

Army BRAC 2005 Community Interest



Transforming Through Base Realignment and Closure

Overview

As a part of the community, activities that impact the Army, are bound to impact the surrounding community. At first glance the major impact to a neighboring community resulting from a BRAC decision is uncertainty. Good communication, at the outset, is key to preserving good relationships with our neighboring communities and helping to reduce the impact as a result of a BRAC decision.

There are two possible scenarios resulting from BRAC decisions that will impact neighboring communities: (1) a realignment of military missions resulting in either (a) an increase in population, or (b) a decrease in population; and (2) the complete closure and transfer of the installation.

Realignment: Increase in Population

Realignment activities may be defined as activities that both reduce and relocate military missions and DoD civilian personnel at an impacted military installation. The BRAC recommendations may direct the movement of specific units and activities from one installation to another with a goal to increase efficiency and co-locate similar activities resulting in reduced long-term operating costs. The realignment of large units onto a military installation will have an impact upon the surrounding community. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Army is required to examine socio-economic impacts associated with realignments to an installation to determine the impact upon the surrounding community. Public participation is included in the NEPA process. This process may take as little as nine months or as long as 18-months depending on the complexity of the recommendation. Good communication with the local community leaders will go a long way to establish good will within the community.

- **Will the increase in population mean that the size of the Army installation will increase too?** No, it is intended that activities realigning to an installation first be accommodated in existing available facilities. New construction, where required, will be accommodated within the Installation Master Plan in areas designated for long term growth. Acquisition of additional land to accommodate realigning activities is generally not anticipated.
- **How soon will new tenants begin arriving?** The arrival of realigning activities is not expected to occur until suitable facilities are available to accommodate the military personnel workforce. Prior to the initiation of construction or renovation projects is the requirement to complete the NEPA process and issue a decision document. Given ordinary time to complete the NEPA process and required construction/renovation, relocating units may begin arriving as soon as two years after the BRAC recommendations are final.
- **Who will manage the new construction contracts at a gaining installation?** Military construction contracts are managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Effectively and efficiently implement the congressionally approved BRAC 2005 recommendations, while maintaining the well-being of Army Soldiers, civilians and their families, and considering impacts to the Army's primary missions and to local communities.

Realignment: Decrease in Population

A recommendation for realignment associated with a military installation may result in the net reduction of military units or activities, without the closure of any real property at that installation. The decision to relocate units from an installation does not require a NEPA analysis because the recommendations of the BRAC Commission are binding as law. This fact does not lessen or eliminate an impact upon the surrounding community. While a NEPA analysis is not required, Commanders must maintain good open lines of communication with community leaders to reduce the opportunity for rumors and exchange of incorrect information.



- **Will a reduction to the military population at an installation result in a corresponding reduction in the footprint or size of the installation?** Not necessarily. Reduction of the size of the installation may be directed by the BRAC Commission. If no such language is present, excess land may be made available at a future date for sale or transfer.
- **How soon will the activity or unit begin departing?** The departure of realigning activities is not expected to occur until suitable facilities are available to accommodate the workforce at the receiving location. Given the requirements at the gaining location, units may be expected to depart the installation as soon as two years after the BRAC recommendations are final.

Installation Closure

The closure of an installation is defined as the full and complete cessation of missions and activities at that installation. Activities at that installation will be required to relocate to other installations based on specific recommendations by the BRAC Commission or as a result of stationing studies to determine the best location for smaller units and activities not directed to a specific installation. Once activities have vacated the installation, it is available for disposal. Prior to disposal of the property, NEPA documentation and any supporting studies must be completed. Communities should begin preparing themselves for redevelopment planning at a closing installation to expedite the redevelopment and revitalization of the installation and corresponding changes in the tax base. Various types of disposal methodologies are described in a Real Property Information Sheet.

- **How soon will the real estate and personal property at a closing installation be available for redevelopment and reuse?** Generally, the real and personal property at a closing installation are not available until that installation has formally closed. Except under special circumstances, units and activities must be relocated to new installations before closure can occur. Environmental remediation activities are ongoing during the closure process to ensure the property meets standards consistent with its use by the Army. These environmental restoration activities may be carried out in full by the Army before property transfer or transfer negotiations may address completion of all or some of the required environmental restoration activities. The Army is eager to work with communities and redevelopment agencies to quickly dispose of the installation and return it to the community for redevelopment and productive reuse. Early, after the BRAC Recommendations become final, the Army will assess the environmental condition of the installation and examine potential reuse activities based on the Army's current use of the property. The Army will initiate discussions and exchange information with the community to assist in its redevelopment planning. It is an Army Goal to dispose of at least 60% of BRAC excess property within six years.
- **As a community we feel we have to fight this closure, what can we do at this time?** The recommendations of the Secretary of Defense to the BRAC Commission are the position of the Army. The Army is preparing to execute those recommendations on the assumption that they will be approved by the President and, in turn, the Congress. Communities are free to oppose the recommendations if they so choose. The BRAC Commission has previously held regional hearings to obtain community input regarding the Secretary of Defense recommendations. Our experience, and the experience of other communities impacted by BRAC activities, supports the dual approach to BRAC: attend hearings and work with the BRAC Commission, but also begin a process to develop a community reuse plan and redevelopment agency to work with the Army in the event the BRAC Commission recommendations negatively impact that community. The sooner that a community has its redevelopment plan finalized and approved, the sooner it can move to address community impacts associated with the closure and proceed with redevelopment activities.
- **Who will have priority in bidding for available property?** Property surplus to the federal need is made available through a number of transfer mechanisms. The property must go through a formal screening process and determinations made that it is both excess to the Army and surplus to the Federal government. The Army will strive to expedite property transfer using the most cost efficient and effective methodology. Community involvement in the real property disposal process will be encouraged soon after the BRAC Recommendations become final.