



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Office of the Planning Director
Prince George's County Planning Department

14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772
TTY: (301) 952-4366
www.mncppc.org/pgco
301-952-3595
D12-092001
MR-12001A

October 23, 2012

Ms. Anne Hodges
Environmental Planner
Joint Base Andrews Naval Air Facility
11 CES/CEAO
3466 North Carolina Avenue
Joint Base Andrews, MD 20762

RE: Construction of U.S. Army Battalion Headquarters

Dear Ms. Hodges:

The Prince George's County Planning Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment for construction of Battalion Headquarters for the U.S. Army Priority Air Transport at Joint Base Andrews (JBA). The US Army Priority Air Transport Command (USAPAT) plans to replace a 7,000 square foot building with a 12,000 square foot building. The new building will provide similar services as the older building but with more space in which to do it. Among those services are: classrooms, conferencing, training, and cold and dry storage.

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the Environmental Planning Section's evaluation and comments on the proposed construction of the demolition and disposal of Building 1778 and the construction of a new battalion headquarters facility.

The proposed project does not include any impacts to any cultural or historic resources within Prince George's County. JBA includes two properties designated as Prince George's County historic sites: 77-001-Forest Grove Methodist Church and Cemetery (Chapel 2), and 77-014-Belle Chance and Cemetery. Neither of these properties will be affected by the proposed demolition and construction.

Based on the information provided there will be no change in the number of USAPAT personnel and its operations once the new building is built, and the transportation impact of the traffic generation potential will remain unchanged, both within the Joint Base Andrews complex as well as beyond its borders. The proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the adjacent transportation network.

In addition the staff agrees with the assessment's conclusion that a short-term minor beneficial economic effect on the regional economy would be expected from implementing the proposed action.

Ms. Anne Hodges

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Thank you again for allowing us the opportunity to comment on this Environmental Assessment. If you should have any additional questions or need additional information, please contact Christine Osei, Mandatory Referral Project Manager, Special Projects, Countywide Planning Division, at 301-952-3313 or via Christine.Osei@ppd.mncppc.org.

Sincerely,



Fern V. Piret
Planning Director

Enclosure

- c: Derick Berlage, Chief, Countywide Planning Division
Maria Martin, Planning Supervisor, Special Projects Section, Countywide Planning Division
Katina Shoular, Planning Supervisor, Environmental Planning Section, Countywide Planning Division
Howard Berger, Planning Supervisor, Historic Preservation Section, Countywide Planning Division
Jacqueline Philson, Planning Supervisor, Research Section, Countywide Planning Division
Tom Masog, Planner Coordinator, Transportation Planning Section, Countywide Planning Division



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Countywide Planning Division
Environmental Planning Section

October 14, 2012

TO: Christine Osei, Planner Coordinator, Special Projects Section

VIA: Katina Shoulars, Supervisor, Environmental Planning Section

FROM: Kim Finch, Planner Coordinator, Environmental Planning Section

SUBJECT: MR-12001A Battalion Headquarters for U.S. Army Priority Air Transport
Environmental Assessment (August 2012 Draft)
Joint Base Andrews (JBA)

The Environmental Planning Section has reviewed the Environmental Assessment for Construction and Operation of a Battalion Headquarters for the U.S. Priority Air Transport (Draft) dated August 2012. The proposed action was evaluated to determine the potential for significant adverse impacts on environmental resources, including but not limited to air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, and biological resources. The following commentary is based on a review of the draft EA and an interpretation of aerial photographs and maps. A site visit was not conducted. The following comments are provided for your consideration.

Proposed Activity or Action

Construction of a new building is proposed for a battalion headquarters. Three locations within the JBA complex were evaluated as alternative locations for the proposed 12,000 square foot facility which will replace an obsolete 7,000 square foot facility, in addition to a no action alternative. The three sites are similar in their existing character, but differ in their prior development activities.

The D Street and Brookley Avenue location is an existing structure and parking lot that would be demolished to make way for the replacement structure.

The Arnold Drive and D Street location is an undeveloped area of turf and landscape trees that has been previously graded and would be converted to development.

The Westover Drive and Arnold Drive location is an entirely wooded site that would require the removal 2.0 acres of trees for development and may contain nontidal wetlands.

Existing Conditions

The land area of the Joint Base Andrews (JBA)-Naval Air Facility Washington (formerly Andrews Air Force Base) is approximately 4,346 acres. JBA is bounded on the west by Branch Avenue, on the

northwest by Allentown Road, on the north by Suitland Parkway, and on the northeast by Pennsylvania Avenue, and is surrounded by various types of development.

Noise: The military noise environment consists primarily of three types of noise zones: low, moderate and high. Air Force Manual 32-1123(I) defines recommended noise limits from Air Force activities for established uses of land with respect to environmental noise. The noise environment at all three proposed site is classed as a Noise Zone 1 under Air Force Manual recommended noise limits, which indicates a relatively low noise environment that is acceptable for housing, schools, medical facilities, and other noise sensitive land uses. No noise sensitive areas as location within 2,000 feet of the proposed locations.

Air quality: The Clean Air Act, as amended, gives EPA responsibility to establish the primary and secondary national Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) that set acceptable concentration levels for six criteria pollutants; Particulate Matter (measured as both particulate matter and fine particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, ozone, and lead. While each state has the authority to adopt standards stricter than those established under the federal program, Maryland accepts the federal standards.

Federal regulations designate Air Quality Control Regions (AQCRs) in violation of the NAAQS as nonattainment areas. Federal regulations designate AQCRs with levels below the NAAQS as attainment areas. According to the severity of the pollution problem, ozone nonattainment areas can be categorized as marginal, moderate, serious, severe or extreme.

Prince George's County, and JBA, is within the National Capital Interstate Air Quality Control Region (AQCR 47). AQCR 47 is in the ozone transport region that includes 12 states and the District of Columbia. EPA has designated Prince George's County as follows: Moderate nonattainment for the 1997 8-hour ozone (O₃); nonattainment for the 1997 fine particulate matter (PM 2.5); and attainment for all other criteria pollutants.

Earth/Geological Resources: Joint Base Andrews is located on a plateau between the Anacostia and Potomac River. The elevation of the three alternative locations is between 260 and 265 feet above mean sea level.

Because of the considerable amount of development over the years, two of the proposed locations have soils categorized as Udorthents, which is land that is altered by disturbance to the extent that the original soil series cannot be identified. Soils for the wooded portion of the Westover Drive site are Hoghole-Grosstown soils. All of these soils are rated as not being limited for small building development, but are susceptible to flooding or ponding.

Water resources: Most of JBA, including the three proposed sites, are located in the Potomac River basin. Two of the proposed locations drain into the Tinkers Creek subwatershed, while the Westover Drive site drains north into to Henson Creek. The on-site waters are not Tier II waterways or within a Stronghold Watershed.

Regional water-supply aquifers are several hundred feet below ground surface, and no recharge areas are located on JBA.

In 2005 JBA completed a study of the 100-year floodplains on the base. Floodplains are generally limited to small streams and the area immediately adjacent to the streams. No floodplains are on any of the three proposed sites.

In accordance with the Clean Water Act, projects at JBA that involve the filling of wetlands would require section 404 permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Nontidal Wetland Permit from MDE. No wetlands have been identified on two of the proposed sites, but it is possible that wetlands could occur on the Westover Drive site because an investigation has not been completed.

Biological resources: Nearly 80 percent of JBA is developed or intensely managed. The remaining patches of vegetation on unimproved areas consist of a mixed hardwood forest. The plants and animals found on JBA are typical of those found in the Atlantic Coastal Plain area. RTE species surveys have been performed on the site periodically. A federal endangered species, sandplain gerardia (*Agalinis acuta*), was identified during a 1994 field survey, but has not been found in subsequent surveys.

Five state-listed species (which were not identified in the Environmental Assessment) have been observed in the past at JBA, but only one, the swollen bladderwort (*Utricularia inflata*), was found in the western branch of the Belle Chance Pond, northeast of the Westover Drive site.

Environmental Consequences

Noise: Short-term increases in noise would result from the use of construction and demolition equipment. No long-term increases in the overall noise environment would be expected from implementing the proposed action.

Air Quality: The proposed action could affect air quality through airborne dust and other pollutants generated during construction and demolition. Air quality impacts would be considered minor unless the emissions would contribute to a violation of any federal, state or local air regulations.

Earth/Geological Resources: Short-term impacts on soils would be expected from construction activities. No long-term effect on soils would be expected

Water Resources: No adverse effects on water resources would be expected from implementing the proposed action. All construction will be conducted in accordance with erosion control and stormwater runoff laws and regulations to prevent any adverse effects on water quality. NPDES Permits for Stormwater Associated with Construction Activities would be obtained as well as the approval from MDE of a Stormwater Management Plan before any construction activity would begin.

Biological Resources: The proposed alternative locations for construction of the battalion headquarters are very similar in their environmental characteristics, with the exception of the Westover Drive location, which would include the removal of approximately 2.0 acres of woodlands for development. Federal facilities are not subject to local application of the Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance, but will be reviewed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for adherence to the Clean Water Act. The habitat on the wooded site provides a diverse habitat for plants and animals, but does not support federally or state-listed species.

Wetlands: A jurisdictional determination of wetlands would be performed on the Westover site before any ground disturbance would occur if the site is chosen for the facility. If wetlands are found, avoidance or mitigation would be applied in accordance with federal and state requirements.


Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment for the construction and Operation of a Battalion Headquarters for the U.S. Army Priority Air Transport at Joint Base Andrews-Naval Air Facility. If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact the Environmental Planning Section at 301-952-3650.


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October 12, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Christine Osei, Project Manager, Mandatory Referral Process

VIA: Jacqueline Philson, Planning Supervisor, Research Section, Countywide Planning Division 

FROM: Theodore W. Kowaluk, Senior Planner 

SUBJECT: Joint Base Andrews Battalion Headquarters

Staff has reviewed the Joint Base Andrews Battalion Headquarters Environmental Assessment Review and agrees with the assessment's conclusion that, "Short-term minor beneficial economic effects on the regional economy would be expected from implementing the proposed action."

From an economic development stand point the construction of the Battalion Headquarters will have a minimal albeit positive impact on the county. Staff is available to answer any questions or concerns you may have with regard to this memorandum.



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**Prince George's County Planning Department
Historic Preservation Section**

**(301) 952-3680
www.mncppc.org**

DATE: October 17, 2012

TO: Christine A. Osei, Mandatory Referral Project Manager
Special Projects Section
Countywide Planning Division

FROM: Howard Berger, Supervisor *HB*
Jennifer Stabler, Archeology Planner Coordinator *JS*
Historic Preservation Section
Countywide Planning Division

RE: Mandatory Referral MR-12001A: Joint Base Andrews Battalion Headquarters
Environmental Assessment Review

Staff of the Historic Preservation Section has reviewed the above-cited mandatory referral and finds that the proposed construction of new small-battalion headquarters facility and the demolition and disposal of Building 1778 will have no effect on identified historic or archeological resources within the subject property.

Staff would also like to note that the proposed project does not include any impacts to any cultural or historic resources within Prince George's County. JBA includes two properties designated as Prince George's County historic sites: 77-001-Forest Grove Methodist Church and Cemetery (Chapel 2), and 77-014-Belle Chance and Cemetery. Neither of these properties will be affected by the proposed construction of a new small-battalion headquarters facility and the demolition and disposal of Building 1778.

Martin, Maria

From: Osei, Christine
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 12:13 PM
To: Martin, Maria
Subject: FW: RE: Joint Base Andrews - New Batalion Headquarters

JBA – Transportation Comments

From: Burton, Glen
Sent: Monday, October 15, 2012 10:02 AM
To: Osei, Christine
Cc: Foster, Eric; Masog, Tom
Subject: RE: RE: Joint Base Andrews - New Batalion Headquarters

Christine:

I had an opportunity to review the PowerPoint and the Mandatory Referral for the subject application. Based on the project description, the US Army Priority Air Transport Command (USAPAT) plans to replace a 7,000 square foot building with a 12,000 square foot building. The new building will provide similar services as the older building but with more space in which to do it. Among those services are: classrooms, conferencing, training, cold and dry storage. Based on information provided in the PowerPoint, there will be no change in the number of USAPAT personnel and its operations once the new building is built. Consequently, one can reasonably assume that the traffic generation potential will remain unchanged, both within the Joint Base Andrews complex as well as beyond its borders. My conclusion therefore is that this proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the adjacent transportation network.

Glen

From: Osei, Christine
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 1:43 PM
To: Finch, Kim
Cc: Martin, Maria; Grover, Ruth; Burton, Glen
Subject: RE: RE: Joint Base Andrews - New Batalion Headquarters

Yes, the attached PowerPoint is said to be the summary of the Master Plan for the Joint Base Andrews.
Thank you

From: Finch, Kim
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 1:12 PM
To: Osei, Christine; Burton, Glen
Cc: Martin, Maria; Grover, Ruth
Subject: RE: RE: Joint Base Andrews - New Batalion Headquarters

Christine,

Are there any difference between this document and the EA that was previously provided to us for review?

Kim I. Finch, Planner Coordinator

Environmental Planning Section
Prince George's Planning Department
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive

Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
Office: (301) 952-3506 Fax: (301) 699-3799
Kim.finch@ppd.mncppc.org

From: Osei, Christine
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 11:30 AM
To: Burton, Glen
Cc: Martin, Maria; Finch, Kim; Grover, Ruth
Subject: RE: Joint Base Andrews - New Batalion Headquarters

Hello Glen

Attached is a presentation that was provided to me by the Andrews Base Planner, David Humphreys
If you have any questions, please call David directly from the information provided below.

David K Humphreys, AICP
Community Planner
Phone: 301-981-1168 or 858-1168 (DSN)
Fax: 301-981-7125
E-Mail: david.humphreys@afncr.af.mil

Thank you

Christine A. Osei, Planner Coordinator
Mandatory Referral Review Project Manager
Special Projects Section, Countywide Planning Division
Prince George's County Planning Department
Email: Christine.Osei@ppd.mncppc.org
Telephone: 301.952.3313

