

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact

The National Museum of the United States Army
US Army Garrison Fort Belvoir
Directorate of Public Works
Fort Belvoir, Virginia

Name of Action: Construction and Operation of the National Museum of the United States Army (NMUSA)

Description of Proposed Action: The Army would construct and operate the NMUSA at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluated two alternative concepts at the Pence Gate site (structured and surface parking options) and four alternative concepts at the Gunston site (Fairfax County Parkway access structured and surface parking options; John J. Kingman Road access structured and surface parking options). A No Build alternative also considered by the Army would not meet the need to provide a museum documenting the history of the US Army.

Environmental Consequences: The EA identified and evaluated the following potential impacts:

Land Use Plans, Aesthetics, and Coastal Zone Management: The Proposed Action would be generally consistent with current land use, the Fort Belvoir Master Plan, and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. The Pence Gate alternatives would preclude street realignments proposed by the Master Plan, which could have long-term, moderate impacts to Fort Belvoir traffic.

The Pence Gate alternatives could also cause adverse visual and auditory effects on adjacent historic properties. Fort Belvoir would conduct a viewshed study for the adjacent Woodlawn Historic District to define development restrictions to minimize potential impacts from the Pence Gate alternatives.

Noise at the Gunston site may disturb golfers at the North Post Golf Course, and wildlife in the Fort Belvoir Forest and Wildlife Corridor (FWC). The Gunston alternatives would also result in the direct loss of 5 to 7 of the current 36 golf holes at the North Post Golf Course. To mitigate this impact, the Army would reconfigure the course to retain 27 playable holes. The Fort Belvoir Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation program may replace the lost holes, an action that would be evaluated in a separate NEPA document. In summary, none of the alternatives would cause a significant impact, but the Gunston alternatives would have a greater impact on land use.

Natural Resources: The Proposed Action would have little impact on renewable natural resources, topography, or soils.

The Pence Gate alternatives would permanently impact approximately 25 acres of wildlife habitat. At the Gunston site, the Fairfax County Parkway alternatives would permanently impact approximately 41 acres of wildlife habitat, while the Kingman Road alternatives would permanently impact approximately 44.5 acres of wildlife habitat. Structured parking alternatives would reduce these impacts by a couple of acres, but much of this reduction would occur in lawn areas.

The Pence Gate alternatives would have minor impacts to streams, wetlands, Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Areas, and other riparian areas. The Gunston alternatives would have somewhat greater impacts to these features than the Pence Gate alternatives. For Gunston, the John J. Kingman Road alternatives would have a greater impact than the Fairfax County Parkway alternatives. The access road from John J. Kingman Road would bridge the FWC, disturbing wildlife movement. (A solid fill road with culverts would have a much more serious impact on the FWC.) The Army would

minimize soil disturbance by placing mats or other suitable materials on the ground. Mats and equipment would be removed immediately upon completion of work. All temporarily-disturbed wetlands and streams would be restored to preconstruction conditions within 30 days of completing work.

If one of the Gunston Kingman Road Alternatives is selected, Fort Belvoir would conduct a study prior to construction to determine the effects of the bridge and the utility easement on wildlife migration and genetic viability. The study will help define mitigation strategies, possibly recommend design changes, or possibly conclude that the crossing should be disqualified altogether.

The Army would survey for wood turtles (a state threatened species) and the small whorled pogonia (federally-listed as endangered). Suitable wood turtle habitat occurs at or near both sites, but disturbance to their habitat is more likely at the Gunston site. Small whorled pogonia may occur at either site. The structured parking alternatives would have fewer impacts on these habitats compared to surface parking alternatives.

The proposed action would increase stream velocities and reduce rainwater infiltration. The Gunston alternatives would likely generate more severe impacts than the Pence Gate alternatives, due to the more extensive grading and stream proximity. Structured parking alternatives would reduce these impacts slightly.

Cultural Resources: The impacts of the Pence Gate alternatives on the Woodlawn Historic District are addressed under Land Use. The Gunston Fairfax County Parkway alternatives would likely impact an archaeological site. If this site is determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Army would consult with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to mitigate the impacts to this site.

Air Quality: The Proposed Action would not have a significant impact on air quality or trigger a General Conformity analysis.

Noise: Construction noise would be short-term and would occur during business hours. To mitigate construction noise, the Army would ensure that construction equipment mufflers are in place and operational. Occasional noise from proposed events at the NMUSA might impact adjacent land uses at either site (see above).

Hazardous Substances: The NMUSA may require fuel for boilers and emergency power generators, but would not use more than minimal amounts of other hazardous substances (household cleaners, fertilizers, and pesticides). Parade grounds events could involve the discharge of dummy ordnance from firearms or cannons. All federal, state, and local requirements for hazardous substance use, storage, and transfer would be followed. The Fort Belvoir Master Spill Plan would guide the remediation of any spills and ensure contaminants are disposed of in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Utilities: The Proposed Action requires utility services that exceed current infrastructure capacities, requiring an upgrade to the Beulah Street potable water main. The Gunston alternatives would also require upgrades to the sanitary sewer utilities. These upgrades would mitigate the utility needs.

Socioeconomics: The project would have no disproportionate impacts on minorities, children, or low income populations. The project would have minimal impacts on the region's economy.

Community Facilities and Services: At Pence Gate, two baseball fields and dugouts would be removed; at Gunston, nine holes from the North Post Golf Course would be lost. These impacts are not considered significant.

Traffic and Transportation: The project would not cause more than minimal traffic impacts. Most trips to and from the NMUSA would occur during off-peak hours. Some localized impacts are likely, but would not significantly affect Fort Belvoir traffic.

Summary of Environmental Impacts: The Proposed Action would not generate significant impacts on human health or the environment.

Conclusion: The Installation Commander at Fort Belvoir has concluded that the Proposed Action would not have a significant effect on the human environment, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

Notice of Availability: The public may review the EA at the Directorate of Public Works, Fort Belvoir, Virginia; the John Marshall Public Library; Kingstowne Public Library; Lorton Public Library; Sherwood Regional Library; City of Fairfax Regional Library, Van Noy Library; or on the installation web site at <http://www.belvoir.army.mil>. Fort Belvoir will hold a public information meeting on October 30, 2008 from 7PM to 9PM in Room 221 A&B, South County Center, 8350 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22309.

Interested parties may submit written comments for consideration on or before 30 days after publication, to Commander, US Army Garrison Fort Belvoir, 9430 Jackson Loop, Suite 100, ATTN: Directorate of Public Works, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5116 or e-mail comments to *environmental-fb-dpw@conus.army.mil*. For more information, contact Mr. Patrick McLaughlin, Chief of Environmental and Natural Resource Division, at 703-806-4007.

Approved by:

Date:

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6 Oct 08