

BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY – MAY 20, 2008

- John Carman called the Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.
- Phil Alperson provided the following updates:
 - On May 15, 2008, MDOT led a BRAC Transportation Coordination meeting which included DPWT, Park & Planning, and WMATA. Dennis Yoder of State Highway Administration presented a detailed report, which is discussed later in this Meeting Summary.
 - On May 19, 2008, The DOD Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) led a series of meetings at the Baltimore office of the MD Dept. of Business and Economic Development. The meetings allowed the BRAC Coordinators from the three major Maryland BRAC communities (Aberdeen, Fort Meade, and NNMC Bethesda) to explain to OEA their funding needs for BRAC-related projects. OEA will assess these needs and, if possible, approach relevant federal agencies for assistance. The Montgomery County team included representatives from DPWT, MNCPPC, WMATA, as well as MDOT. They presented the list of projects that was submitted to the Governor's BRAC Subcabinet last fall: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/subcab-dpwtpowerpoint-101807.pdf>.
 - Phil has been working with the local congressional delegation – particularly the office of Congressman Van Hollen – and other contacts on Capitol Hill in an effort to secure federal funding for the two projects identified by the NNMC Base Commander, Admiral Jeffries, as worthy of Defense Access Road (DAR) certification. Those projects include enhanced pedestrian access to the Metro station from NNMC, and turn lanes at the North Wood Gate. While the DAR certification process has only just begun, Phil's hope is to secure expedited federal support based on Admiral Jeffries' formal request for certification, without waiting for the DAR process to be completed, particularly since there is no assurance that DDO will certify these projects for DAR funding. Active legislation includes the wartime supplemental bill and the FY09 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The FY09 Transportation Appropriations bill could be a vehicle for such support later in the year. More detailed discussion of the DAR projects appears later in this Meeting Summary.
- Phil reported that the Park and Planning follow-up report on last month's group mark-up of preferred improvements to NNMC-area pedestrian/bike paths has been delayed, and should be available later in the week. The Committee will be able to consider the mark-up and discuss it at the next BRAC Committee meeting in June.
- Ollie Oliveria of NNMC discussed a highly publicized amendment to the NDAA by Congressman John Murtha to delay the hospital construction at Bethesda and Fort Belvoir. (Link to May 16 Washington Post article: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp->

[dyn/content/article/2008/05/15/AR2008051503747.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/article/2008/05/15/AR2008051503747.html)) Ollie noted that Navy representatives have been engaged in discussions with congressional members and staff to emphasize the urgency to proceed with, rather than delay, the BRAC-mandated September 15, 2011 completion deadline. Wounded warriors should not be forced to wait for health care improvements, and the local communities should not be forced to endure undue construction delays that could add years to the projects. It was the consensus of the committee to support the current construction schedule, and that Phil should communicate this position to County Executive Leggett. It was noted that the Murtha proposals are not included in the Senate version of the NDAA and that, at least as of now, the BRAC mandated September 2011 completion deadline is still in place, and that the Navy will maintain its construction schedule. Committee members also expressed their interest in communicating to the congressional delegation their support for expedited completion of the project and for federal funding for the DAR projects.

- Andrew Gutberlet led a discussion of the DAR Requests submitted to DOD by the Navy. (DAR Requests: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/dar-bumed-050208.pdf>) Members of the Committee had expressed strong concerns about changes in the ROD and DAR language that appeared to be inconsistent with language in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In particular, the ROD did not include particular improvements described in the EIS that would be made at the three NNMC gates along Jones Bridge Road. The ROD also omitted a planned northbound right-turn lane into the South Wood Gate along MD355; instead the ROD called for a northbound left turn lane at the NIH truck inspection facility across from the North Wood Gate, and increased traffic storage in the southbound left turn lane into the South Wood Gate. It was noted that northbound left turns into the NIH truck facility are currently prohibited and that neither NIH nor any of the local transportation authorities had been consulted about these changes. It was also noted that plans had been discussed with local transportation authorities to extend the road median to prevent such turns, but that the extension had not been constructed. Jerry Cichy of the Maryland Transit Administration observed that there is no current signage indicating that left turns are prohibited, and suggested that DPWT and SHA research whether a traffic order prohibiting such turns is on file. Mohammad Siddique and Dennis Yoder agreed to follow-up on this query.

Andrew explained the DAR certification process in detail. The process certifies the existence of a traffic problem caused by a military action, but it does not certify the projects described in the request for DAR certification. Andrew described the Navy's proposed solutions and funding levels to mitigate those traffic problems as "placeholders" in the DAR requests. If DOD does indeed certify the existence of a DOD-caused traffic problem, then a consultation process with Federal and State transportation agencies commences to identify actual solutions and funding levels to mitigate the problems. The solutions that result from this collaborative process may not be the same as those described in the Navy's DAR request.

Andrew said he expects the DOD to respond to the DAR certification request within three months. The Navy submitted its formal request on May 2, 2008, so he expects a response in early August. If successful, then consultations with transportation agencies

would begin in the fall. Under the regular DAR process, Congress would need to authorize funds for these projects, and then DOD would need to find such funds within its budget, or Congress could specifically appropriate those funds. Alternatively, Congress could earmark those funds independent of the DAR process.

- Dennis Yoder of the State Highway Administration gave an update on the intersection projects. The State has allocated \$45.3 million to study, design and construct by 2011 improvements at the four main intersections that serve NNMC: MD185/Jones Bridge Road, MD355/Jones Bridge Road, MD355/Cedar Lane, and MD187/Cedar Lane. Survey work should be completed in mid-June. Design would take place in the fall and winter. Public input would take place the following spring and summer, although Committee members expressed a strong desire to participate in those discussions earlier in the process. Dennis said that \$45.3 million would not be enough to cover the entire cost of this project through completion, so additional funding sources must be identified. He said that these intersection projects are short-term improvements designed to meet the 2011 completion of the BRAC project at NNMC. Suggestions for greater improvements, such as additional lanes along MD355 between Jones Bridge Road and Cedar Lane are expensive long-term projects that would have to be addressed later.
- Dennis also discussed SHA's position on a proposed east-bound slip-ramp from the Beltway directly into the NNMC campus. He said the project is not feasible based primarily on Federal Highway Administration regulations. According to FHWA regulations, the close proximity of the proposed slip ramp to Beltway interchanges at I-270, MD355 and MD185 render the proposal unsafe and ineligible for FHWA approval. SHA hopes to finalize a discussion paper on the matter soon.
- Sara Benson of WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority – Metro) gave an update on the proposed pedestrian access to the Medical Center Metro station from the NNMC campus. WMATA is considering three alternatives, and will use the BIC as a community forum to discuss them when plans are available:
 - Elevator on the east side of MD355 that goes down to the Metro platform (approx 100 feet). Pedestrians could access the existing west side elevators or escalators
 - Elevators on the east side that go down to a mid-level platform (approx 25 feet). Pedestrians would be able to access the existing west-side elevators from this mid-level platform
 - A pedestrian overpass across MD355. ADA accessibility would need to be addressed with this concept.
- Ollie Oliveria introduced Jeff Miller, NNMC's recently-hired Transportation Program Manager. Jeff will be tasked with working on a Transportation Management Plan that will be part of a forthcoming NNMC Master Plan, and devise other transportation strategies relating to expansion at NNMC.
- Ollie led a discussion of the Record of Decision (ROD):
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/exec/brac/pdf/rod-fedregister->

[051408.pdf](#)) and other issues relating to next steps at NNMC now that construction is about to begin. A formal groundbreaking ceremony will take place in mid-June, but pre-construction activities are already under way. The Master Plan is still being developed and he anticipates its release in later summer and that it will include a comprehensive TMP. NNMC is committed to addressing the matter of a long-term community liaison, and that a short-term community relations strategy is being developed so the public can have a ready point of contact, especially during the construction phase. He expressed the Admiral's commitment to continuing a constructive dialogue with the community.

- John Carman solicited comments from the public. Tom Doerr of the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee expressed his concern that most BRAC-related transportation plans revolve around vehicles, and that comprehensive plans should allow for bicycle connections not just around NNMC but within the MD355 corridor generally.
- The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, June 17, at 7:30 p.m. at the BCC Services Center.

Committee members in attendance, May 20, 2008:

Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator

Tim Stelzig for Jon Alterman, Bethesda Parkview Citizens Assn.

John Carman, Committee Chairman

Chuck Floyd

Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Assn.

Janet Maalouf, Maplewood Citizens Assn.

Deborah Michaels, Glenbrook Village Homeowners Association

Patrick O'Neil, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce

Dennis Yoder for Andy Scott, MDOT

Mohammad Siddique, DPWT

David M. Smith, Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

Melanie Wenger, Montgomery County Office of Intergovernmental Relations

Daniel Wheeland, NIH

Ex-officio:

Delegate Bill Bronrott

David "Ollie" Oliveria, NNMC

Andrew Gutberlet, NNMC

Jeff Miller, NNMC Transportation Program Manager

Other attendees

Sara Benson, WMATA

Gerald Cichy, Maryland Transit Administration

Jan Clark, USHUS

Dennis Coleman, NIH

Tom Doerr, Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee (RBAC)

Mal Rivkin

Anthony Terminiello