

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT (EA) FOR THE 67TH STREET OCEANFRONT PROPERTY
REDEVELOPMENT OF JOINT EXPEDITIONARY BASE LITTLE CREEK-FORT
STORY, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500 - 1508) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and Navy regulations (32 CFR Part 775), and Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 5090.1C, the Department of the Navy (Navy) gives notice that an EA has been prepared and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for the redevelopment of Navy-owned property between 67th and 68th Streets (the 67th Street property) at the north end of Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Proposed Action: The proposed action is to demolish the existing approximately 8,000-square-foot Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek - Fort Story (JEBLCFS) catering facility and 17 beach-side recreational pavilions and construct new facilities to support the Navy's Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Program. The new facilities would use design criteria that meet the accessibility requirements for handicapped people in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), requirements of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system, and anti-terrorism/force protection (AT/FP) regulations.

The preferred alternative (Alternative 1) is to demolish the existing catering facility and recreational pavilions and construct 20 vacation rental homes. The rental home complex would comprise 10 two-bedroom units and 10 three-bedroom units constructed in three multi-unit buildings. The three buildings would be two stories each. The density of the rental homes would be consistent with the current conditions in the surrounding area of 12 dwelling units per acre. Support facilities for the vacation rental homes would include a maintenance service utility room, parking for two cars per home, adequate utilities for year-round use, and appropriate receptacles for trash and recyclables. The 67th Street property currently has a single entrance/exit onto 67th Street. Under the preferred alternative, the Navy would create a second

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entrance/exit onto 68th Street directly opposite the existing property opening.

The purpose of the proposed action is to support the Navy's MWR Program by redeveloping the 67th Street property to meet current MWR Program demands. The proposed action is needed to maintain a robust MWR Program. The existing catering facility at the 67th Street property is not fully meeting this need.

Existing Conditions: The 67th Street property is located in the residential area next to Virginia Beach's public North End Beach. The existing one-story brick catering facility and parking lot occupy 1.7 acres between Atlantic Avenue and the Atlantic Ocean, approximately 9 miles from JEFLECS. Because of its age and condition, the existing facility is no longer commercially viable and is currently under-used.

The 67th Street property is within the Commonwealth of Virginia's designated coastal zone, and its eastern boundary abuts a primary sand dune and a maritime dune grassland community. Wildlife found on the site likely includes species of small mammals, shore and urban birds, and reptiles that are typical of beach and developed environments. No federal- or state-listed threatened or endangered species, cultural resources, surface waters, or wetlands are located on the 67th Street property.

Alternatives Analyzed: The primary criterion for development of reasonable alternatives to support the proposed action was to evaluate facility options that fulfill the MWR Program mission. A secondary criterion was to avoid unnecessary maintenance and upkeep of underused and outdated facilities at the expense of military operating forces. The Navy considered two alternatives for redevelopment of the 67th Street property, plus an additional alternative, the No Action Alternative.

- **Alternative 1** is to demolish the existing catering facility and recreational pavilions and construct 20 vacation rental homes. The rental home complex would comprise 10 two-bedroom units and 10 three-bedroom units constructed in three multi-unit buildings. The three buildings would be two stories each. The density of the rental homes would be consistent with the current conditions in the surrounding area of 12 dwelling units per acre. Support facilities for the vacation rental homes would include a maintenance service utility room, parking for two cars per home,

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adequate utilities for year-round use, and appropriate receptacles for trash and recyclables. The 67th Street property currently has a single entrance/exit onto 67th Street. Under Alternative 1, the Navy would create a second entrance/exit onto 68th Street directly opposite the existing property opening.

- **Alternative 2** is to demolish the existing catering facility and recreational pavilions and construct a larger, two-level catering facility. The new facility would be designed to accommodate up to 400 guests. The first level would comprise parking for up to 220 vehicles with an elevator providing access from the parking area to the approximately 17,000-square-foot catering facility on the second level. The Navy would create a second entrance/exit onto 68th Street opposite the existing property opening under Alternative 2.
- **The No Action Alternative** is continued use of the catering facility in its current condition by the MWR Program. No demolition or redevelopment would occur at the 67th Street property. None of the benefits associated with redevelopment of the 67th Street property would occur. The No Action Alternative is included as required by Navy and CEQ regulations and provides an environmental baseline with which to compare the alternatives. The No Action Alternative, if implemented, would not satisfy the purpose and need for the proposed action, although it has been analyzed as required.

Alternative 1 (vacation rental homes) has been identified as the preferred alternative. In addition to meeting the needs of the Navy's MWR Program and providing a modest return on investment, redevelopment of the 67th Street property into a vacation rental home complex would address the high demand for vacation rental homes to serve the community of active-duty, reserve, and retired Navy personnel and National Guard and Department of Defense civilians and their families. Affordable opportunities in the region for military personnel to enjoy a beachfront vacation setting with their families are limited. It is for these reasons that an increase in the number of available vacation rental homes is the preferred choice for the proposed action.

Alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further evaluation were redevelopment of the 67th Street property with a

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recreational vehicle (RV) campground, a high-rise Navy lodge, or a swimming pool.

Environmental Effects: The following is a summary of the environmental consequences of the proposed action under the preferred alternative (Alternative 1):

Land Use, Coastal Zone, and Visual Setting. Implementation of Alternative 1 would result in a change in land use on the 67th Street property, but because the new use would be in character with the surrounding properties, implementation of Alternative 1 would be consistent with surrounding land use. The development would not be large enough to generate indirect impacts such as additional development or demolition.

The Navy, in its Coastal Consistency Determination (CCD) letter, dated 15 September 2009, determined that the proposed action (Alternative 1) would be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable coastal zone policies of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality concurred with the Navy's determination in a letter dated 12 November 2009.

Alternative 1 would have temporary impacts on the aesthetic environment during construction because the site would be disturbed by the activities and the presence of construction materials and equipment. However, redevelopment of the 67th Street property would have long-term positive impacts on the aesthetic environment by demolishing the existing catering facility, which is old and falling into disrepair, with new facilities. The city's architectural standards, although not a requirement, would be followed. The proposed vacation rental homes would be similar in height to the existing catering facility and would not exceed 35 feet, the maximum height allowed for buildings within residential districts (Virginia Beach City Code Appendix A, Article 5, Section 503).

Traffic. Alternative 1 would generate temporary impacts from construction vehicles entering and exiting the property. There would be no impacts on public transportation or bicycle/pedestrian traffic. Following construction, traffic would decrease compared with current traffic from the existing catering facility before, during and after events at the facility. Traffic under Alternative 1 would be similar to current residential traffic.

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Noise. Demolition and construction activities could have a temporary impact on the existing noise environment in the immediate area. These activities would be temporary and would occur only during daylight hours, when noise is less intrusive for residential receptors. Operation of the vacation rental homes would likely add little, if any additional noise over that of the existing catering facility. Noise from the vacation rental homes would be primarily residential in nature. The estimated 40 passenger cars, in an hour, on 67th Street would cause an insignificant increase in traffic noise for residences along 67th Street.

Infrastructure and Utilities. The average daily water use generated by the vacation rental homes would be approximately 6,000 gallons per day (gpd). This average daily water use would be less than one-tenth of one percent of the City of Virginia Beach's average daily water use and would have a negligible impact on the city's water supply. Similarly, the amount of wastewater generated daily would be a small percentage of the actual average flow per day (26 million gallons per day [mgd]) to the Atlantic Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and the WWTP's permitted capacity (54 mgd).

A temporary increase in storm water runoff would occur during construction, due to land disturbance. The Navy would obtain a Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VDES) Construction General Permit (9 VAC 25-180-10 et seq.) before beginning any ground-disturbing activities. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented at the site to reduce or eliminate erosion, sedimentation, and storm water pollutants. Following construction, storm water from the site would be collected by the city's system. Alternative 1 would slightly reduce the amount of impervious surface on the site, which would slightly reduce the amount and velocity of storm water runoff from the site. Thus, implementation of Alternative 1 would have a long-term beneficial impact on storm water discharge.

Community Facilities and Services. When compared with the total annual influx of the tourist population in Virginia Beach, the potential increase of 100 people in a vacation rental area would have negligible impacts on Virginia Beach community facilities and services (police and fire protection and medical services).

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Socioeconomics. Implementation of Alternative 1 would not require the transfer of Navy personnel and, therefore, would not result in an increase or decrease in regional population. The proposed vacation rental homes would not be permanent residences and would not contribute to the city's housing stock. Therefore, there would be no permanent impact on population or housing. Demolition and construction activities would have a positive short-term effect on the regional economy as funds are spent on labor and materials purchased in the region. However, this positive impact would be short-term, and implementation of Alternative 1 would not significantly affect the regional economy over the long-term.

Topography, Geology, and Soils. Most of the site is flat and paved and thus no major grading would be required before construction. Installing underground utility lines would require minor excavation. Construction activities would have temporary impacts on soils at the site, which would be minimized or avoided by using standard soil erosion and sedimentation control techniques.

Water Resources. Surface waters and wetlands are not present on the site; therefore, there would be no impacts on these resources. Construction could affect the shallow Columbia aquifer if fuels or other materials were spilled during construction. The Navy would implement BMPs, including spill prevention and immediate cleanup of spills, which would prevent infiltration into area groundwater resources in the unlikely event of a spill.

Although the 67th Street property is located within the 100-year floodplain, there is no practicable alternative for locating the proposed structures outside of the floodplain. Implementation of Alternative 1 would not increase the current impact on the floodplain. Construction of the vacation rental homes would reduce the amount of impervious surface on the 67th Street property. The Navy will adhere to the intent of the National Flood Insurance Program building standards and criteria as well as to the intent of the Virginia Beach municipal floodplain building standards (Virginia Beach City Code, Appendix C, Section 5B).

Vegetation and Wildlife. Potential temporary impacts on the maritime dune grassland community adjacent to the 67th Street property, including soil compaction and loss of some vegetation,

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could occur during construction. These potential impacts would be avoided or minimized by locating the construction staging area on existing paved surfaces and restricting vehicle and foot traffic near the dunes. Following construction, the Navy will revegetate the dunes as needed with native species. Redevelopment would occur within the footprint of the existing catering facility and would not result in any loss of habitat. Wildlife in the area could be temporarily displaced during construction but would continue to use the 67th Street property following completion.

Migratory Birds. Implementation of Alternative 1 would not result in the taking or mortality of migratory birds or any other action that is prohibited by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Threatened and Endangered Species. No federal- or state-listed threatened or endangered species occur on the 67th Street property; therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would have no effect on threatened or endangered species.

Cultural Resources. There are no archaeological or historic resources listed or eligible for listing on the NREIP located on the 67th Street property; therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would not have any direct impacts on cultural resources. In a letter signed on April 23, 2009, the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with the Navy on the finding that the proposed development would have no effect on historic properties.

Air Quality. Vehicle emissions, demolition of existing structures, emissions from architectural coatings, paving work, etc., would have short-term localized impacts on air quality. Operation of the construction equipment would have a minor, temporary impact on air quality during construction. It is anticipated that overall local emissions would return to existing conditions after completion of construction activities. There would be no significant long-term impacts on air quality. Annual emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) would be below the de minimis level of 100 tons per year (tpy) and would not make up 10% of the region's emission inventory. A Record of Non-Applicability (RONA) was prepared for the proposed action.

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Finding: Based on the analysis presented in the EA and coordination with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, the Navy finds that implementation of the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human or natural environment or generate significant controversy.

The EA prepared by the Navy addressing this action is on file and interested parties may obtain a copy from: Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Mid-Atlantic, 9742 Maryland Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia 23511, Attention: Edward DuRant.

2/16/10

Date



M.S Boensel
Rear Admiral U.S. Navy
Commander
Navy Region, Mid-Atlantic