

February 22, 2012

TO: The Montgomery County BRAC Implementation Committee (BIC)

FROM: Ilaya Hopkins, BIC Chair

Thank you for your participation in the ongoing work of the Montgomery County BRAC Implementation Committee (BIC). We had a productive meeting on February 21. The full summary is available at www.montgomerycountymd.gov under "Get Involved". These summaries are particularly useful if you are unable to attend a meeting. Please review the material so that everyone is working with the same information meeting to meeting.

The group decided to move to meeting every other month for the time being. Therefore, the next meeting will be Tuesday, April 17 (tentatively at the BCC Regional Services Center – waiting confirmation) at 7:30.

As a group, we discussed the goals and objectives of the BIC going forward.

First and foremost, the County Executive sees this group as an important means to follow progress of the implementation of mitigation efforts around the Medical Center as this area continues to grow and evolve.

Having a dedicated staff person to keep the community engaged and informed is key and we support the renewal of the DoD Office of Economic Adjustment grant to keep Phil Alperson as the Montgomery County BRAC point person.

The BIC meetings provide a forum to reinforce shared participation with a focus on efforts to improve the whole system. This will be increasingly important as there will be more points of difference when shovels hit the ground during the multiple phases of construction. We will use this group as a way to find synergies, share best practices and lessons learned, and minimize the disruption for the Bethesda Medical Center area – residents, businesses, institutions – as much as possible. The overriding and unifying goal of the matrix of projects underway is to reduce single occupancy vehicles, increase access to public transportation, improve bike/pedestrian access, and maintain (hopefully improve) mobility throughout the area.

The ripple effects of the BRAC expansion, additional build out of the base, NIH Master Plan implementation and general development in the Central Business District will be widely felt. The primary focus of this group is on the immediate surrounding area of the Medical Center. That being said, the meetings will continue to provide a forum for sharing data and experiences, exchanging information, and providing decision makers and implementers the on the ground perspective to factor into final decisions on infrastructure work. Coordination and an eye toward the larger impact will serve as a model for other projects to avoid piecemeal approaches that can undermine the effectiveness of the investments being made.

Lastly, as recipients of information from primary sources – whether it be reports from SHA or MCDOT or anecdotes about commutes from neighbors and colleagues – members of this committee are ideally situated to foster increased communication to and from the communities which they represent to inform the broader public. Working with the BRAC coordinator, the SHA community relations office, the Public Affairs offices of WRNMMC and NIH, each of us can help disseminate through our own channels notices and updates and other useful information to help educate residents and visitors to Bethesda to alleviate some of the anxiety and stress that will come with the disruption of construction and change.

I encourage everyone to use the www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brac website as a resource (particularly the “BRAC News and Traffic” section for updates and the “Get Involved” section for summaries and documentation of items covered at our meetings.)

Thanks again for your continued interest and engagement in this important issue for our community. If you have any questions, ideas or concerns, feel free to contact me at ilayahopkins@verizon.net, Ken Hartman, Director of the BCC Regional Services Center at Ken.Hartman@montgomerycountymd.gov, or the Montgomery County BRAC Coordinator Phil Alperson at Phil.Alperson@montgomerycountymd.gov.