



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

January 5, 2009

**MCPB
ITEM #
January 15, 2009**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Dan Hardy, Chief
Transportation Planning Division *DKH*

FROM: Shahriar Etemadi, Supervisor
Transportation Planning Division *DKH fci*

SUBJECT: National Naval Medical Center Master Plan and Transportation Management Plan

The Master Plan Update for the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) that includes the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) examines the impact of the total build out of the NNMC campus and provides recommended improvements to minimize the impact. The majority of the development on campus will be implemented by the year 2011 as part of the Base Realignment And Closure (BRAC) activities. The BRAC part of the campus development was examined through the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process with a Record of Decision (ROD) issued in May 2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Transmit the following comments to the National Capital Planning Commission:

1. Continue to submit plans for individual campus buildings to the Planning Board for mandatory referral reviews. Subsequent mandatory referral review submissions need not include transportation studies for individual buildings as the offsite impacts of the proposed master plan changes have been identified in the May 2008 Record of Decision.
2. Additional on-campus housing will be a positive change that provides affordable housing for; and reduces traffic by; patients, their families and visitors traveling long distances to reach the National Naval Medical Center.
3. The Master Plan should consider two additional elements:
 - a. Relocation of the helipad to a more internal (and elevated) location to provide for a more safe and efficient landing and departure and to reduce noise impact to surrounding neighborhoods.
 - b. Incorporation of kiss-and-ride facilities on the campus along the site perimeter but outside security gates to promote inter-campus ridesharing opportunities
4. The TMP should strengthen the mechanisms to encourage non-single occupancy vehicle travel by visitors and more fully explore opportunities to combine shuttle service programs with the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

5. The TMP should provide more details on monitoring and enforcement and the annual progress report on the TMP should be provided to the County Executive and M-NCPPC staff for their review and comments to enhance the program.

DISCUSSION: The submitted November 2008 Final Master Plan and TMP has been reviewed by staff and summary of our review and recommendations are presented to the Planning Board as Mandatory Referral No. 08811-MDP-4. Staff will transmit the Board’s recommendations to the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). The November 2008 Final Master Plan is available for public review at:

http://www.bethesda.med.navy.mil/professional/Public_Affairs/BRAC/

Staff reviewed the August 2008 Draft Master Plan and submitted comments that are included as Attachment A.

The Master Plan envisions a ten-year horizon for an ultimate build-out of the NNMC campus beyond what is proposed as part of the BRAC program. The build-out of the campus by 2016, including BRAC expansion, will add 2,500 employees for a total of 10,500 and double the number of annual visitors and patients to 981,000. To accommodate this expansion, the Navy is proposing an additional 1,650,000 square feet of new medical and administrative offices, totaling 6,350,000 square feet of building area and 2,500 additional parking spaces for a total of 7,923 parking spaces.

Land Use

The development of the campus is contained within the site and therefore, no major impact is identified for future land use and zoning policies in the greater Bethesda/Chevy Chase area. In staff’s review of the Draft EIS, we expressed concerns that not enough on-campus housing had been provided to support the expansion. The November 2008 Final Master Plan Update recommends more on-site housing and lodging for students, patients and their visitors. This is a positive change from what originally was proposed at the time of the EIS review. The following table shows the current and proposed housing supply on campus.

Navy Lodge	No. of rooms
Current rooms	106
Future rooms	306
Fisher Houses	
Current rooms	15
Future rooms	78
Bachelor Enlisted Quarters	
Building 60	88
Building 61	56
Building 50	99
New Barracks	80
Total Current	243
Total Future	323
Total Future Rooms	707

The planned number of rooms will increase from 364 to 707 for patients and visitors. The proposed increase in rooms will help alleviate the need for patients, their families and visitors to seek lodging off-campus, facilitating achievement of the TMP traffic reduction goals.

Environment and Historic Resources

The environmental and historic resources parts of the Final Master Plan conform with minimum requirements of our plans and laws. It is understood that multiple design criteria are essential to the expansion, and we suggest that interaction with local regulatory agencies may help find positive solutions within the design constraints applied by the site topography and applicable federal and military regulations. Conceptual mitigation measures can be refined during the subsequent detailed design phases. Opportunity should be given for input from local regulatory agencies as these concepts morph into detailed design, regardless of the ultimate approval authority. We therefore recommend continued submissions of individual buildings for mandatory referral review. Staff does suggest one overall site design change related to the environmental setting- relocation of the helipad to a more internal and elevated location - that may improve the overall plan from many perspectives, as outlined below:

1. Enhanced security since helicopter flights would be more isolated from unsecured areas/airspace.
2. Increased land made available for other purposes within the existing helipad/approach zone.
3. Faster, safer, and more direct access would be provided from helipad to emergency services.
4. Reduced noise impact to surrounding neighborhoods.

The historic buildings and additions are consistent with M-NCPPC and Maryland Historic Trust recommendations for limiting any adverse impact.

The Montgomery County Planning Department, Historic Preservation Section staff has reviewed the National Naval Medical Center – Final Master Plan Update 2008, [dated November 7, 2008] and found the plan to be consistent with the Draft Master Plan Update 2008, [dated August 8, 2008] and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) submitted for review in March 2008. The historic preservation elements of the Final Master Plan Update 2008 recognize the historical significance of the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda and the historic and cultural resources on the NNMC campus.

Historic Preservation staff has worked closely with the Maryland Historical Trust (the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office), the National Capitol Planning Commission, and other review agencies in the review of undertakings with potentially adverse impacts to cultural and historical resources located on the NNMC campus. The submitted Final Master Plan Update 2008 concurs with the MD SHPO conditional agreement that the construction of Buildings A and B will have no adverse effect on historic properties and meets the criteria outlined in the Draft Master Plan Update 2008 and FEIS as it relates to the protection of important historic resources and prominent features on the campus. Historic Preservation staff is in agreement with this assessment.

The Historic Preservation Section commends the Navy's efforts for respecting the historical significance of the NNMC campus in their design and encourages continued coordination with the MD SHPO to successfully complete the preservation requirements for the proposed undertaking.

Transportation

The transportation impacts of the master plan build-out are profound. The Environmental Impact Statement for the BRAC identified roadways, intersections, Metrorail station, bike and pedestrian facilities that will be impacted in a significant way. The Master Plan used the recommendations in BRAC EIS to provide for mitigation of traffic impact on the area transportation system. We support all those recommendations, which range from improving major intersections to improving the gates at the hospital access points, providing additional access to the Medical Center Metrorail station and improvements to nearby bike and pedestrian facilities.

We continue to strongly recommend that the Navy pursue and obtain the necessary funding for construction of a second Metro access on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue to facilitate the metro use of the NNMC employees and visitors. We also recommend that the Kiss and Ride lots planned for NNMC campus as part of the BRAC program be constructed and open to traffic by end of 2011 when the full expansion of BRAC has been complete.

The Maryland Department of Transportation has held the first meeting with public agencies to review and seek comments on design concepts for improvements at two of the four intersections identified in the ROD. The intersections reviewed were Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) at Cedar Lane and Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355) at Jones Bridge Road. Planning staff is reviewing these designs to provide comments to MDOT by late January 2009. Other intersection improvement designs for Rockville Pike (MD 355) at Cedar Lane and Connecticut Avenue (MD 185) at Jones Bridge Road are underway and expected to be submitted to reviewing agencies in March 2009. MDOT plans to have public meetings on the proposed improvement designs in summer of 2009. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) originally allocated \$45 million for improving these four intersections. With the economic downturn, MDOT has deferred \$15.9 million of the budgeted capital. However, the remaining \$28.1 million still provides enough capital to continue with design, acquisition of the right of way and some construction. MDOT is optimistic that most of the improvement plans will be implemented by 2011.

Parking

The BRAC EIS proposed a net increase of 1,800 parking spaces over existing 6,123 parking spaces for a total of 7,923. The master plan estimated an existing 6,083 parking spaces (page 2-18) on campus, slightly fewer than what was inventoried for BRAC EIS.

However, the recommended total future parking spaces will be approximately an additional 1,800 spaces over the existing condition for a total of 8,087 spaces (page 8-26). Most of the parking spaces, however, will be used for visitors. The TMP section of the master plan has a parking tabulation that indicates that employee parking will be reduced as the TMP

matures. Only 4,157 parking spaces, or 0.4 employee/parking space ratio, will be available to employees in the year 2011. The number of employee parking spaces will be reduced to 3,533 (0.34 ratio) in 2018 and 3,465 (0.33 ratio) in 2028.

NCPC has established a standard of 1:3 parking to employee ratio for the federal establishments located within 2,000 feet of a Metrorail station. The TMP establishes the goal of 1:3 ratio.

Transportation Management Plan (TMP)

The proposed TMP included in the Master plan provides for bold and innovative ways of reducing employee vehicle trips. Many of our recommendations as part of reviewing the BRAC EIS and the August 2008 Draft Master Plan have been included in the final draft. There are two areas we suggest the TMP be improved; in developing stronger programs to encourage non-SOV travel by visitors and in coordinating shuttle services with the NIH campus. The summary of the TMP program elements are listed below:

- Objectives in the TMP include increasing Average Vehicle Occupancy (AVO) from 1.1 to 1.5 by 2011; increase transit mode share from 11.3% to 30% by 2011; and increasing non-motorized modes (including telework) from 3% to 18%. These objectives would result in a remarkable reduction in employee trips. Similar strategies should continue to be explored to reduce visitor trips, which is a major community concern.
- The plan seeks to achieve an employee parking ratio of 1:3 by 2011, consistent with NCPC Guidelines for a federal campus located within 2000 feet of a metrorail station. This is commendable and must be pursued to full fruition.
- NNMC has designated a full-time Transportation Program Manager, a remarkable commitment since for many other large federal campuses, coordinating transportation programs is typically only one part of an administrative employee's duties.
- The plan requires NNMC to deliver a "State of the Union" report on TMP progress annually to the NNMC Command Leadership. This is an outstanding commitment. We recommend that the County Executive and the Planning Board be provided with an opportunity to receive a copy of this report, review the relevant data and make appropriate comments to enhance the program, including changes to strengthen the TMP programs should the goals not be met initially.
- The plan identifies ways to promote the use of Metrochecks, which will be phased out in 2009. The plan should instead highlight and discuss "SmartBenefits" vouchers. SmartBenefits is a convenient Web-based program that lets employers assign the dollar value of employees' monthly commuting benefit directly to an employee's SmarTrip cards.
- The TMP includes all the essential elements of a standard traffic mitigation agreement, which is an important element of NNMC program to mitigate trips.

- The TMP promotes vanpools and offers showers and lockers for cyclists and walkers which is an effective component of promoting the increase in non-auto driver mode share.
- The plan also identifies future strategies, such as a parking cash-out program that assigns a dollar value to a parking space and then paying employees not to use it. In return, employees commit to commute by alternative modes such as transit, bicycling and walking.

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