

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BRAC PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OFFICE NORTHEAST**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT: DISPOSAL AND REUSE OF TOPSHAM ANNEX, NAVAL AIR
STATION BRUNSWICK, BRUNSWICK, MAINE (DECEMBER 2010)**

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500 - 1508) implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Department of the Navy gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been issued for the disposal of Topsham Annex, (NAS) Brunswick, and its reuse.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide for the disposal of Topsham Annex by the Navy in accordance with Public Law 101-510, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as amended in 2005 (BRAC Closure Law), and reuse in a manner consistent with the *Topsham Annex Master Reuse Plan*. Reuse of the Topsham Annex property would provide the local community the opportunity for economic development and job creation.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is the disposal and reuse of Topsham Annex, NAS Brunswick in accordance with BRAC Closure Law. In August 2005, the BRAC Commission voted to close NAS Brunswick along with Topsham Annex.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Topsham Annex has functioned as a general support facility for NAS Brunswick; it includes 177 housing units in a 60-acre residential area and a commissary, a training facility, office space, and a fire station in a 14-acre area called the Military Triangle. The housing units are managed by a public-private venture (PPV) partner, formerly the Northeast Housing LLC, through a 50-year lease with the Navy. Of the original 177 housing units constructed, 129 units are functional and 48 units have been demolished or identified for demolition. Of the 129 functional units, 72 are occupiable, one is vacant, and 56 are "off-line" - unoccupied and fenced off from the rest of the property. While the Navy has the ability to dispose of the land on which the housing is located under BRAC Closure Law

procedures, improvements on that land are currently not under the control of the Navy.

No facilities or parcels were identified for transfer to other federal agencies upon closure of the Annex, so the entire 74-acre Annex property is considered "surplus" property. The reuse of surplus property was determined by a local redevelopment authority.

ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The U.S. Navy considered two disposal and reuse alternatives for Topsham Annex plus a third alternative, the No Action Alternative.

- **Alternative 1 - Mixed Use Scenario.** Alternative 1, the preferred alternative, is the disposal of Topsham Annex and its reuse in a manner consistent with the *Topsham Annex Master Reuse Plan*. The *Reuse Master Plan* calls for development of approximately 60 acres (81%) of the total Annex property into a mixture of medium and high density residential and business and community land uses. Approximately 14 acres (19%) of the Annex would be dedicated to a variety of active and passive recreational uses that would complement adjacent athletic facilities owned by the local school district. Full build-out would be implemented over a 20-year period. The development is designed to be compatible with adjacent land uses while utilizing existing facilities and infrastructure.
- **Alternative 2 - Business Park Scenario.** Under Alternative 2, approximately 30 acres of the Topsham Annex property, including parts of the residential area and the Military Triangle, would be redeveloped as a business park with 660,000 square feet of floor space and 594,000 square feet of parking space. Alternative 2 excludes residential land uses and assumes that the entity chosen to develop Topsham Annex would have obtained the necessary development rights and permits for the PPV housing area. The remaining area on the Annex property would be developed with roads and infrastructure corridors or would be left as, or restored to, open space.
- **No Action Alternative.** Under the No Action Alternative, the property would be retained by the U.S. government and placed in caretaker status. Existing structures and land would not be reused or developed and the existing PPV residential housing is

expected to continue to be occupied, per lease agreement.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The EA addressed the potential environmental consequences of the disposal and reuse of Topsham Annex, including the reuse of existing facilities or demolition of existing facilities and construction of new facilities, in relation to the resource issues listed below. The proposed action would have no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on the resources examined.

Land use

Implementation of Alternative 1 would incorporate the guiding principles and goals noted in the *Reuse Master Plan*: community development; consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan* and other development plans; realism; compatibility with existing neighborhoods; and environmental quality. The proposed redevelopment would have beneficial impacts on land use at the Annex property by promoting economic development via commercial uses that generate tax revenues and jobs, support local businesses, and provide market rate and workforce housing.

Coastal zone

In a 25 June 2009 letter from the Maine State Planning Office, it stated it does not have an enforceable policy that applies to the proposed closure of the Annex and its disposal through transfer to another entity. Accordingly, further federal consistency review of this action is not required.

Socioeconomics

Implementation of either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 would have no disproportionate or adverse human health and safety impacts or environmental impacts on low income, minority, or aged 17 or younger populations.

Closure of Topsham Annex will result in short-term socioeconomic impacts, including an initial population loss and the loss of less than 100 permanent jobs. However, redevelopment of the Annex property under either Alternative 1 or 2 is likely to result in local construction expenditures, new jobs, and an increased tax base. Increases in local population and housing demand under either alternative are expected to be minor.

Redevelopment of Military Triangle for business and community uses under either of the action alternatives could generate permanent jobs. Likewise, the valuation of the redeveloped property would increase the town's tax base.

Community services

Because of the 20 year build-out period and subsequent gradual population growth, neither alternative would significantly affect the capacities of local police and emergency services, medical services, or parks and recreation services. The closure would result in a minor impact to local public schools by a loss of annual federal impact aid (0.1% of the school district's total budget).

Transportation and traffic

Implementation of either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 would increase traffic in the vicinity of the Annex property. Upon full-build out, surrounding intersections would operate at a level of service 'D' or better, except for the unsignalized intersection of Eagles Way at Route 201, where traffic would be delayed.

Environmental management

Demolition of any facilities may require additional clean-up of any petroleum recontamination remaining under buildings and/or removal of abandoned underground storage tanks (USTs) and aboveground storage tanks (ASTs). Planned demolition of housing would address asbestos containing material (ACM) and lead based paint (LBP). Land use controls may be required. Future property owners will be notified regarding the environmental condition of the property and structures. Before transfer or lease of BRAC property, the Navy will prepare a Finding of Suitability to Transfer/Lease (FOST/FOSL) summarizing how the applicable requirements and notifications for hazardous substances, petroleum products, and other regulated materials have been satisfied and whether the property is environmentally suitable for transfer or lease. The document will also contain information on any long-term remedies and responsibilities for maintenance and reporting.

Air quality

Potential impacts from demolition, construction, and renovation projects under either alternative would be minor. Under either alternative, there would be a temporary increase in construction-related air emissions for all

criteria pollutants; however, the increases would be below the de minimis threshold of 100 tons per year for each criteria pollutant.

Infrastructure

Water consumption and wastewater generation at the Annex property would increase by 90% over existing conditions under Alternative 1 or 35% over existing conditions under Alternative 2; the increase in demand for water supply and wastewater treatment services under either alternative would not exceed the capacity of the town's existing infrastructure. A preliminary assessment of the water and wastewater collection system was conducted as part of the *Reuse Master Plan* planning process. The residential area was identified as likely requiring improvements to the existing gravity-collection system or replacement of the system to meet local standards. In addition, the utility infrastructure on the Military Triangle may need upgrading. With the age of the existing infrastructure, some improvements are likely.

Cultural resources

Under a Programmatic Agreement (PA) between the United States Navy and the Maine State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) signed on September 27, 2010, a preservation covenant was placed on Building 333: Flag Headquarters/Army Reserve Office, which is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The covenant requires all successors to the property to consult with the Maine SHPO before taking any action that could impact Building 333.

Geology, topography, and soils

Impacts to topography would be minor under Alternative 1 and moderate under Alternative 2 because some grading would be required in areas with steeper slopes. Construction activities under either alternative could impact up to 24 acres of hydric soils, up to 4 acres of prime farmland, and up to 22 acres of farmland of statewide importance.

Water resources

Surface water, groundwater, and wetlands would not be directly affected. New storm water infrastructure may be necessary to offset increased surface runoff from new impervious surfaces. Storm water runoff from the Annex property under either alternative could potentially affect water quality in Atlantic salmon habitat in the Cathance

River. With proper implementation of an erosion and sediment control plan and use of appropriate best management practices during construction activities, impacts on surface water quality due to erosion and off-site sedimentation would be minor.

Vegetation and wildlife

Wildlife and migratory birds on and in the vicinity of the Annex property would be temporarily displaced during construction activities but are expected to continue to use the Annex property following construction.

Threatened and endangered species

Topsham Annex is within the Cathance River watershed. Storm water runoff from the Annex property could potentially affect water quality in Atlantic salmon habitat in Merrymeeting Bay, part of the Cathance River watershed. Redevelopment activities on the Annex property that would disturb more than 1 acre of land would be required to adhere to the standards set forth in Maine's storm water management law. This includes submitting an erosion and sedimentation control plan to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). With proper implementation of a plan and use of appropriate best management practices during construction activities, impacts on surface water quality due to erosion and off-site sedimentation would be minor. Therefore, the Navy has determined that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the Atlantic salmon.

No reuse or redevelopment of the Annex property would occur under the No Action Alternative; however, the existing housing would continue to be occupied, per lease agreement. Under this alternative, there would be no impact on taxes and revenues in the short term due to continued federal ownership. However, there would be a potential loss of long-term (20 years) productivity of the property had redevelopment occurred.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

After review of the EA prepared in accordance with the requirements of NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500 - 1508), as well as U.S. Navy procedures for implementing NEPA (32 CFR 775), no significant impacts on the resource areas examined were identified. The U.S. Navy finds that

implementing the proposed action would not significantly impact human health or the physical environment. In addition, cumulative impacts of the proposed action in combination with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions would not be significant.

Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This decision has been made after taking into account all submitted requirements and is within the legal authority of the U.S. Navy.

The EA, including this FONSI, may be obtained from:
Director, BRAC Program Management Office NE, 4911 Broad St,
Building 679, Philadelphia PA 19112.


Name _____


Date _____