Earth
- Brainerd
- Cook
- Crosby
- Dawson
- Deer River
- Fosston
- Grand Rapids
- Granite Falls
- Hibbing
- Little Falls
- Madelia
- Madison
- Montevideo
- Moose Lake
- New Ulm
- Olivia
- Ortonville
- Paynesville
- Sleepy Eye
- Virginia
- Warren
- Willmar





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## Demographic and Operational Characteristics

Demographic and operational characteristics are very important for the long-term success and efficient operation of a Veterans Home. Therefore, using numbers based on current needs of existing homes, MDVA-MVH has recommended that the following characteristics be met by all places to serve as a site for a new Veterans Home (Engan Associates & Ulteig, 2009):

- A minimum 10,000 veterans and active National Guard members are located in counties within 60 minutes calculated travel time of the community. This is a reasonable minimum number of veterans needing services.
- The community has the ability to staff a Minnesota Veterans Home and to provide the special services required by its residents. All 27 communities that passed the mandatory requirements appear to have an adequate number of RNs, LPNs, and CNAs in zip code areas within 45 minutes calculated travel time to provide primary staff for a Veterans Home. Each of these communities is located within 60 minutes calculated travel time of a higher education medical training program.
- A minimum of 10 dentists are located in zip code areas within 30 minutes calculated travel time of a community. It is anticipated

that area dentists will be able to contract for the care required.

- A minimum of five physicians are located within the community. This is a necessary threshold to assure availability of primary care physicians.
- A minimum of ten psychologists are located within 60 minutes calculated travel time of the community. This is a minimum threshold to meet the requirements of consulting psychology for a Veterans Home.
- A minimum of one psychiatrist is located within 60 minutes calculated travel time of the community.

*Seventeen communities meet the mandatory characteristics, as well as the thresholds for demographics and operational characteristics:*

- Aitkin
- Bagley
- Bemidji
- Blue Earth
- Brainerd
- Crosby
- Deer River
- Grand Rapids
- Hibbing
- Little Falls
- Montevideo
- Moose Lake
- New Ulm
- Olivia



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- Paynesville
- Virginia
- Willmar

## Community Characteristics & Current Situation

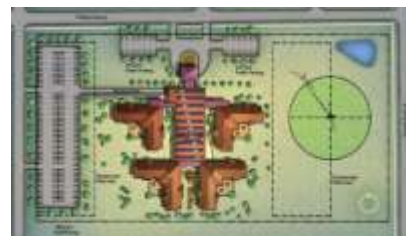
The proposed Veterans Home would be located on a 13.5-acre site purchased by the City of Montevideo on the southeast corner of the city limits. The location is in the growing eastern edge of the city on former farmland. The site is well positioned for residents to participate in community activities as part of the city's desire to have a Veteran Friendly Community. By using the local taxi and van services, residents can easily access: the commercial main street, the Chippewa County Fairgrounds, the cultural center, the fine arts center, and to the north the new hospital and Veterans Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC).

From the larger city context, the City of Montevideo has amenities which will enrich the resident's social, educational, spiritual and recreational needs. William Avenue, where the Veterans Home would be located, provides the organization spine for community activity; the middle school, high school, athletic fields, National Guard Training and Community Center, and natural park settings to the north all offer opportunities for social engagement. Open space to the south, east and west offer outdoor opportunities via bike trails and walking paths to nature preserves.

Community Plan



The Veterans Home design provides state-of-the-art social and operational organization with four neighborhood clusters, all equal distance from communal space which includes an exercise center. The building provides passive solar design and is a platform for future solar thermal collectors. The site plan provides for geothermal heating and wind turbine generated power.



Montevideo Veterans Home Site Plan

Development of an additional Minnesota Veterans Home is about creating a home for veterans. This home will include the personal space of the resident but also the facility campus and the greater community of people and services. City Manager Steve Jones explained that "it is essential that the site be integrated into the community"





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(Jones, 2017). He mentioned that this includes public transportation, public parks, rivers and trail systems.

A Veterans Home requires community support and activities. Important assets include community partners to assist with recreational activities, baseball and softball games, theatre and other off site programs. Activities that can utilize the skill and experience of veterans to volunteer and help to create a strong community are desirable. It is also desirable that community volunteer groups be available to support the needs of the Veterans Home residents.

## Key Issues

### *Why build a Montevideo Regional Veterans Home?*

For the Veterans! Current estimates indicate there are 386,000 Veterans living in the State of Minnesota. If even one half of one percent require long-term care and choose a Veterans Home, that would require 1,930 beds. Minnesota's current five Veterans Homes have 860 beds.

### *Who pays for and who owns the Veterans Home?*

The Veterans Home is a state owned facility. Construction costs are split between the federal and state governments. Current cost estimates indicate a \$20,475,285 federal commitment and a \$10,240,715

state commitment for the project for a TOTAL project, cost of \$30,716,000. Of the state share we have financial commitments and costs to date of \$5,032,145.

### *If the state and federal government own and pay for the construction cost, why is the City being asked to contribute financially to this project?*

The Minnesota State Legislature enacts legislation stating that a home will be built and WHERE it will be built. To help our chances of placing a Veterans Home in our region, we are paying a portion of the state's cost to help convince the state to agree to the project.

### *Where will the facility be built?*

The City of Montevideo has donated land (approximately 13.5 acres) located on the corner of County Road 15 and William Avenue.

### *Why should the facility be constructed in Montevideo?*

1. There are many reasons! First, Montevideo has one of the twelve Veterans Administration Community Based Outpatient Clinic's that are located in Minnesota. Therefore, transporting Veterans from the home to receive medical attention would be cost and time efficient. We also have the new \$40 Million Dollar Chippewa County Montevideo Hospital healthcare facility located in Montevideo.



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2. We fit the guidelines! State and Federal guidelines dictate that the facilities must be at least 100 miles or a two-hour drive from the next-closest home.

3. Montevideo would serve over 12,000 Veterans within a 60 minute drive time! Also, there is not another Veterans Home within two hours in every direction of Montevideo. Montevideo also has 12 National Guard and Reserve units within a 60 minute drive time of Montevideo.

4. Community Support! Montevideo has always been a "Pro-Veteran" community as is evident through their active service clubs, Veterans Friendly Community designation, Beyond the Yellow Ribbon designation, the placement of the clinic and monuments erected around town, all of which go towards creating a friendly and welcoming experience for area Veterans.

*How many jobs will be created if the Veterans home is constructed in Montevideo?*

The Montevideo Community Development Corporation hired the University of Minnesota to conduct an Economic Impact Analysis. Their study found that 205 jobs would be created at the facility itself!

*Does the Montevideo region have the workforce capable of supporting the Veterans home?*

According to Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development, currently in Region 6W (the six counties in and around Montevideo) there are 220 people actively seeking employment in healthcare related positions. In this same region, there are 300 people willing to work in zip code 56265 (Montevideo).

*What else did the Economic Impact Analysis reveal?*

Among many positives, the highlights include:

- Output in the local economy to increase by \$11.7 Million Dollars annually.
- Labor income in the local economy is expected to increase by nearly \$8 Million Dollars annually.
- Output in the local economy is expected to increase by \$20+ Million Dollars due to the CONSTRUCTION of the facility using 200+ construction workers.

*Is there adequate housing available if this facility were to be constructed?*

Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMNHP) has drafted a project agreement which outlines a commitment contingent on construction of the home. The commitment calls for an assessment of the REGIONAL housing opportunities. Based off of these findings, a Regional Action Plan will be drafted. Finally, based off the action plan the SWMNHP has committed to constructing and rehabbing the necessary housing identified within the action plan.



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*Have higher education facilities been informed of the proposed Veterans home?*

Yes! Meetings have taken place with regional educational partners, including Ridgewater Community & Technical College and Minnesota West Community Technical College. The purpose of these discussions was to ensure that if this proposal moves forward, there are adequate classes being offered and training/employment opportunities being explored to the fullest degree possible.

*Who has completed the project predesign?*

Short Elliot Hendrickson (SEH), a top notch architectural and engineering firm from Minneapolis, has been hired and continues to do plan updates. In turn, they have sought the nation's foremost experts on extended care and Veterans Home design.

## Assessment of Alternatives

*Alternative:* The cost of providing medical services or skilled nursing care to patients in their home or alternative facilities can be less than providing skilled nursing care in a nursing home and is an option that could be explored for providing long-term care to Minnesota veterans. Implications include managing a large staff and properly addressing Veterans' needs within their own homes.

*Alternative:* The federal Veterans Administration has implemented community-based care models for aging

veterans in the Medical Foster Home Program. The program has homes within 35 miles of the Minneapolis VA campus, and each home provides for three adults with medical support provided by the VA. Implications include a limited impact of the state's Veteran population and the cost behind foster home programs.

*Alternative:* Minnesota has had a continual drop in nursing home occupancy levels and has the lowest recorded rate of nursing home occupancy at 90% for community based nursing homes. Veterans could be allowed to utilize existing nursing homes and receive state and federal funding at these locations. Implications include the opposition of the Federal VA to this type of care and Veterans not receiving care in consideration of their unique conditions.

*Alternative:* Do nothing. The State and Federal VA could choose to not create more beds in Minnesota Veterans Homes. The implications include Veterans not receiving the care and benefits they deserve and the State losing allotted beds to another state.

## Recommendations & Proposed Action

**Mission:** To Respectfully Honor and Serve Our Veterans.

**Vision:** We envision a community where our Veterans can live



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in affordable housing, have good jobs and raise families, have access to health care, senior services, and can live out their lives in peace.

*Action Steps: Access to Health Services:* A Community Based V.A. Outpatient Clinic has been established in Montevideo; we need to continue to offer support.

*Affordable Housing:* Over the last decade, over 125 affordable units have been built in Montevideo, many for seniors. We need to continue on this path, and focus in on the specific needs of Veterans.

*Jobs and Community Access:* Montevideo has created the Veterans Friendly Community and Veterans Friendly Place campaign to offer discounts and other services to Veterans. We are also a designated Beyond the Yellow Ribbon community. Montevideo has been on the forefront of programs to integrate returning Veterans back into the community. We need to continue to support job creation and establish specific programming to help Veterans find work or start their own business.

*Support of Local Veterans Institutions:* The Veterans Service Office, Social Services, VFW, American Legion, and Disabled American Veterans groups are all active in Montevideo, and we need to continue to support their missions.

*Construct a local Veterans Home:* Preliminary work has begun and work is in earnest to make this happen. As side projects related to the Veterans home, its residents, visitors, and workers, the community will need to address housing needs associated with the project, explore and plan for its impact upon the community, and find methods to increase and attract the availability of trained health care workers.





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## Initial Financial Commitment

### Veterans Home Fundraising

\$30,716,000 Estimated Project Cost for New VA Home in Montevideo  
 \$20,475,285 Federal Share (2/3)  
 \$10,240,715 State Share (1/3) (Of the state share we have committed funds and costs to date of \$5,032,145)

***\$5,208,570= State Share after local committed funds and costs to date***

Pledges/Committed To Date	Value
Chippewa County	\$3,000,000
Montevideo Community Development Corporation	\$250,000
Montevideo City Council	\$200,000
Montevideo Industrial Development Corporation	\$150,000
Minnwest Bank Inc	\$60,000
Montevideo Economic Development Authority	\$50,000
Yellow Medicine County	\$50,000
Lac qui Parle County	\$50,000
Swift County	\$50,000
Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership	\$50,000
KleinBank Inc	\$35,000
American Legion Post #59	\$30,000
VFW Post #380	\$30,000
World War II/Korean War Vets Coffee Group	\$8,295
Chippewa County Township Association	\$8,000
Watson Lions Club	\$1,000
City of Montevideo Land Donation: Land Value (13.5 Acres at \$1.25 per square foot based on recent appraisals)	\$707,850
Other Pledges	\$150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,880,145</b>

Local Costs To Date	Entity Performing Task	Paid By	Value
Predesign Costs	S.E.H. Architects	MCDC	\$68,000
Economic Impact Analysis	U of M Extension	MCDC	\$4,500
Contingencies/Miscellaneous	City/County	City/County	\$79,500
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$152,000</b>

***\$5,032,145 Total Local Costs and Committed Funds to Date***

## ONGOING COSTS

The estimated annual State General Fund Appropriation for the Montevideo Veteran Home would be: \$5,200,000.00



## Timing

Project Schedule	
Activity	YEAR 1 J F M A M J J A S O N D YEAR 2 J F M A M J J A S O N D YEAR 3 J F M A M J J A S O N D YEAR 4 J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M
Estimated Project Length- Months	
1. Predesign Document	
2. Legislative Approval	
3. Local Approval	
Agency RECS Review	
4. Selection Process	
5. State Designer Selection	
6. Schematic Design	
7. Quality Control/Schematic Design Approval	
Agency RECS Review	
8. Design Development	
9. Quality Control/Design Development Approval	
Agency RECS Review	
10. Construction Documents	
11. Quality Control/Const. Documents Approval	
Agency RECS Review	
12. Bid Period	
13. Contract Award	
14. Construction Administration (18 Months)	
15. Substantial Completion	
16. Commissioning	
RECS Review	
17. Department of Health Review	
18. Veterans Affairs Review	
19. Completion Punch List	
20. Occupancy	





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## Conclusion

Over the last ten years, the City of Montevideo has presented legislators their plan for the construction and operation of a new Veterans Home in Montevideo. Each year, this presentation and supporting information is updated in order to be made current and accurate. Montevideo has consistently proven that their site is qualified by federal and state rules and regulations to serve as the home to the next Minnesota Veterans Home.

	Site is Shovel Ready
	Project Pre-Design is Complete
	Federal Application for Funding is Complete and Ready to Submit After State Approval
	Over 1,500 Vets on Waiting List to get 1 of 862 Beds Available
	State Approval to Move Forward

The State of Minnesota has a federally identified need of 1,058 beds within the state. As of 2017, the state has a potential bed capacity for 144 new beds. At this time, this capacity need is unmet.

At one point, each one of the roughly 1,500 Veterans on a list waiting to be admitted into a Veterans Home left their homes, wives, children, parents and grandparents to serve their country, fully realizing that they may or may not return. During all of

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our wars and conflicts, they endured undue hardships, severe wounds, loss of arms and legs, mental disabilities and the like. Today, unless personally affected by having a spouse, son, or daughter in “harm’s way”, there is not too much that we sacrifice for these men and women in combat. There are almost daily reports about our war efforts, but we go to work, go home, and go on vacation. Unless we have relatives serving, or are involved in some other way, we do not give them much thought.

General David Petraeus explained that In World War II, 11.2% of the nation served in four (4) years. During the Vietnam era, 4.3% served in twelve (12) years. Since 2001, only 0.45% of our population has served in the Global War on Terror. These are unbelievable statistics. Over time, fewer and fewer people have shouldered more and more of the burden, and it is only getting worse. Where possible, these veterans should be made a priority and should receive the care they deserve. Montevideo acknowledges this and will continue to fight for the construction and operation of a Veterans Home in our community.



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