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Joint Board Matter
Chairman Sharon Bulova
Supervisors Pat Herrity, Gerry Hyland, and
Jeff McKay,

April 27, 2010

I have a Joint Board Matter that involves the Fort Belvoir Master Plan.

Background

The update of Fort Belvoir's Master Plan began in 2003 with a public scoping session for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared to evaluate alternatives for future development. At that time the Board endorsed comments which expressed full support for the update and urged Fort Belvoir to provide a strong link between development proposals and specific transportation and other infrastructure improvements needed to support development. The letter also strongly recommended coordination with Fairfax County staff. The update of the master plan was interrupted with the announcement in 2005 that Base Realignment and Closure Committee recommendations would result in approximately 22,000 employees being relocated to Fort Belvoir, effectively doubling the working population of the Post.

In 2007, as part of the EIS for BRAC implementation, the land use categories of the Master Plan were reclassified and the land use map was updated. This partial update was done despite strong objections by Fairfax County that such changes should wait and be included in the comprehensive update of the Master Plan. Since 2008, BRAC related development has proceeded on Fort Belvoir's Main Post and the Engineer Proving Ground (EPG) but very little information about the progress of the update of the Fort's master plan had been shared with Fairfax County, until now. On April 13, 2010, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) forwarded to Fairfax County eleven components of a final draft master plan for Fort Belvoir. A list of the master plan documents referred by NCPC is attached to this Board Matter.

NCPC has tentatively scheduled these master plan documents for action at the July 1, 2010, commission meeting and has asked staff for comments by May 28, 2010. Staff has found that the master plan component for the EPG (now called Fort Belvoir North Area) and a complete Transportation Plan component have not been provided. In addition, we have not received a completed Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment for the Master Plan as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Additionally, none of the draft master plan documents are listed on either Fort Belvoir's or NCPC's websites for open public review and comment.

Finally, the way that NCPC and Fort Belvoir are considering the draft master plan raises serious questions regarding the degree to which Army regulations and NEPA guidelines are being followed. Army Regulation 210-20 governing Real Property Master Planning states that garrisons will work with local and regional planning agencies to build close and harmonious planning relations and that any Real Property Master Plan will be coordinated with communities surrounding the installation to:

- (1) Minimize impacts of installation operations and development or base realignment actions on those communities.
- (2) Maintain awareness of, and respect for, the future growth patterns and development of the surrounding communities.
- (3) Seek mutual compatible land uses and zoning considerations to maintain the operational capability and future viability of the installation.

The regulations state clearly that a formal environmental assessment will be conducted in conjunction with developing a Real Property Master Plan and that this assessment using the NEPA process consolidates all current and future real property actions at the installation and looks at the cumulative impacts. The regulations go on to state that “completing the formal environmental assessment of the Real Property Master Plan using the NEPA is a major component of an effective environmental management system. Excerpts from AR 210-20 are attached to this Board Matter as well.

Motion

Therefore, I move that the Board authorize me to work with county staff to prepare and transmit a letter to NCPC on behalf of the Board of Supervisors that would request the following:

1. That NCPC immediately suspend any review or formal action on the draft Fort Belvoir Real Property Master Plan until all components of the plan are completed and the required NEPA analysis and documentation is provided;
2. That Fairfax County and its citizens be afforded a minimum 90 day review period following the completion of the entire draft Real Property Master Plan and associated NEPA analysis documents; and,
3. That Fort Belvoir conduct a meaningful outreach and engagement process with the surrounding community to explain their future plans and describe how the necessary supporting infrastructure will be provided.

Copies of the letter will be sent to Fort Belvoir’s Garrison Commander and to our congressional delegation.