

# COALITION OF MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER NEIGHBORS

BY EMAIL

November 5, 2010

Dear County Executive Leggett,

With just under a year until the new Walter Reed opens its doors, we are writing to express our ongoing concern that the area surrounding the base is not prepared for this drastic change. There is no doubt about it – we are all going to be impacted by the doubling of the patients and visitors and the increase in the staff. The members of the Coalition believe strongly and with unanimity that the BRAC Implementation Committee you initiated needs to remain intact and operational through the opening of the new Military Medical Center and until BRAC-related infrastructure improvements impacting the immediate area are complete or very near so. This is especially important in these final months leading up to the opening when much work remains to be designed, planned and funded.

The BRAC Implementation Committee has accomplished some important items.

- We helped to initiate and support the interagency coordination between the county and state entities that are involved in the transportation projects.
- We helped to secure the first ever DAR funding for transportation beyond building roadways.
- We have ensured that communities are aware of the developments and issues related to the base and the surrounding area.
- This broader engagement has allowed individual communities to work to mitigate specific impacts on their neighborhoods.
- And members of the BRAC Implementation Committee, specifically members of the Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors, have pushed to have a broader vision for the area because if we cannot answer the big questions of how this will work in a coordinated and meaningful fashion, we will not be able to address the small details of the individual projects in a productive and timely manner.

The BRAC Implementation Committee in its entirety provides an open forum for insight, coordination and accountability among the various affected entities and needs to be continued. We understand that many of the members, in particular, county and state employees, are working tirelessly on these projects. We appreciate their efforts and our request to continue these evening meetings is not made lightly. But for the community, the BRAC Implementation Committee is the only opportunity for concrete involvement in these critical continuing efforts. Community members provide invaluable on-the-ground perspectives that are not reflected in any other forum, representing the solicited input of the surrounding residential, institutional and commercial neighbors who will experience the brunt of the impact of the predicted traffic increase.

By including community input through the BRAC Implementation Committee, you are fostering cooperative and productive partnership among the numerous affected stakeholders, which results in improved outcomes and an efficient process. Moving forward, it is vital that the many members of BRAC Implementation Committee, representing a variety of interests, remain engaged and continue working together to make the BRAC a success because so much remains to be done. Many issues have yet to be addressed, chief among them funding. Obtaining additional resources is best accomplished by all affected stakeholders working in concert. But even where funds currently are available, important questions remain. How will they be spent? What projects will be rolled out and on what time line? How will we work to keep the overall community apprised of the numerous changes that will affect their lives over a significant length of time?

Above all, the BRAC Implementation Committee provides the opportunity for the Navy and Defense Department to engage productively with the community and other institutions in the area. This is a relationship we need to cultivate for the long-term success of the Community. Until a viable substitute can be implemented to continue this working relationship, the BRAC Implementation Committee should remain intact.

If you do ultimately decide to disband the BRAC Implementation Committee, we will look to the County to provide the alternative that will continue to highlight the unique nature of this expansion and we can work to mitigate the adverse impacts on the surrounding communities of this massive undertaking. We are unclear, given the scope and complexity of the BRAC expansion, how the work of the BRAC Implementation Committee could be effectively managed as part of the Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board which deals with a wide range of issues. These meetings may be sufficient as a formal venue for updates, information sharing and opportunity for community input, but it cannot be expected to fulfill the role that the BRAC Implementation Committee has served over the last three and a half years, with so many critical aspects of these BRAC-related infrastructure projects unresolved.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Bailey Condrey, Parkwood Citizens Association  
Lulu Gonella, Chevy Chase View  
Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Association  
Ed Krauze, Bethesda Parkview Citizens Association  
Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont  
Avice Meehan, Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village HOA  
George Milne, Stone Ridge School  
Paul Thaler, Locust Hill Estates Citizens Association  
Bob Weesner, Village of North Chevy Chase

cc: The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, US House of Representatives  
The Honorable Nancy Floreen, President, Montgomery County Council  
Francoise Carrier, Chair, Planning Board  
The Honorable Brian Frosh, Senator, District 16  
The Honorable Rich Madeleno, Senator, District 18  
The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair, House Delegation  
John Carman, Chair, BRAC Implementation Committee