

Finding of No Significant Impact

The National Museum of the United States Army US Army Garrison Fort Belvoir Directorate of Public Works Fort Belvoir, Virginia

Name of Action: Construction and Operation of the National Museum of the United States Army (NMUSA) and reconfiguration of North Post Golf Course.

Description of the Proposed Action: Under the proposed action, the Army would construct and operate the NMUSA on the North Post of Fort Belvoir. Construction of the NMUSA would occur in multiple phases, ensuring a successful museum opening but not allowing construction to outpace funding. The initial phase of the NMUSA would include a 177,000 gross square-foot, multi-story, main museum building with exhibit halls, theater, Veterans' Hall (auditorium), food service and retail areas, administrative spaces, an experiential learning center, and a lobby with a visitor reception area. This phase also includes a memorial garden; parade ground; grandstand; amphitheater; education, survival and interpretive trail, and comfort station; powder storage building; parking; roadways; and utility infrastructure. Future NMUSA construction could include expansion of the main museum building, memorial garden, grandstand, and the addition of a small storage building and outdoor education center.

The North Post Golf course would be reconfigured to be maintained as a 36-hole facility. In order to accomplish this, the Army would replace and/or reposition the six holes compromised by the NMUSA in and around the remaining holes, as well as reconfigure the remaining golf course and golf cart paths to maintain play through four sets of nine holes.

Over 64 sites around the country were evaluated as potential locations for the NMUSA, but Fort Belvoir, Virginia was selected as the best and only reasonable location. The selection of Fort Belvoir became law in 2004. The Army examined eight different site locations on Fort Belvoir during the planning process for the NMUSA. The Gunston site on Fort Belvoir is considered to be the best and most reasonable at this time. The remaining sites were rejected for the following reasons: the Southwest and T-16 Areas have limited availability to utilities and communication lines, NMUSA construction at the Woodlawn and North Area sites would violate the Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) standards of current facilities, the Tulley Gate site is a major utility corridor and has extreme topography, and the Lieber Gate and Pence Gate sites are no longer available.

This NMUSA EA examined two reasonable alternatives for the Gunston site, a layout that involves surface parking, and another for construction of a parking garage or deck. This EA also addresses the impacts of reconfiguring the existing North Post Golf Course to address effects that would be caused by construction of the NMUSA. The Army also evaluated a No Action alternative; however, the No Action alternative would not provide for the construction and operation of the NMUSA at Fort Belvoir.

Environmental Consequences: The Environmental Assessment (EA), which is attached and incorporated by reference into this Finding of No Significant Impact, examined the following potential effects of the proposed action alternative and possible mitigation strategies:

Natural Resources: The Army would mitigate natural resource impacts by maximizing retention and protection of existing trees and native vegetation; planting native wetland plants in storm drainage areas to promote water quality. The Army would protect existing trees to the extent feasible by removing only those trees that would interfere with NMUSA or golf course features and by planting trees at a 2:1 ratio to replace those of 4-inch diameter or greater. Additionally, the Army would take steps to protect seeps and recharge areas for Northern Virginia Well Amphipod and supporting habitat and strictly adhere to erosion and sediment control and stormwater management laws and regulations to minimize impacts to aquatic ecosystems and protect Laura's club tail dragonfly. Potential habitat for the small whorled pogonia will be avoided by using the results of plant surveys when planning the realignment of the North Post Golf Course. No other Special Status species would be affected by the proposed action.

Noise: Construction would be limited to weekday business hours. Construction equipment would use mufflers. Noise from the operation of the NMUSA is expected to be minor.

Infrastructure and Utilities: The proposed action would have a moderate impact on infrastructure and utilities by constructing a sanitary sewer pump station, potentially upgrading a sewer line, and potentially upgrading a potable water main.

Community Facilities and Services: The proposed action would have a moderate impact on community facility and services due to impacts caused by construction of the museum on land occupied by 6 holes of the Fort Belvoir Golf Course. Fort Belvoir would reconfigure the golf course to provide 36 holes with at least par 35 for each nine hole course. During the reconfiguration construction there may be short-term reductions of the total number of holes below 36, but every effort will be made to minimize the number of holes brought out of play and the duration of the disruption.

Transportation and Traffic: The proposed action would have a minor impact on long-term increases in traffic on local roadways. Army and VDOT will develop a Memorandum of Agreement which will include transportation solutions for the museum site.

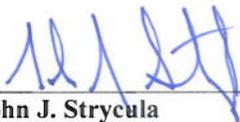
Best management practices and adherence to applicable policies/regulations that would be implemented for resource protection are included with discussions of each respective resource area in the Draft EA. No mitigation measures for effects on socioeconomics, utilities, air quality, cultural resources, topography, soil integrity, migratory birds, surface water quality, floodplains, waters of the US including wetlands and Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Areas, Land Use, Coastal Zone Management, Petroleum and Hazardous Substances would be required. Air pollutant emissions from the proposed action would be below de minimis levels for general conformity.

Summary of Environmental Impacts: The proposed action would not have significant impacts to human health or the environment. No significant cumulative impacts or indirect impacts are anticipated.

Conclusions: On reviewing the Environmental Assessment and other project information, the Garrison Commander at Fort Belvoir has concluded that the proposed action would not have significant impacts on the environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

Notice of Availability: The Environmental Assessment was available for public review at the Directorate of Public Works and Van Noy Library, Fort Belvoir, Virginia; and at Lorton, Sherwood, Kingstowne and Fairfax City Regional branches of the Fairfax County Public Libraries. A copy of this notice and the Environmental Assessment was made available at www.belvoir.army.mil.

Response to Comments: Comments of concurrence and guidance were received during the public comment period. These comments have been considered. For more information, contact Mr. Patrick McLaughlin, Chief of Environmental and Natural Resource Division, at 703-806-4007.



John J. Strycula
Colonel, US Army
Commanding

19 MAY 2011

Date