

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

CONSTRUCTION OF AN ARMED FORCES RESERVE CENTER AND IMPLEMENTATION OF BRAC 05 REALIGNMENT ACTIONS IN NEWARK, DELAWARE

On September 8, 2005, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (“BRAC Commission”) recommended that certain realignment actions occur at Newark, DE. These recommendations were approved by the President on September 23, 2005, and forwarded to Congress. Congress did not alter any of the BRAC Commission’s recommendations, and on November 9, 2005, the recommendations became law. The BRAC Commission’s recommendations must now be implemented as provided for in the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510), as amended.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) which identifies, documents, and evaluates the environmental effects of the BRAC Commission’s recommended realignment of functions at Newark, DE. The EA has been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and implementing regulations issued by the President’s Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)¹; Environmental Analysis of Army Actions, 32 CFR Part 651; and Policies and Responsibilities for Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act within the Department of the Navy, 32 CFR 775. The 2006 Base Realignment Closure Manual for Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act was used for guidance in preparing the EA. The purpose of the EA is to inform decision makers and the public of the likely environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives.

1.0 PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is to implement the BRAC Commission’s recommendation, as mandated by BRAC law, Public Law 101-510, by acquiring land and constructing new facilities to accommodate the personnel and functions of organizations realigning and relocating to Newark, DE.

The BRAC Commission’s recommendations are²:

“Close the Major Robert Kirkwood United States Army Reserve Center and its organizational maintenance shop in Newark, DE, and re-locate units to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center and organizational maintenance support facility in Newark, DE, if the Army is able to acquire suitable land for the construction of the facilities. The new AFRC shall have the capability to accommodate Delaware Army National Guard units from the William Nelson Armory in Middletown, DE, if the state decided to relocate those units.”

To implement these recommendations, the following new facilities are proposed for construction:

Armed Forces Reserve Center (AFRC) and supporting facilities. The proposed AFRC would provide an approximately 80,994 square foot (SF) 400-member training facility with administrative, educational, assembly, library, learning center, vault, weapons simulator, and physical fitness areas for four Army Reserve units and two Delaware Army National Guard (DEARNG) units. Associated support facilities include an approximately 8,050 SF Vehicle Maintenance Shop (VMS) and an approximately 1,361 SF unheated storage building. In addition, there would be approximately 4.28 acres of paved areas including approximately 2.47 acres of military equipment parking (MEP) areas and approximately 1.81 acres of privately-owned vehicle (POV) parking areas, walkways, and access roads.

¹ Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, 40 CFR Parts 1500–1508.

² Although the BRAC language indicates that the Major Robert Kirkwood United States Army Reserve Center is located in Newark, DE it is actually located in Wilmington, DE.

To accommodate the proposed facilities it is likely that some or all of five buildings existing on the preferred location would need to be demolished prior to construction of the proposed facilities. The five structures total 215,900 SF and include a free standing one-story steel manufacturing building and four storage/outbuildings.

Personnel. Implementing the BRAC Commission's recommendations in Newark, DE would result in the total assignment of approximately 401 personnel to the new AFRC, 379 of whom are reservists and part-time soldiers and 22 of whom are full-time personnel. Of the total incoming personnel to the new AFRC, only those associated with the DEARNG units (6 full-time, 114 part-time soldiers) would be coming from outside of the Newark, DE area. They would be relocating from Middletown, DE, approximately 15 miles away. Each unit would be drilling on one of three weekends each month; with a maximum drill weekend consisting of approximately 162 personnel.

Vehicles. The relocation and realignment of reserve units to the proposed AFRC would also bring associated unit vehicles, equipment, and materials. The total number of vehicles that would relocate to the new AFRC in Newark, DE is projected to be approximately 98, including 65 wheeled vehicles, 18 trailers, and 6 tracked vehicles.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

CEQ regulations require inclusion of the No Action alternative. The No Action alternative serves as a baseline against which the impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives can be evaluated. Under the No Action alternative, the U.S. Army would not implement the Proposed Action. U.S. Army Reserve and DEARNG units would continue to train at and operate from their current locations with current facilities which are outdated, inadequate, and inefficient. However, routine replacement or renovation actions could occur through normal military maintenance and construction procedures as circumstances independently warrant. The No Action alternative is evaluated in detail in this EA to provide the baseline prescribed by CEQ regulations.

The U.S. Army considered and analyzed one other alternative, the Preferred Alternative – Ogletown Road. Under the Preferred Alternative, the U.S. Army would construct the AFRC facilities described in the Proposed Action on a 20-acre parcel of land located at 1001 Ogletown Road in Newark, DE.

Other alternatives were considered, but not analyzed in the EA. These included ten other new construction sites located within 10 miles of Newark, DE. These other alternatives were considered not feasible to implement the Proposed Action and were therefore dismissed from further analysis.

3.0 FACTORS CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING THAT AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT IS NOT REQUIRED

The EA, which is incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI), identified and examined potential effects of the alternatives. The EA evaluated 12 resource areas and areas of environmental and socioeconomic concern: land use, aesthetic and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances.

The EA determined that implementation of the proposed realignment actions would not have any significant adverse effects or impacts on any of the environmental or related resource areas at the Preferred Alternative site or on areas surrounding the site. All of the resource areas evaluated resulted in a No Effect or a No Significant Effect determination.

None of the predicted effects of the proposed realignment actions would result in significant impacts; therefore, mitigation is not required, and implementation of the Proposed Action will not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. Therefore, preparation of a FNSI is appropriate.

4.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Interested parties were invited to review and comment on the EA and Draft FNSI from March 6, 2009 through April 4, 2009. A Notice of Availability was published on March 6 and March 13, 2009 in both the Newark Post and The Post newspapers.

The EA and Draft FNSI were made available during the public comment period on the World Wide Web at:

http://www.hqda.army.mil/acsim/brac/env_review.htm

The EA and Draft FNSI were also available for review during the public comment at the following local libraries:

Newark Free Library
750 Library Ave
Newark, DE 19711

Wilmington Public Library
10 E 10th St.
Wilmington, DE 19801

Reviewers were invited to submit comments on the EA and Draft FNSI during the public comment period via mail, fax, or electronic mail to:

Mona Garrett
99th Regional Support Command
99 Soldiers Lane
Coraopolis, PA 15108-2550
email: mona.garrett@usar.army.mil
Fax No. (412) 604-8156

[XX] comments were received on the EA and the Draft FNSI during the 30-day public comment period.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the EA, it has been determined that implementing the Proposed Action will have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects on the quality of the natural or human environment. Because no significant environmental impacts will result from implementing the Proposed Action, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared.

Date: _____

William Monk III
Major General, U.S. Army
99th Regional Support Command
Commanding General