

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
for
Army Residential Communities Initiative
RCI Properties at Fort Belvoir, Virginia
United States Department of the Army**

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The U.S. Army at Fort Belvoir proposes to lease the Berman Tract to Fort Belvoir Residential Communities (FBRC) for the purpose of meeting requirements under the Residential Communities Initiative (RCI). The Berman Tract, along with the Woodlawn East parcel, and Parcel E would be combined under the Ground Lease and developed as family housing and related amenities. The Woodlawn East/Berman Tract is approximately 53.5 acres and situated on North Post adjacent to the existing Woodlawn Village neighborhood. After development, the Woodlawn East/Berman Tract is projected to accommodate approximately 102 housing units – including handicap accessible units, recreation areas, and related facilities. As part of this Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA), the Proposed Action was compared against the No Action Alternative.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

Due to existing budgetary constraints, the Army has determined it is unable, on its own, to meet the critical housing needs of America's soldiers and their families. The purpose of the RCI is to address the Army's family housing problems by supplying safe, attractive, and modern places for soldiers and their families to live. Under the RCI, installations can leverage scarce public funds by partnering with private firms who raise capital and provide development, construction, and management services. The RCI program is currently comprised of 44 installations and includes over 86,000 units (DA, No Date).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to allow the RCI project to enhance and sustain the portfolio of family housing units at Fort Belvoir by improving the quality and availability of housing, including handicapped accessible housing. Additional developable land is required for the project to improve the quality of life for service members and their families and to sustain neighborhoods as envisioned in the original 2003 EA for the RCI project at Fort Belvoir.

The need for changes to the Proposed Action is to address unforeseen constraints due to insufficient developable land in the Ground Lease to support the long-term sustainment and improvement of Fort Belvoir's portfolio of housing units. The selection of the Woodlawn

East/Berman Tract parcel for the proposed development was coordinated with the installation to best meet the long-term vision and needs of Fort Belvoir.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Woodlawn East/Berman Tract is currently undeveloped, relatively flat land that was previously disturbed through historical Army training activities. It is surrounded by residential development to the east, west, and south and the Jackson Miles Abbot Wetland Refuge (JAWR) to the north. The SEA identifies and evaluates potential impacts of the Proposed Action to:

- Land Use;
- Aesthetics and Visual Resources;
- Noise;
- Geology and Soils;
- Water Quality;
- Biological Resources;
- Cultural Resources;
- Socioeconomic Resources;
- Environmental Justice and Protection of Children;
- Transportation; and
- Hazardous and Toxic Substances.

Adding the Berman Tract to the Ground Lease and developing the Woodlawn East/Berman Tract area for use as residential communities involves changes to the resources listed above. The project will not increase the population at Fort Belvoir, but will alter the location of approximately 102 housing units at Fort Belvoir.

The site is accessed from Pole Road to the south. Under the Proposed Action, land use will change from undeveloped to residential. The visual quality of the area would be altered through the removal of mature trees and vegetation, along with the construction of new homes. Construction noise would be created during development. The potential for erosion and soil loss from land clearing and alterations to the natural landscape would be created during construction until the site is permanently stabilized. Stormwater generation and flow would be altered during construction and post-development activities through the removal of vegetation, soil disturbance, and increase in impervious surfaces. No streams are present at the project site and of the approximately 7 acres of wetlands located on the Woodlawn East/Berman Tract, an estimated 0.5 acres or less of wetlands would be impacted depending on final design. Groundwater recharge would decrease through the increase in impervious surfaces. Vegetation would be removed where roads and buildings will be constructed, but remain in areas such as wetlands and vegetative buffers between neighboring residential areas. Wildlife and threatened and

endangered species may be affected through the potential loss of habitat. No cultural resources are located on the site. Potential exists for the site to contain hazardous substances and materials utilized as part of the historical training operations. No minority populations would be impacted by the project and construction is anticipated to generate a number of local construction jobs.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

In the short-term, the Proposed Action would have temporary adverse, construction related impacts on land-use, aesthetics and visual resources, noise, geology and soils, water quality, wildlife, and hazardous and toxic substances. Based on their temporary nature and limited impact from the project, these short-term, primarily construction-related impacts would vary from negligible to minor and would not be significant. Erosion and sediment control measures, best-management practices, the observation of normal construction hours would be used to ensure that short-term adverse impacts are minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

In the long-term, the Proposed Action would have negligible to minor adverse impacts on land use, visual aesthetics, groundwater, wildlife and sensitive species, protection of children, traffic, and hazardous substances. A long-term beneficial impact to soil would occur through site grading. The project would have no adverse impacts on cultural resources or environmental justice concerns. If not properly mitigated, the Proposed Action would have a significant impact to vegetation due to permanent removal of an estimated 31 acres of wooded land. Impacts to wetlands estimated to be 0.5 acres or less would occur depending on final project design. Through the required mitigation measures listed below, impacts to these resources would be minimized.

MITIGATION

The following mitigation measures are selected to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels.

Resource	Mitigation	Reference Section
Wetlands – An estimated 0.44 acres of wetland will be impacted by this project – 0.40 acres of palustrine forested wetland and 0.04 acres of palustrine emergent wetland.	Mitigation for wetland impacts will be as required by the Clean Water Act Section 404 and VWP permits to be obtained by the project.	4.5.1

Resource	Mitigation	Reference Section
Vegetation - An estimated 31 acres of wooded land would be cleared for the proposed development. A site-specific tree estimate would be conducted after the final limits of clearing and grading have been established. This survey would determine the final number of trees that would be removed by the project.	An approximately 100-foot-wide vegetation buffer between the new housing and existing off-installation housing to the East would be maintained to the extent practicable. Trees and vegetation within the buffer area would be trimmed or removed to the extent required for safety reasons and good landscaping practices. Replacement of removed trees on a ratio of 2:1 would be provided for trees greater than four inches in diameter at breast height that are removed as determined by the tree survey. Both on-site and out-of-kind mitigation for tree removal may be considered and implemented by the project.	4.6.1
Protected Species – A breeding bird survey conducted in 2014 identified one species of concern, the Eastern Wood-Pewee (<i>Contopus virens</i>). However, the canopy and understory may be suitable for other migratory bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.	Project construction activities would implement time-of-year restrictions for migratory birds by avoiding cutting and removal of vegetation from April 1 to July 31. If vegetation cutting and removal occurs in this time frame, a survey for protected birds and active nests would be performed before vegetation removal is performed.	4.6.1
Protected Species – Habitat for the listed northern long-eared bat (<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>) is present on the site.	Requirements as determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation would be implemented.	4.6.1

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

The supplemental environmental assessment (SEA) was made available to public agencies and organization for a review period of 30 days beginning on (INSERT DATE). Printed copies of the SEA were made available at the Lorton, Kingstowne, and Sherwood Regional branches of the Fairfax County Public Library. An electronic copy of the SEA was made available on the

Fort Belvoir website at <https://www.belvoir.army.mil/envirodocs.asp>). A Notice of Availability for the SEA was published in (INSERT PUBLICATIONS) on (INSERT DATES).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the SEA conducted in accordance with NEPA, the Council of Environmental Quality regulations, Army implementing regulations as set forth in 32 CFR 651, and after a review of comments submitted during the public comment period, I have determined that the proposed action is not a major federal action, either individually or cumulatively, and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not necessary.

Michelle D. Mitchell
Colonel, US Army
Garrison Commander

Date of Decision