

Finding of No Significant Impact Base Realignment at Fort Buchanan, Bayamon, Puerto Rico

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (Title 40 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR] Parts 1500–1508) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (Title 42 of the United States Code, Part 4321 et seq.) and Army regulation (32 CFR Part 651), the 1st Mission Support Command (MSC) Army Reserve and Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the potential environmental and socioeconomic effects associated with implementing the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission's (BRAC Commission) recommendations at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico.

PROPOSED ACTION

With respect to Fort Buchanan, the BRAC Commission recommended in relevant part:

Close the U.S. Army Reserve Center 1st Lieutenant Paul Lavergne, Bayamon, PR, and relocate the 973rd Combat Support (CS) Company into a new Armed Forces Reserve Center on United States Army Reserve property in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, and relocate all other units into a new Armed Forces Reserve Center (AFRC) on Fort Buchanan. Realign the U.S. Army Reserve Center Captain E. Rubio Junior, Puerto Nuevo, by relocating the 807th Signal Company into a new Armed Forces Reserve Center on Fort Buchanan. The new AFRC on Fort Buchanan shall have the capability to accommodate units from the Puerto Rico Army National Guard San Juan Readiness Center, San Juan, if Puerto Rico decides to relocate those National Guard units.

Relocation of units, equipment, and personnel from the Army Reserve Centers in Bayamon and Puerto Nuevo to Fort Buchanan would require the Army to construct and operate new facilities at Fort Buchanan. The Army proposes to construct and operate an AFRC at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. Primary facilities would include an AFRC building, Organizational Maintenance Shop (OMS) and unit storage building. The AFRC would provide about 85,000 square feet of space, the OMS would have about 11,000 square feet of built space, and organizational unit storage would be provided in a building having about 1,400 square feet of space.

Under the BRAC law, the Army must initiate all realignments no later than September 15, 2007, and complete all realignments not later than September 15, 2011. Implementation of the proposed action would occur over a span of approximately 3.5 years.

ALTERNATIVES

The AFRC would be on a 5.6-acre parcel in the 300 Area (the approximate center of Fort Buchanan). The 300 Area parcel is bounded by Chrisman Road to the northeast, Wilson Road to the southeast, and Crane Loop to the southwest and northwest. The OMS and storage facility would be on a 6.6-acre parcel in the 6500 Area (in the northern portion of Fort Buchanan). The 600 Area parcel is bounded by North Terminal Road west, South Terminal Road to the south, and the installation boundary to the north. The 300/600 Area Alternative is the Army's Preferred Alternative. Review of sites on Fort Buchanan for construction and operation of the AFRC produced one other alternative candidate parcel to the preferred site. This alternative site is in the 1200 Area of the installation. The site is occupied by the Coqui Gardens family housing area, and it was determined that use of the site, involving the demolition of family housing units, additional utilities infrastructure, and additional site preparation, would add about 3 percent to the project cost. The 1200 Area parcel, therefore, was eliminated from consideration.

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 1st MSC Army Reserve and Fort Buchanan would not implement the proposed action. The BRAC recommendations have the force of law and must be implemented. The No Action Alternative, therefore, is not possible. Consistent with CEQ requirements, however, the No Action Alternative is evaluated in detail in the EA.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The environmental and socioeconomic consequences of implementation of the 300/600 Area (the Army's Preferred Alternative) and the No Action Alternative are summarized below. The EA examined the potential effects on 12 resource areas: land use, aesthetic and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics (including environmental justice and protection of children), transportation and traffic, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances.

300/600 Area Alternative

Short-term minor adverse effects on air quality, noise, soils, biological resources, quality of life, and traffic would be associated with construction activities. Short-term minor beneficial effects on the local economy would result from increased employment and income from construction jobs and the purchase of construction materials and supplies. Long-term minor adverse effects associated with operation of the new facilities would be expected on aesthetics, air quality, surface water and stormwater, traffic, and utilities. Long-term minor adverse effects would occur from construction equipment air emissions and noise, development of a previously open area, increased imperviousness, and the generation of additional solid waste and construction debris. No effects on land use, groundwater resources, floodplains, the coastal zone, cultural resources, population, housing, environmental justice, protection of children, or hazardous and toxic substances would be expected.

No Action Alternative

No effects on any of the resource areas considered in the EA would be expected from implementation of the No Action Alternative.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

No cumulative effects would be expected under any of the alternatives. No specific concurrent projects have been identified, and as such no cumulative effects are expected.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation actions are used to reduce, avoid, or compensate for significant adverse effects. The EA did not identify the need for mitigations measures.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the analyses performed in the EA, implementation of the 300/600 Area Alternative would have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse effects on the quality of the natural or human environment. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. Preparation of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The EA and FONSI are available for review and comment for 30 days. Notices of Availability (NOAs) of the documents were published in *El Nuevo Día* and *The San Juan Star*; the document review period will end 30 days after publication of the NOAs. Copies of the EA and FONSI can be obtained by contacting Mr. Anibal Negron at 787-707-3576, or by e-mail requests to Anibal.negron1@us.army.mil. Copies of the EA and FONSI are available for review at the Carnegie Public Library, 7 Ponce de Leon Avenue, San Juan, PR 00901. Comments on the EA and FONSI should be submitted to Mr. Negron no later than 30 days after publication of the NOAs.



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Date