

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN
ENHANCED USE LEASE AT NAVAL AIR STATION PATUXENT RIVER, MARYLAND

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)'s regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §§ 1500-1508) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 5090.1D, the Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that an environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared and an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required for the implementation of an enhanced use lease (EUL) at Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River, Maryland.

Proposed Action

The Navy proposes to make available for lease non-excess real property at NAS Patuxent River. EULs are a tool that the Department of Defense employs to leverage government-owned real estate assets (e.g., land and buildings) that are not currently needed for public use, available, and not considered excess (i.e., unnecessary) to the military's needs.

The Navy identified several parcels of land at NAS Patuxent River that are currently available for development or redevelopment. Upon entering into an EUL agreement at NAS Patuxent River, the Navy would grant the rights to finance, design, construct, operate, and maintain a work campus development with a maximum of 600,000 square feet (ft²) (55,742 square meters [m²]) of office spaces and parking that would accommodate up to 3,000 personnel.

Specifically, the proposed EUL would provide a modernized work campus that would provide office space for various public and private tenants, which could include one or more combinations of active-duty and reserve military service members, government civilian workers, government contractors, or entities other than the Federal government.

Construction of the new work campus would be expected to occur over a period of 18 months. The functions served in the existing facilities on the work campus site would ultimately be relocated by means of separate actions to more modern spaces that are adequate to meet the Navy's existing and future needs.

Alternatives

The EA considered two action alternatives in addition to the No Action Alternative. The two action alternatives were combinations of up to three potential sites, identified by the Navy as suitable for an EUL. The EA also evaluated two staffing scenarios for each action alternative to analyze an adequate range of potential traffic impacts: Scenario 1 assumed facility occupancy by primarily existing staff (2,600 existing; 400 new); Scenario 2 assumed occupancy by new staff (3,000 new staff).

The Draft EA, which was published for public review and comment, identified Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative. However, it has been determined that implementation of an EUL at Site 5 is not in the best interest of the Navy and Alternative 2 (EUL Sites 6 and 7, only) is the preferred alternative to be implemented by the Navy in this FONSI.

Alternative 1 (EUL Sites 5, 6, and 7): Under Alternative 1, the Navy would implement an EUL for development of the new work campus among EUL Sites 5, 6,

and 7. EUL Site 5 is located on the western side of Buse Road across from the Naval Air Systems Command Integrated Product Team Building (i.e., Building 2272). This 15.4-acre (6.2-hectare [ha]) parcel of partially developed land encompasses eight office and administrative buildings that were constructed in the 1940s and wooded land. Under Alternative 1, only Buildings 433 and 440 on Site 5 would be demolished to clear space for development of the parking lots. Access to this site would be provided from Buse Road, across from Building 2272.

EUL Site 6 (4.8 acres [2 ha]) and EUL Site 7 (2.7 acres [1.1 ha]) are adjacent to each other, north of the Gate 1 entrance, and east and north of the Naval Air Museum, respectively. Access to Sites 6 and 7 would be provided from a new access road from Buse Road, inside and east of Gate 1. These sites comprise open field and wooded land and are largely unimproved. Apart from a small shed that houses a water pumping facility (Building 536), a ground antenna, and a septic field on EUL Site 6, there are no existing buildings on these sites. These facilities would be demolished.

An assessment of EUL Sites 5, 6, and 7 determined that they have developable acreage able to support more than three buildings of up to five stories with a total maximum of 600,000 ft² (55,742 m²) of office space and parking (e.g., surface parking lots, multiple-level parking structures) that could support up to 3,000 personnel. For the purposes of this alternative, it is assumed that Site 5 would support up to 150,000 ft² (13,943 m²) of administrative space and 750 personnel, while Sites 6 and 7 would support up to 450,000 ft² (41,828 m²) and 2,250 personnel, with approximately 132,000 ft² (12,269 m²) of surface parking lots on Site 5 and 396,000 ft² (24,538 m²) of gross floor area in surface parking lots or multiple-level parking structures on Sites 6 and 7. The new facilities would use existing utilities and infrastructure and would not conflict with land uses in the surrounding area because they would be located near other administrative buildings. A combination of these sites provides the Navy more flexibility with design than any one site on its own.

Alternative 2 (EUL Sites 6 and 7; Preferred Alternative): Under Alternative 2, the Navy would implement an EUL for development of the new work campus only on EUL Sites 6 and 7. As contiguous parcels, EUL Sites 6 and 7 have the combined developable acreage to support a maximum of 600,000 ft² of office space and parking (e.g., surface parking lots, multiple-level parking structures) to support up to 3,000 personnel. The new facilities would connect to existing utilities and infrastructure and would not conflict with land uses in the surrounding area because the sites are currently vacant land. Access to these sites would be provided via a new access road connecting to Buse Road inside and east of Gate 1.

No Action Alternative

CEQ regulations specify the inclusion of a No Action Alternative against which potential impacts can be compared. Although the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action, it was analyzed in accordance with CEQ regulations.

Under the No Action Alternative, NAS Patuxent River would not enter into an EUL with a lessee to develop, operate, and maintain a work campus office development at NAS Patuxent River. No public-private partnership would be developed between the Navy and the lessee at NAS Patuxent River. The Navy's objectives for the EUL, to enhance and optimize real property at NAS Patuxent River, would not be met and the Navy would continue to operate under current

conditions within inadequate facilities. The ability to meet mission requirements would be difficult and inefficient.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is for the Navy to make the best use of real property with a new and efficient work campus to accommodate up to 3,000 personnel. The Proposed Action would be implemented by entering into a long-term (i.e., 50-year) lease with a private developer with the intent to construct and operate the work campus office development on real property not currently needed for public use. The Navy intends to advance the Proposed Action through the use of an EUL.

Installation managers face stark financial and resource limitations that inhibit their ability to address space deficits. Implementation of an EUL would provide the Navy with flexibility in meeting its requirements and would also allow for some financial return on property available for out-leasing through the potential for private tenants.

As discussed above, two staffing scenarios representing the range of sources of personnel that could occupy the EUL development at NAS Patuxent River were assumed for each alternative addressed in the EA. Under either scenario, both private and public entities may obtain space in any new EUL development.

Environmental Effects of the Preferred Alternative

The following environmental resources, which could be impacted by the Preferred Alternative, were analyzed in this EA: land use and airspace, traffic and transportation, infrastructure and utilities, air quality, noise, coastal zone management, geology, biological resources, water resources, cultural resources, hazardous materials and wastes, socioeconomics and environmental justice, and human health and safety.

The environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the Preferred Alternative would not be considered significant under either staffing scenario. The environmental impacts would be slightly less for Alternative 2 due to the additional building demolition and vegetation removal at Site 5 under Alternative 1. Therefore, Alternative 2 is also the environmentally preferred alternative. The environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative are summarized as follows for each resource area analyzed.

Land Use and Airspace. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have no significant impacts on land use and is consistent with current land planning strategies at NAS Patuxent River. Although the Preferred Alternative would introduce new visual elements to the installation, the facilities would be consistent with current infrastructure and would not result in significant visual impacts.

Traffic and Transportation. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in non-significant impacts that include longer queue lengths, increased travel times, and an overall increase in traffic delay along Three Notch Road (MD 235). On the installation, impacts would be greatest at the Buse Road intersection with the new access road. Impacts associated with Staffing Scenario 2 (all new staff) would be greater than Staffing Scenario 1 (primarily existing staff); however, impacts under either scenario would not be significant.

Infrastructure and Utilities. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in non-significant impacts on electrical supply, water supply, wastewater, stormwater drainage, and solid waste management during construction activities and the long-term additional personnel during the operational term of the EUL. These impacts would be minimized as the new facilities would use energy efficient equipment and processes such that there would be no impact to current service levels on the installation or in the surrounding community.

Air Quality. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in temporary impacts from construction-related emissions and a long-term increase in operations emissions due to the construction of new facilities. St. Mary's County is currently in attainment for all criteria pollutants and the Preferred Alternative would not affect the County's attainment status.

Noise. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in temporary, non-significant noise impacts during construction. These impacts would be localized to the project area and would cease upon completion of construction activities.

Coastal Zone Management. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in additional impervious surfaces and increased stormwater runoff; however, all activities would be conducted in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies regarding protection of coastal zone resources. The Maryland Department of the Environment did not respond to the Navy's negative coastal consistency determination, which was prepared and submitted per the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Defense and the State of Maryland.

Geology. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in non-significant impacts due to soil disturbance and compaction during construction. Impacts to soils would be minimized through implementation of an approved Sediment and Erosion Control plan and would cease upon completion of construction. Soil compaction underneath the new facilities would not change the topography or underlying geology of the area.

Biological Resources. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in non-significant impacts on vegetation and wildlife. Temporary disturbances of wildlife from construction noise would be expected but would cease on completion of construction activities. Permanent vegetation removal and habitat loss would occur; however, the impacts would be minimal relative to available habitat in the region and would have no population level effects.

The northern long-eared bat was Federally-listed as threatened in April 2015 and has the potential to occur in the project area. Previous surveys in 2012 and 2013 did not identify any individuals at NAS Patuxent River. If northern long-eared bats are identified within the project area prior to construction, no tree clearing would be permitted during the pupping season (1 June to 31 July, annually).

Water Resources. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have Non-significant impacts on water resources. Best management practices established in the installation Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be implemented to reduce impacts from increased stormwater runoff and on

groundwater recharge. Environmental Site Design would be used to maintain predevelopment runoff characteristics.

Approximately 0.05 acre (0.02 ha) of wetlands could be impacted. All impacts on wetlands would be mitigated in accordance with applicable permit requirements. No impacts on floodplains would be expected.

Cultural Resources. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have No Adverse Effect on historic properties. The Maryland SHPO concurred in a letter dated October 14, 2014.

Hazardous Materials and Wastes. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would require minor amounts of hazardous materials and wastes used or generated during construction activities. All materials and wastes would be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable laws and regulations; therefore, no significant impacts would occur.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would result in short-term, construction-related increases in local taxes and sales receipts and would not affect the availability, quantity, or price of housing or labor. The Preferred Alternative would not result in disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations or children.

Human Health and Safety. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have no significant impacts on human health and safety.

Cumulative Impacts. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative, when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions at or near NAS Patuxent River is not anticipated to result in significant cumulative impacts. The Traffic and Transportation analysis in the EA included non-Navy traffic projections and, therefore, analyzed the cumulative impacts to regional networks. As stated, overall traffic delays would increase but impacts would not be significant.

Public Involvement

A public scoping meeting was held on April 8, 2014 at the Bay District Fire Hall in Lexington Park, Maryland to solicit input on the Alternatives to be considered in the EA. Four comment letters were received and were addressed in the Draft EA. The Draft EA was made available for public review and comment from September 26, 2014 through October 27, 2014. A public open house on the Draft EA was held at the Bay District Fire Hall on October 15, 2014. Three comment letters were received on the Draft EA and are addressed in the Final EA (Appendix A).

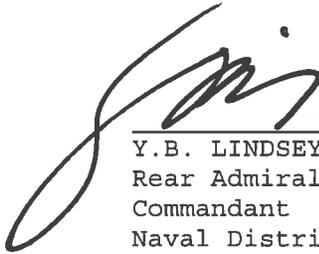
As stated above, the Draft EA made available for public review identified Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative. However, Alternative 2 (the preferred alternative) was also presented for public review and comment and now is the preferred alternative to be implemented in this FONSI.

Finding: Based on the analysis contained in the EA and after considering the comments received on the Draft EA, the Navy finds that implementation of the Preferred Alternative (under either staffing scenario) will not significantly affect the quality of the human or natural environment or generate significant controversy. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

The EA addressing this action is on file and interested parties may obtain a copy from: Ms. Connie Hempel, NAS Patuxent River Public Affairs, 22268 Cedar Point Road, Building 409, Room 204, Patuxent River, MD, 20670, or by email to connie.hempel@navy.mil. The Final EA and FONSI are also available on the following website: https://www.cnrc.navy.mil/regions/ndw/installations/nas_patuxent_river/om/enhanced-use-lease-projects/environmental-assessment.html

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Date



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