



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett  
*County Executive*

August 13, 2013

Mr. Joseph Macri  
Public Affairs Office  
Naval Support Activity-Bethesda  
8901 Wisconsin Avenue  
Building 11, Room 216  
Bethesda, MD 20889  
**VIA EMAIL: [NNMC.NSABETHESDAEIS@health.mil](mailto:NNMC.NSABETHESDAEIS@health.mil)**

RE: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Medical Facilities Development and University Expansion, Naval Support Activity Bethesda

Dear Mr. Macri:

I am responding to the Final EIS that was released on July 19, 2013, for the Medical Facilities Development and University Expansion at NSAB. While I fully support the construction projects envisioned in the EIS that will help “achieve the new statutory world-class standards for military medicine at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC),”<sup>1</sup> I have concerns about long-term increases in parking planned for the NSAB campus

New construction will bring more personnel and traffic to NSAB. Growth at NSAB must be supported by efforts to ensure that gridlock doesn’t prevent patients, families, and medical professionals from gaining timely access to WRNMMC. This can be accomplished by expediting the transportation projects and programs that have been designed by government and community stakeholders, and by expanding opportunities for NSAB personnel to telecommute or utilize transit, carpools, bicycling, and other alternative modes

Transportation projects that are underway include the Maryland 355/Rockville Pike Crossing Project at the Medical Center Metro Station and projects to improve traffic operations and pedestrian safety at four intersections that serve WRNMMC. In addition, Montgomery County completed a number of pedestrian and bicycle improvements in 2011, constructing and renovating shared use paths and sidewalks that fill gaps in a county-wide network of trails and paths that will facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to the Medical Center.

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<sup>1</sup> Final EIS Executive Summary, page ES-1

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I appreciate that the EIS noted that BRAC-related transportation projects will positively address congestion in the area of WRNMMC. This analysis validates the comprehensive strategy of transit, roadway, and pedestrian projects developed to mitigate congestion related to BRAC-mandated growth at NSA Bethesda. These projects would not be in the pipeline without significant assistance from the United States Congress and the Department of Defense.

The Traffic Study in the EIS compares current traffic conditions to traffic conditions anticipated in 2018 upon the completion of any of the EIS "Build Alternatives" or if the EIS "No Build" conditions are in place. Notably, the Traffic Study accounts for the completion by 2018 of the BRAC-related transportation projects described above:

"For the external roadways, there were no significant impacts in any of the intersections or arterials when comparing the 2018 No Build condition to the 2018 Build Alternatives.... Although some intersections would experience a slight decline in [Level of Service], no intersections would shift to a failing LOS under any Build Alternative."<sup>2</sup>

However, the planned construction under the EIS of two new parking facilities totaling 900 spaces is of concern. While ongoing construction has temporarily eliminated some surface parking, in the long run NSAB will see more personnel and vehicles, and there will be more parking to accommodate them. While the EIS forecasts that NSAB will maintain its laudable personnel-to-parking ratio of better than 3:1, I am concerned that the sheer increase of personnel at NSAB could generate more congestion in the corridors that serve the Medical Center and downtown Bethesda, especially with long range construction proposed under Master Plans for NSAB and the National Institutes of Health.

Again, I support the construction projects that are the subject of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and I want to express my appreciation to the Department of Defense, Naval Support Activity Bethesda, and the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for all they do to support our active, wounded, and retired military. I want to thank the defense agencies for working collegially with state and local governments and community stakeholders to develop and implement the comprehensive BRAC transportation projects. I look forward to continued collaboration with NSAB as we address future growth at the campus.

Thank you again for allowing me to share my views on the Final EIS.

Sincerely,



Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

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<sup>2</sup> Page ES-52 of the EIS Executive Summary