4.7.3 Potential Measures to Address Impacts from NNMC Actions

The EIS identifies potential traffic improvements for the 2011 implementation of the alternatives. These measures are both external and internal to NNMC. As discussed in the following sections, potential funding sources for these improvements measures vary. Figure 4-2 at the rear of Section 4.7.4 shows the location of these potential improvement projects.

4.7.3.1 Potential External Roadway and Intersection Improvements

Potential improvement measures were identified and evaluated for those intersections external to NNMC that would operate above the intersection capacity under both the Preferred Alternative and Alternative Two. These improvement measures would remedy impacts from additional traffic caused by the BRAC alternatives by bringing the intersections back to a level of service equal to or better than that from background traffic under the No Action Alternative conditions. Refer to Tables 4-15 through 4-18 in Section 4.7.4, which compare intersection service with the recommended improvements to service under the No Action Alternative and the BRAC alternatives.

Each of these potential improvements is under the jurisdiction of either Montgomery County or the State of Maryland and would require funding and implementation through the appropriate Montgomery County or State of Maryland Transportation Organizations. The State of Maryland has programmed approximately $45 Million over the next four years for intersection improvements around NNMC.

The Navy has coordinated the traffic analysis and these potential improvements with the State transportation agencies and remains committed to cooperate to the maximum extent allowed by law with these agencies in the implementation of any or all of the proposed improvement measures. Measures include:

Rockville Pike (MD 355) at Cedar Lane operates above capacity in both AM and PM peak hours. Recommended measures:

1) Add a left-turn lane on the westbound and eastbound approaches of Cedar Lane, or other feasible roadway improvements (including signal optimization), based on further engineering and design studies undertaken by the public transportation agencies.

2) Add an additional lane in each direction along Rockville Pike between Jones Bridge Road and Cedar Lane, per recommendation of the 1990 Bethesda Chevy Chase Master Plan. NNMC Bethesda will cooperate by providing frontage along MD 355 to accommodate the implementation of this measure if the State of Maryland and Montgomery County

determine it appropriate to implement. Appropriate real estate easements would be coordinated and implemented to permit widening of Rockville Pike.

Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) at Cedar Lane operates above capacity in the PM peak hour. Recommended measures:

1) Provide an additional left-turn lane along the southbound approach of Old Georgetown Road and provide two receiving lanes along Cedar Lane eastbound, based on further engineering and design studies undertaken by the public transportation agencies.

2) Provide an additional through lane in each direction along the Old Georgetown Road approaches to Cedar Lane, per recommendation of the 1990 Bethesda Chevy Chase Master Plan.

Rockville Pike (MD 355) at Jones Bridge Road operates above capacity in the PM peak hour. Recommended measures:

1) Stripe the inner lane as a left-turn only lane and the right lane as shared through and right lane on the eastbound approach of the intersection.

2) Add an additional lane in each direction along Rockville Pike, per recommendation of the 1990 Bethesda Chevy Chase Master Plan. NNMC Bethesda will cooperate by providing frontage along MD 355 to accommodate the implementation of this measure if the State of Maryland and Montgomery County determine it appropriate to implement. Appropriate real estate easements would be coordinated and implemented to permit widening of Rockville Pike.

Connecticut Avenue (MD 185) at Jones Bridge Road operates above capacity in both AM and PM peak hours (based on further engineering and design studies undertaken by the public transportation agencies). Recommended measures:

1) Provide an additional left-turn lane to the eastbound approach of the intersection.

2) Provide a separate right-turn lane along the southbound approach of the intersection.

Note that pedestrian walkways could also be improved if necessary to meet code for any roadways that are widened. The local funding of necessary improvements may sometimes include federal grants or Defense Access Road (DAR) certification for DoD funding, which would be administered through the local transportation organizations. The Department of Defense

does not provide funding or management of road improvements outside its property, except as may be authorized by law under the DAR Program. The DAR Program provides a means for the military to pay their fair share of the cost of public highway improvements necessary to mitigate an unusual impact of a defense activity. An unusual impact could be a significant increase in personnel at a military installation (currently defined as one that doubles existing traffic at the year of implementation), or one that requires relocation of an access gate, or the deployment of an oversized or overweight military vehicle or transporter unit. The potential improvements listed above in this section do not readily meet the guidance or criteria for DAR certification.

4.7.3.2 Recommended Internal Improvements for NNMC

The EIS also identifies potential internal traffic improvement measures for the 2011 implementation of the alternatives (See Figure 4-2). These improvements are within the purview of the Navy for implementation and the Navy has programmed funding for the following on-Base traffic mitigation projects. Gate and other improvements would be expected to speed vehicle entry and egress, improve circulation, and reduce queuing at the gate.

North Wood Road Gate:

1) Expand the number of lanes from two lanes to three lanes, with two inbound lanes in the morning peak period and two outbound lanes in the evening peak period.

2) Conduct a study at North Wood Road at Rockville Pike to determine if a traffic signal is warranted and suitable for submission of a request to state and local transportation authorities for funding and implementation.

South Wood Road Gate:

Expand the number of lanes from two lanes to three lanes, with two inbound lanes in the morning peak period and two outbound lanes in the evening peak period.

Gunnell Road Gate (Navy Exchange Gate):

Expand the number of lanes from two lanes to three lanes, with two inbound lanes in the morning peak period and two outbound lanes in the evening peak period.

Grier Road Gate (Navy Lodge Gate):

1) It is recommended that this gate serve inbound and outbound traffic throughout the day.

2) Provide for separate outbound right and left turn lanes. This approach would need to be widened to include a single receiving/inbound lane.

University Road Gate (USUHS Gate):

Expand the number of lanes from two lanes to three lanes, with two inbound lanes in the morning peak period and two outbound lanes in the evening peak period.

Perimeter Road:

Widen and improve Perimeter Road on NNMC.

NIH Commercial Vehicle Inspection Station:

Conduct a study at the NIH Commercial Vehicle Inspection Station on Rockville Pike to determine if a traffic signal is warranted and suitable for submission of a request to state and local transportation authorities for funding and implementation.

Brown Road/Palmer Road North:

1) Widen the northbound approach of the intersection and provide a separate left-turn lane and a shared through/right turn lane.

2) Widen the eastbound approach of the intersection and provide a separate right-turn lane and a shared through/left turn lane.

Gate Improvements/Queuing Reduction and Mitigation Study:

A safety and security analysis is being conducted by DOD at the NNMC gates to improve security and safety, reduce queuing on Base and off Base, and reduce damage to gates and guard houses. This analysis would include potential improvements or queuing mitigation measures at all of the access gates, to include: North Wood Road Gate, South Wood Road Gate, Gunnell Road Gate, Grier Road Gate, and University Road Gate (USUHS' Gate).

4.7.3.3 Potential External Improvements for NNMC Access

Several potential improvements external to NNMC that could directly enhance access to NNMC are also being evaluated and the Navy is submitting a request for DAR certification for those that are recommended for implementation. These are further discussed below and Figure 4-2 shows the location of these proposed improvements.

Potential Roadway Improvements External to NNMC for DAR Certification:

As noted in the previous section, the Navy is evaluating potential improvements at each NNMC gate, to include potential improvements to reduce queuing off Base. The evaluation off Base includes potential improvements at the gate access intersections on Rockville Pike and Jones Bridge Road. For any such improvements recommended from the gate studies, the Navy is submitting a request for DAR certification. These potential improvements include, but are not limited to:

1) Add a right turning lane along northbound Rockville Pike into the South Wood Road Gate.

2) Add a right turn lane along westbound Jones Bridge Road into Gunnell Road Gate.

3) Add storage into left turn lanes along southbound Rockville Pike at North Wood Road Gate and South Wood Gate, and along eastbound Jones Bridge Road at the Gunnell Road Gate. This storage would lengthen the turning lanes to allow more cars to wait for the turn without blocking the through lanes.

These improvement measures would be intended to move turning traffic out of the travel through lanes on Rockville Pike and Jones Bridge Road, minimize the backup of traffic being processed through security from backing up onto local roadways and blocking through traffic, and address incoming employees resulting from the BRAC action without degrading the quality of the intersections.

Pedestrian Access from Medical Center Metro Station:

To improve pedestrian safety at the Rockville Pike from the Medical Center Metro Station to NNMC, the Navy is submitting a request for DAR certification for pedestrian access to the Medical Center Metro Station. This project would enhance public safety and would require close cooperation with WMATA.

If each of these projects is found to be DAR program eligible, the Department of Defense will need to make a determination of whether and how to fund the projects as part of its internal budget process.

4.7.3.4 Additional Potential Measures

In addition to the measures listed above, other potential improvement measures outside the jurisdiction of the Navy that address existing and future regional transportation issues are discussed in Appendix C, Transportation Study. Measures within the Navy's purview include an update of the existing NNMC Transportation Management Plan (TMP) in conjunction with a master plan update. The goals of the existing 1997 TMP are to reduce traffic congestion, conserve energy, and improve air quality by seeking to reduce the number of employee Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips in the workday commute, to better utilize existing parking spaces, and, to maximize the use of alternative transportation options. The existing TMP is currently implemented at NNMC and the Navy remains committed to promoting the use of mass transit for its employees and will continue to promote alternate commuting. Current TMP strategies in use at NNMC include:

1) Shuttle Services - On campus, shuttle service includes peak AM and PM periods from/to the Medical Center Metrorail Station. Off Campus shuttle service is provided to military hospitals and bases in the Tricare Area, including WRAMC, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Annapolis Naval Station, and Patuxent River Naval Air Station.

2) Mass Transportation Fringe Benefit (MTFB) Program – Reimburses employees a monthly amount, up to the limit set by the Department of Transportation.

3) Parking – Staff carpools are strongly encouraged at NNMC. Participants must register for the parking pass and are allotted reserved parking, whereas other employee parking areas are on first-come first-serve basis.

4) TRANSHARE - A NNMC clean-air program, targeted a 60-percent reduction in air pollution by setting goals to increase the percentage of employees using options to single-occupant vehicles.

It is the Navy's intent that the update to the TMP will reflect the changes that have taken place in the intervening years. It will include recommendations for such physical or operational changes as telecommuting, transit subsidies, shuttle bus services, pedestrian improvements, and bicyclist improvements. A transportation coordinator has been added to the NNMC staff to facilitate implementation of TMP strategies.

Additionally, in comparison to WRAMC, NNMC is more accessible via public transportation due to its close proximity to the Medical Center Metrorail Station. Therefore, the Navy expects that the BRAC realignment to NNMC will result in an overall traffic volume reduction in the region from the greater number of public transportation options that are available.