

1 PURPOSE AND NEED

The US Army Garrison Fort Belvoir proposes to outgrant a strip of property along the southern edge of Richmond (Jefferson Davis) Highway (US 1) and the eastern edge of Old Colchester Road (OCR) to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for the proposed widening of US 1 (Table 1-1). The purpose of the Proposed Action is to outgrant sufficient land to VDOT to support the agency’s desire to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety along this segment of US 1. According to the VDOT EA, US 1 in northern Virginia (Figure 1-1) serves metropolitan travel needs as an arterial in the regional transportation network, and serves local traffic by connecting neighborhoods with commercial areas. Within Fairfax County, US 1 serves as an alternate corridor to Interstate 95 (Figure 1-2) for commuters heading to employment centers such as Fort Belvoir, the City of Alexandria, Crystal City and Washington, D.C. (VDOT, 1999).

Table 1-1
Outgrant Distance and Size¹

	US 1²	OCR	TOTAL
Distance	2,521 feet (768 m) 0.477 miles (0.768 km)	822 feet (251 m) 0.156 miles (0.251 km)	3,343 feet (1,019 m) 0.633 mi (1.019 km)
Permanent Easement	0.252 acres (0.1022 ha)	0.518 acres (0.21 ha)	0.770 acres (0.3122 ha)
Temporary Easement	0.338 acres (0.1368 ha)	0.214 acres (0.09 ha)	0.552 acres (0.223 ha)
Total Easement	0.590 acres (0.239 ha)	0.732 acres (0.30 ha)	01.322 acres (0.535 ha)

¹Measurements made along pavement edge from southeast corner of OCR/US 1 intersection. Conversion table located in Chapter 7.

²Total length of the US 1 widening project is 5,917 feet (1,804 m) or 1.121 miles (1.804 km).

Although the Proposed Action will eventually support road upgrade of US 1 from Interstate 95 (I-95) to the north of Fort Belvoir, this document will only evaluate the proposed outgrant of Fort Belvoir property for this phase of VDOT’s US 1 widening project. Any proposed construction associated with subsequent phases, as well as traffic impacts and other site-specific impacts associated with them, would be addressed in follow-on environmental assessments.

VDOT’s project consists of widening US 1 for 5,917 feet (1,804 m) or 1.121 miles (1.8 km). This segment begins 0.075 miles (0.12 km) south of the Lorton Road / US 1 intersection and ends at the eastern terminus 0.477 miles (0.768 km) east of the OCR / US 1 intersection (Figure 1-3). It will require Fort Belvoir to outgrant 0.770 acres (0.3122 ha) for a permanent easement and 0.552 acres (0.223 ha) for a temporary construction easement. The total length of the proposed outgrant is 3,343 feet (1,019 m) or 0.633 miles (1.019 km), which includes 2,521 feet (768 m) along the south side of US 1 and 822 feet (251 m) along the east side of OCR.

The primary purpose of the project is to:

- ?? Widen US 1 to accommodate the current and projected traffic flow at the OCR / Telegraph Road / US 1 intersection.
- ?? Improve the northbound OCR through lane approach to the Telegraph Road / US 1 intersection, which is presently not aligned properly and creates a zone of a potential serious accident adjacent to Fort Belvoir.

Based on the proposed upgrade of OCR northbound 1) a through lane will flow directly into the appropriate northbound Telegraph Road lane; and 2) dedicated right turn and left turn lanes will flow to US 1. This upgrade is consistent with recommendations in the Northern Virginia Transportation Plan (2010), the Draft 2010 Statewide Highway Plan of 1989, and the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan (VDOT, 1994).

1.2 Location

Fort Belvoir is located in southeastern Fairfax County, Virginia, approximately 18 miles (29 km) southwest of Washington D.C. and 80 miles (129 km) north of Richmond, the Capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Fort Belvoir consists of the 8,259-acre (3,345-ha) Main Post and the 807-acre (327-ha) Engineer Proving Ground (EPG). The Main Post lies north of Pohick Bay and Gunston Cove between I-95 and the Potomac River. Fort Belvoir functions as an administrative and logistics center for the Military District of Washington (MDW). Currently, about 21,240 civilian and military personnel work on Fort Belvoir, which provides support services for over 200,000 military personnel, dependents, and retirees in the region.

US 1 divides the Main Post into two distinct geographical areas: North Post and South Post. The North Post is bounded by Telegraph Road on the north and northwest; US 1 on the south and Huntley Meadows, Woodlawn Plantation, and private development on the east. South Post is bounded by US 1 on the north and on the west by OCR and the Norman J. Cole Jr. Pollution Control Plant (formerly Lower Potomac Pollution Control Plant), the Woodrow Wilson Boy Scout Reservation, and private development. South Post is bounded on the south by Pohick Bay and Gunston Cove, and the Potomac River to the southeast; and Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Dogue Creek, Woodlawn Plantation and private development to the east. Fort Belvoir surrounds Accotink Village, a 33-acre (13.4-ha) area along US 1, which is not a part of Fort Belvoir (US Army Garrison Fort Belvoir, 2001b).

1.3 Historical Overview

Military use of the land forming Fort Belvoir began in 1915 with the US Army Corps of Engineers School's summer training exercises. That year, the US Government bought a 1,500-acre (608-ha) expanse of rural land, known as the Belvoir Plantation, to set up a summer training camp and rifle ranges for engineers stationed at the Washington Barracks (now Fort McNair in

Washington, D.C.). In the wake of World War I, the training camp was expanded and modified to become a major installation, first under the name of Camp A.A. Humphreys, then from 1935 to present, Fort Belvoir. In the 1950s, the emphasis at Fort Belvoir began shifting to research and development.

Expansion and development continued at Fort Belvoir through the end of the Vietnam War, with the installation playing an important role as a training site for engineers and officers. The 1988 relocation of the Army Engineer School to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri completed the transition from engineer training to administrative and logistics support for defense agencies in the National Capital Region. In recent years, Fort Belvoir has functioned primarily as an administrative and logistic support center for the Army and as a host for over one hundred tenant organizations (US Army Garrison Fort Belvoir, 1993 and 2001a).

1.4 The NEPA Process

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, Fort Belvoir prepared this environmental assessment (EA) to publicly document the environmental consequences of outgranting of Army land at Fort Belvoir to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for the construction and maintenance along US 1 and OCR. Although, VDOT's EA fulfills their NEPA requirements, Army Regulation (AR) 200-2, "Environmental Effects of Army Actions", regulates the outgranting of US Army property under the jurisdiction of Fort Belvoir and requires a NEPA EA be performed.

The Fort Belvoir EA has been prepared pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500-1508, AR 200-2 and 32 CFR Part 651 to evaluate the proposed outgranting of real property to VDOT for this phase of construction of the US 1 corridor. This EA addresses the effects (impacts and effects are used synonymously) of outgranting the land to widen US 1 and realign OCR in terms of (1) the environmental and socioeconomic impacts; and (2) the loss of land use.

NEPA provides for the consideration of environmental issues in federal agency planning and decision-making. Under NEPA, federal agencies must prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an EA, for any federal action, except those actions that are determined to be "categorically excluded." An EIS is prepared for those federal actions that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment. An EA is a concise public document that provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether or not to prepare an EIS. The EA includes brief discussion of:

- ?? the need for the proposal;
- ?? the alternatives (as required under Section 102 [2][E] of NEPA);
- ?? the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives; and
- ?? a listing of agencies and persons consulted.

The EA results in either a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) or a decision to prepare an EIS and a Notice of Intent (NOI). If Fort Belvoir determines that the proposed action may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment, then an EIS will be prepared.

Under Section 2667 of Title 10 US Code (USC), the Secretary of the Army (SA) may authorize the use of military real estate for commercial purposes when it is advantageous to the United States. The use must promote the national defense or be in the public interest and the Army must not need the land at the time. Army Regulation (AR) 405-80 “Management of Title and Granting Use of Real Property” outlines the authority, policy, responsibility, and procedures for making military real estate available to others. In accordance with AR 405-80, Fort Belvoir will prepare a Report of Availability for the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Baltimore District. The Baltimore District will prepare the outgrant, set the terms and conditions for the land use, including environmental mitigation measures, and request Secretary of the Army (SA) approval of the outgrant.

An evaluation of the environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives include direct, indirect, and cumulative effects as defined at 40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.8 as well as qualitative and quantitative, where possible, assessment of the level of significance of these effects. Direct impacts are those caused by the proposed action that occur at the same time and place. Indirect impacts are caused or induced by the action but occur later in time or are removed in distance. Cumulative impacts are the impacts on the environment that result from the incremental effect of the proposed action added to other past, present or reasonably foreseeable future actions.

Judgments of the level of significance are made within the guidelines defined at 40 CFR 1508.27. “Significantly” as used in the phrase “significantly affecting the quality of the human environment” requires consideration of both context and intensity. For a site-specific action in the locale of the subject area, context means that the effects in the locale are primary. Intensity refers to the severity of the impact. Criteria applicable in evaluating intensity include the unique characteristics of the geographic area, such as ecologically critical areas or environmentally sensitive areas and duration. Cumulative impacts must be considered here, including whether the proposed action threatens a violation of federal, state or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment, or is relevant to the threshold significance.

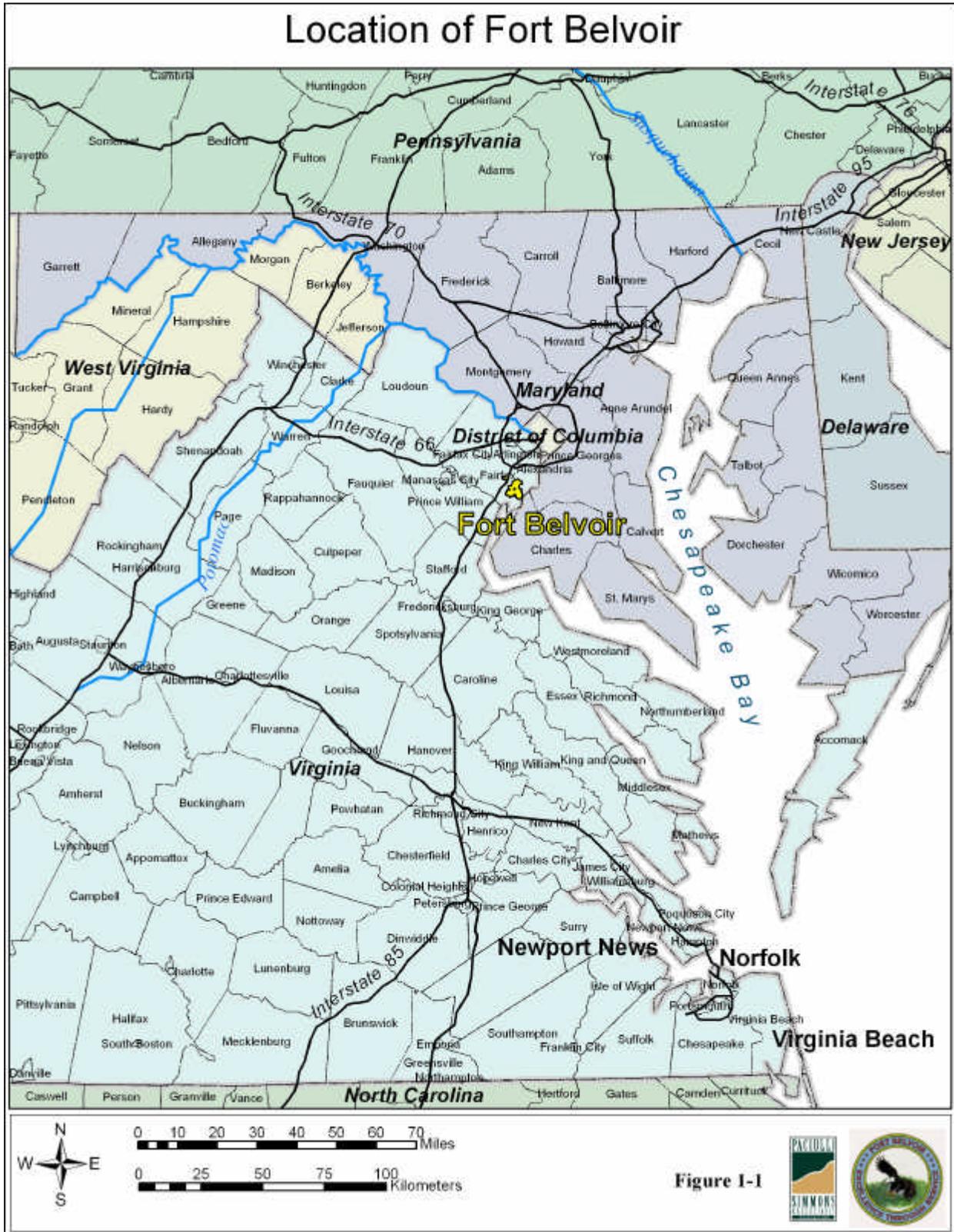


Figure I-1

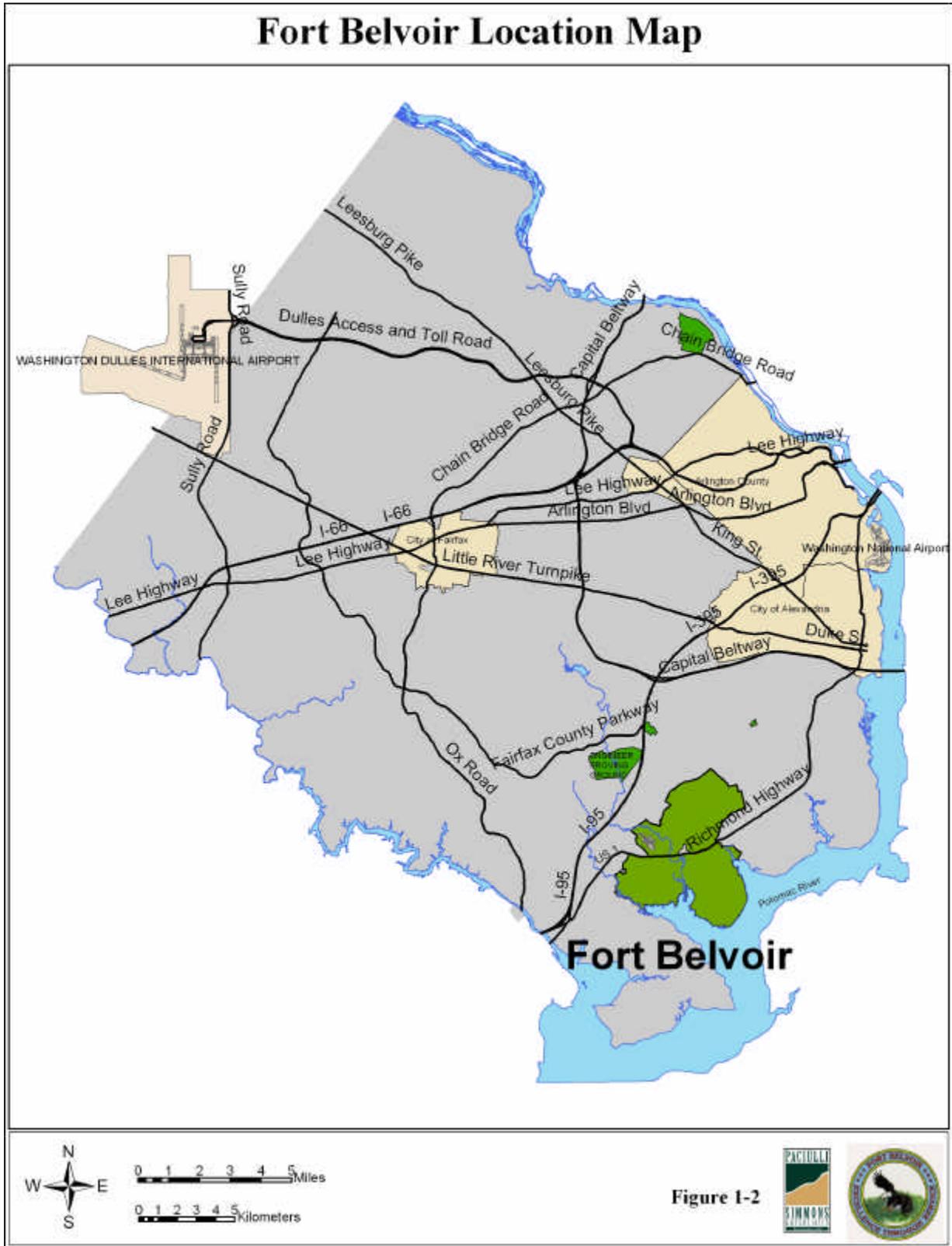




Figure 1-3

