

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Project History In 2005 the Defense Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) Commission recommended the closure of the United States Army Reserve (USAR) Centers in Shreveport and Bossier City, LA and the relocation of all reserve component units to a new Armed Forces Reserve Center (AFRC) that would be constructed on or adjacent to the Naval-Marine Corps Reserve Center (NMCRC), Shreveport in Bossier City. The proposed action is to implement the Commission's recommendation as mandated by the BRAC legislation, Public Laws 101-510 and 107-107. To accomplish this recommendation, the USAR will construct a new AFRC in Bossier City, and realign units from Shreveport and Bossier City to this new facility. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, a Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to identify and assess the environmental effects of the proposed construction and operation of a new AFRC in Bossier City, Louisiana.

Purpose and Need The mission of the USAR, under Title 10 of the U.S. Code (USC), is to provide trained and ready soldiers and units with the critical combat service and combat support capabilities necessary to support national strategy during peacetime, contingencies, and war.

The purpose and need for the proposed action is to implement the 2005 BRAC recommendation, and to ensure that the USAR units are able to operate and train in facilities that are properly configured to allow the most effective training to complete mission requirements.

The proposed action would enhance the ability of the USAR to fulfill their training requirements by allowing them to consolidate units from multiple locations into a new centralized facility. This would enhance military value, improve homeland defense capability, greatly improve training and deployment capability, create significant efficiencies and cost savings, and be consistent with the Army's force structure plans and transformational objectives. If this project is not executed, the units would be forced to operate and train in facilities not properly configured to allow the most effective training to complete mission requirements, and the BRAC recommendation would not be implemented. Military value and homeland defense capabilities would not be enhanced, training and deployment capability would not be improved, and significant efficiencies and cost savings would not be realized.

Appropriate facilities are needed to meet readiness, recruiting, retention, and training objectives. Existing facilities are inadequate to support the operational requirements of the realigned USAR units. Therefore, the proposed action is to construct a new AFRC in Bossier City for seven units to fulfill the military mission of the USAR.

Proposed Action USACE and the Army propose to acquire 4.169 acres of privately owned land adjacent to the NMCRC in Bossier City and to lease 0.525 acre of NMCRC property for a total of 4.694 acres where the new AFRC would be located.

In this project, a 600-member training facility (51,737 square feet [ft²]) would be constructed for seven USAR units with the following areas: administrative, educational, assembly, library, learning center, vault, weapons simulator, and physical fitness. The project would also provide for unit storage (13,500 ft²) and adequate parking space (approximately 8,510 square yards [yd²]) for all military and privately owned vehicles.

Alternatives The EA evaluates three alternatives: (1) no action alternative, (2) preferred alternative—to construct a new AFRC adjacent to the NMCRC, incorporating the existing carwash site and a portion of existing NMCRC property, and (3) alternative action—to construct a new AFRC adjacent to the NMCRC, incorporating a portion of existing NMCRC property, but not including the existing carwash site. An additional alternative was considered in preliminary analysis and was not carried forward for analysis in the EA. That alternative was to construct the AFRC at another site. It was determined that implementation of this alternative was not feasible, as the BRAC recommendation directed that a specific area be used for the new AFRC location. As a result, the site directed for use in the BRAC recommendation was given priority and other potential sites were eliminated from consideration. Therefore, this additional alternative was not suitable and was not evaluated in the EA.

Environmental Consequences The EA describes potential environmental impacts of implementing the proposed action. Those impacts are summarized below:

Land Use There would be no impacts to land use from Alternative 1. With implementation of Alternative 2, the preferred alternative, construction would be on mostly vacant land adjacent to the existing NMCRC. Impacts would be negligible and would not result in a significant alteration of the surrounding community. Consequences of Alternative 3 would be the same as those of Alternative 2.

Aesthetic and Visual Resources No impacts to aesthetic and visual resources would occur under Alternative 1. Under Alternative 2, the project would be constructed in an area that is already mostly developed with various man-made structures and buildings, introducing a negligible change in this already modified visual environment. Only negligible impacts to aesthetics or visual resources would be expected. Consequences of Alternative 3 would be the same as those of Alternative 2.

Air Quality No impacts to air quality would occur under Alternative 1. Under Alternative 2, there would be a minor short-term adverse impact from the air emissions of construction equipment and fugitive dust from the construction site, which would be minimized through best management practices (BMPs). There would be a minor impact from air emissions from building heating, cooling, and water heaters during operation, but these small sources would result in no more than a *de minimis* impact on air quality. Consequences of Alternative 3 would be the same as those of Alternative 2.

Noise No impacts to noise would occur under Alternative 1. Minor short-term adverse impacts would occur under Alternative 2 from operation of equipment during construction, and routine operation of the AFRC could result in negligible nuisance disturbance at nearby residential areas. Consequences of Alternative 3 would be the same as those of Alternative 2.

Geology and Soils No impacts to geology and soils would be expected under Alternative 1. With implementation of Alternative 2, there would be minor impacts to approximately 4 acres of soil as a result of construction, but appropriate BMPs would minimize the impacts from erosion and stormwater runoff. There are no special qualities associated with soils or geologic resources at this site, and the site contains no prime farmland. Consequences of Alternative 3 would be the same as those of Alternative 2.

Surface Waters and Waters of the U.S. No impacts to surface waters or waters of the U.S. would be expected under any of the evaluated alternatives. No impacts to floodplains would occur under any of the evaluated alternatives. The project area is not located in a coastal zone.

Hydrology and Groundwater No impacts to hydrology and groundwater would occur under any of the evaluated alternatives.

Stormwater No impacts to stormwater would occur under Alternative 1. Use of appropriate BMPs would prevent impacts to stormwater from construction activities under Alternatives 2 and 3. An increase in the amount of impermeable surface would result under Alternatives 2 and 3 from construction of the new building and parking area, but the resulting volume of stormwater runoff would be handled by post-construction stormwater controls. Bossier City has indicated that the new stormwater piped system that is part of the planned new street project for Swan Lake Road would accommodate any runoff from the project site.

Vegetation No impacts to vegetation would be expected under Alternative 1. With implementation of Alternatives 2 and 3, there would be negligible impacts to common vegetation due to construction and the conversion of vacant land to a developed building site and parking.

Wildlife No impacts to wildlife would be expected under Alternative 1. With implementation of Alternatives 2 and 3, a low quality wildlife habitat would be permanently converted to a developed building site and parking area, resulting in negligible impacts to common wildlife.

Wetlands No wetlands were observed and no areas of hydrophytic vegetation were identified at the project site. Therefore, no impact to wetlands would occur with any of the evaluated alternatives.

Sensitive Species There would be no impacts to federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat under any of the evaluated alternatives.

Cultural Resources No impacts to cultural resources would occur under any of the evaluated alternatives.

Socioeconomic Resources Under Alternative 1 there would be no impact to socioeconomic resources. Under Alternatives 2 and 3 there would be a minor short-term beneficial impact from an increase in construction-related employment.

Environmental Justice and Protection of Children No disproportionate impact to minority or low-income populations, and no environmental health or safety risks to children, would occur under any of the evaluated alternatives.

Transportation Alternative 1 would have no impact on traffic. Under Alternatives 2 and 3 there would be a minor, short-term impact on traffic in the immediate area from construction, and workers would use appropriate controls to maintain safe traffic conditions. Changes in traffic patterns at the immediate project site and an increase of less than 0.1 percent in daily traffic would have a negligible impact on traffic flow.

Utilities Alternative 1 would have no impact on utilities. Under Alternatives 2 and 3 demand for potable water, wastewater treatment, energy, communication, and solid waste disposal would increase slightly and there would also be a minor impact on solid waste management due to construction-related waste. However, sufficient capacity exists to accommodate the increased demands. Alternative 3 would not require demolition of the existing carwash and thus would generate less solid waste during site preparation than Alternative 2.

Hazardous Materials There would be no hazardous materials impacts from implementation of Alternative 1. Alternatives 2 and 3 would have negligible impacts on the generation or disposal of hazardous or toxic waste or materials. Under Alternative 2, demolition waste from the carwash would require proper disposal in accordance with Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC) Title 46.

Indirect and Cumulative Impacts No indirect or cumulative impacts would be expected under any of the evaluated alternatives.

Mitigation Because no significant impacts would result from the proposed action, no mitigation is proposed. Applicable construction permits would be obtained, and health and safety procedures during construction would be implemented. A stormwater general construction permit, required for land disturbances greater than 1 acre in size, would be obtained from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) in accordance with the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES), prior to the beginning of construction. While no mitigation would be performed, appropriate BMPs would be implemented to further reduce unavoidable minor impacts of the proposed project. BMPs would be used to minimize soil erosion, control fugitive dust emissions, and contain stormwater runoff. Construction activities would occur during the daytime, week-day hours to minimize disturbance from noise.

Public Comment Copies of the Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were distributed to regulatory agencies and made available to the public for review and comment from May 8, 2009 to June 6, 2009.

Determination On the basis of the findings of the EA and after careful review of the potential anticipated impacts, implementation of Alternative 2, conducted in a manner consistent with applicable regulatory requirements, would not result in a significant impact on the quality of the environment. Therefore, issuance of a FONSI is warranted, and preparation of a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

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