

**Written Statement of Supervisor Dana Kauffman  
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
House Committee on Government Reform Hearing  
August 31, 2006**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today on behalf of the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia. I would like to thank Chairman Davis for holding this field hearing to discuss the potential impacts of last year's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decision to bring an additional 22,000 employees to Fort Belvoir by 2011.

We in Fairfax County view this decision as a tremendous vote of confidence by the Department of Defense in our community, and the essential role we play in our nation's military operations. Fairfax County welcomes the opportunity to work with the Army on its BRAC plans, while considering the impacts of this opportunity on the area's transportation network. We had high hopes that, if combined with appropriate transportation funding, this would be an opportunity for economic revitalization in southern Fairfax County.

However, when the Army announced last month that its plans for Fort Belvoir include locating the Army museum and most of the new personnel, approximately 18,000, at the Engineer Proving Ground (EPG) site in Springfield without a significant financial commitment to provide the necessary infrastructure improvements, red flags were raised at both the state and local levels about the gridlock that will surely follow. In a nutshell, without major transportation improvements, the thousands of relocated BRAC workers, as well as other regional commuters will face hours of delay on gridlocked roads, unable to get to their jobs to accomplish their missions.

This issue deserves far more detailed consideration than it has received to date, since transportation is critical to the Army's mission as well as to the County and the region. Without major transportation improvements, the increased traffic loads will slow the delivery of goods and services to Fort Belvoir and EPG, as well as to the surrounding area, to a crawl over long portions of the day. The quality of life at Fort Belvoir, the EPG site, and southeastern Fairfax County will be adversely affected.

While the impact on our region's transportation infrastructure is the single most important concern we have about the BRAC decision for Fort Belvoir, there are three distinct issues at play here. The first has to do with the Army's decision not to disburse a greater portion of the incoming personnel and facilities, the second is the lack of tangible progress over the last year since the BRAC decision was made to complete the Fairfax County Parkway segment through EPG, and the third, and most critical to the region's transportation network, is the lack of federal funding to accompany a doubling of the population of Fort Belvoir.

First, I have long been a proponent of bringing the Army museum to this area, and the Fairfax County Board has shown its support with a substantial cash contribution for the museum's completion. However, our support of the museum was with the understanding that the facility would be located off of Richmond Highway so that it could be paired with Mount Vernon Plantation, Washington's Grist Mill, Woodlawn Plantation, and George Mason's Gunston Hall Plantation as an attraction for tourists. We ask that the proposed site of the Army museum be once again designated on the previously selected Route 1 location, which had the support of the community and the County, or another site in close proximity to Route 1 to provide this synergy with the other tourist destinations and historic sites.

Additionally, the Army has rejected outright proposals to include vacant GSA warehouses comprising 70 acres of federal land, located adjacent to a regional transportation center, as part of their plans. Absorbing 22,000 new employees would be a challenge under any circumstances, but the Army's plan will certainly exacerbate the difficulties.

Second, immediate priority attention must be given to ensuring the completion of the missing piece of the Fairfax County Parkway, a "must have" for the successful relocation of the bulk of the BRAC facilities to the EPG site. The Fairfax County Parkway has been on hold for approximately 4 years pending completion of the environmental clean up by the Army on EPG. Over a year ago, the project was actually advertised for design-build proposals but had to be withdrawn from bid advertisement when it became clear that the cleanup would not be completed on schedule. We are concerned to hear that recently the environmental cleanup contractor has been demobilized from the site due to insufficient funding for completion of the work.

There is a critical need for the Army, or the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on behalf of the Army, to commit to build the EPG segment of the Parkway. VDOT has offered to turn over funds remaining for the project's construction to the Army or the Army's agent and to operate and maintain the facility when it is complete. Without a near-term decision concerning who will complete design changes now necessitated by the BRAC relocations and a commitment by the Army to complete the construction, the road cannot be opened in sufficient time for BRAC in 2011.

Third, the federal government simply must commit to fund vital up-front capital infrastructure improvements and on-going operating costs for public transportation services required to safety, quickly, and efficiently deliver BRAC employees to and from their offices, and this commitment must be made as soon as possible. As you know, transportation projects require a great deal of time to plan and complete, and the clock is ticking.

The Army has identified a number of on-post and “off-post” transportation improvements associated with BRAC. The three “off-post” improvements identified by the Army and already planned and funded (in whole or in part) for construction were the missing Fairfax County Parkway segment through the EPG, discussed above, which has been funded for many years with state bond funds allocated to Fairfax County; the fourth lane on I-95, which is a fully funded VDOT project; and the Connector Road from Route 1 at Old Mill Road to Telegraph Road which will replace commuter connections between Route 1 and Telegraph Road that were lost when Woodlawn Road and Beulah Street were closed to public access after September 11, 2001. This replacement connector road has been only partially funded to date from federal appropriations. While the “off-post” improvements are not physically located totally on Army land, they are all required to ensure that BRAC employees can get to their jobs on-post and to mitigate the impacts that BRAC will have on the surrounding transportation infrastructure.

In addition, Fairfax County, VDOT, and the Army’s traffic consultant have identified other road and transit improvements that are necessary to prevent gridlock with the BRAC initiative. The Army must immediately develop an implementation plan for these additional “off-post” transportation improvements. This includes working with Fairfax County and VDOT on refining the list and developing federal funding sources and a project execution schedule. It is not enough to identify necessary off-post projects as “to be built by others”. BRAC cannot accomplish its mission if its workers are tied up in congested roads and unable to access the site by transit. In addition, the Army has a responsibility to be a good neighbor in carrying out the BRAC plan.

The projects identified to date are summarized below:

Roadway Improvements: Fairfax County Parkway

As discussed above, the top priority for BRAC installations that are to be relocated to EPG is completion of the missing 2-mile segment of the Fairfax County Parkway through the EPG. The 18,000 new employees designated to work at the EPG site in 2011 will generate as many as 5,600 new vehicle trips in the morning peak hour, most of which will need to use access points off the Fairfax County Parkway. This does not include the traffic that would be generated in the vicinity of EPG if the Army Museum were also to be located there. Without this Parkway segment in place, the EPG site simply cannot function with the projected level of BRAC traffic to the site.

Construction of the Fairfax County Parkway remains on hold pending completion of the Army’s environmental clean up. Because the project has been on hold for so many years, cost estimates have continued to escalate. This escalation does not include the cost of modifications needed to support the influx of new employees to EPG. The revisions

needed to the current design plans include building the Fairfax County Parkway initially as 6 lanes rather than the currently proposed 4 lanes on right-of-way for 6 lanes and modifying interchange configurations and ramps to handle the increased intensity of development due to BRAC.

As indicated above, VDOT has offered to turn over funds remaining for the project's construction to the Army, or the Army's agent, and to operate and maintain the facility when it is complete. In light of state law prohibiting VDOT from accepting property that has not been cleaned of environmental contaminants and the lengthy history of non-attainment of environmental cleanup of the site, VDOT is unwilling to re-initiate construction on the project. The Army must develop a plan to clean the right-of-way and redesign, construct, and fully fund this project.

Once the design plans are modified, it is anticipated that a minimum of 4 to 4½ years will be needed to complete the business relocations required as part of the federal land acquisition process and to construct the roadway. With BRAC relocations scheduled for completion in September 2011, that leaves less than a year to complete design modifications and initiate pre-construction activities (such as land acquisition, utility relocation, and bid advertisement). The bottom line is, time is running out for completion of the EPG segment of the Fairfax County Parkway by 2011. This situation needs urgent attention by the Army as well as VDOT.

#### Other Roadway Improvement Needs

To serve the EPG site, additional access points will be needed from the Fairfax County Parkway, Backlick Road, and the Franconia-Springfield Parkway. Capacity improvements need to be provided at each of these access locations to handle anticipated site traffic. For example, a grade-separated interchange must be constructed at the intersection of the Franconia-Springfield Parkway with Neuman Street should any access to EPG be considered by the Army via an extension of Neuman Street. Upgrades, including turn lanes at the existing Barta Road access into/out of the EPG site, will be needed on Backlick Road. A concept plan should be developed that shows how the EPG access including security checkpoints will operate and how Department of Defense (DOD) and Non-DOD traffic will be handled, so that backups do not occur on the Fairfax County Parkway, I-95, Franconia-Springfield Parkway, and Backlick Road. The adequacy of capacity at security check points and on internal spine roads is critical to ensure that traffic from the BRAC properties do not backup onto the surrounding roadway network.

For both the BRAC relocations to the EPG site and to Fort Belvoir, access to and from I-95 must also be addressed, including high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) and potentially high-occupancy toll (HOT) lane access.

To support the increases in traffic resulting from BRAC relocations to Fort Belvoir, Route 1 needs to be widened from Old Mill Road to Telegraph Road (four to six lanes), including a grade-separated interchange to access Pence Gate. At Route 1 at Belvoir Road, a flyover and turn lanes are needed to provide an additional grade-separated connection from North to South Post. Telegraph Road needs to be widened from two to four lanes from Beulah Street to Hayfield Road and from Hayfield Road to South Kings Highway. Various spot improvements will also be needed at intersections where new BRAC traffic to Belvoir will be accessing the Fort. As previously mentioned the Connector Road Project (Route 1 to Telegraph Road) is not fully funded. This project must be fully funded for the 4 lanes and constructed in sufficient time for BRAC.

### Transit

An on-going, fully funded commitment must be made to a robust public transit service to and from EPG and Fort Belvoir as well as for on-base shuttles both initially and into the future for the long-term success of the BRAC proposals. Without continuous provision of these services, travel by personal vehicle to the installations will only continue to increase, thereby creating additional gridlock on the already overburdened highway network. These measures will help carry out federal air quality mandates for the region, which is a non-attainment area.

A new Virginia Railway Express (VRE) station is needed on the Fredericksburg VRE line north of the Lorton Station and south of the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail/VRE Station for pick up and drop off of passengers at the EPG site. A flyover of I-95 from this proposed station to the EPG site is critically needed to accommodate shuttle buses. Depending on the location and design, this flyover could potentially provide a connection to the Franconia-Springfield Transportation Center (which currently provides service to Metrorail, VRE, Metrobus, Fairfax Connector, TAGS, Prince William County, Greyhound, and other private commuter bus services).

Other transit improvements that must be provided and continuously funded include establishing on-base shuttle bus service as well as bus service to/from the Franconia-Springfield and Huntington Metrorail stations via the Fairfax County Parkway, Franconia-Springfield Parkway, and Route 1 to EPG and Fort Belvoir. Shuttle bus service should also be considered to the EPG site from the Backlick VRE station, where trains serving communities to the west and north on the Manassas VRE line stop, as well as from the Lorton VRE station, on the Fredericksburg VRE line, to transport workers from the south to Fort Belvoir. Also, a bus transit/transfer center should be provided at the Army Museum with parking regardless of where the museum is located.

### Park-and-Ride Facilities

A park-and-ride/transit-transfer center is needed on or adjacent to Fort Belvoir for access to the Richmond Highway Public Transit Initiative (including the REX Metrobus service). Also, a park-and-ride lot adjacent to the Parkway at the EPG should be built as planned with the interchange. Funding is already available in part for both of these facilities.

### Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

On-going, continuous funding must be provided for a robust, centrally-administered TDM program on Fort Belvoir and EPG for all agencies to use. Permanent TDM coordinator positions should be established for the installations to facilitate carpools, vanpools, and other TDM programs (such as bike to work, pedestrian access, and ride share programs). It is critical that this program not only be established but that it be funded on an on-going basis to ensure that the share of non-automobile travel to the facilities does not fall in the future, worsening traffic congestion on the highway system.

### Traffic Signals and ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems)

Traffic signals need to be re-optimized along Route 1, Fairfax County Parkway, John J. Kingman, and Telegraph Road. Also, ITS initiatives are needed, such as adding highway advisory radios, cameras, and permanent variable message signs (VMS) signs along Route 1 (Fort Belvoir area) and the Fairfax County Parkway (around EPG) at strategic areas. This would provide public notification on changes to Fort Belvoir gate closures, force protection changes, and other significant events, and would assist in rerouting traffic in and around Fort Belvoir.

Obviously, funding for the improvements necessary to the area's already overloaded transportation system is of utmost concern. Doubling the workforce at Fort Belvoir, already the largest employer within Fairfax County, will have a significant impact on a host of services provided to the base by the County or the state. Unless funding for major transportation improvements is part and parcel of BRAC's implementation plan, the quality of life at Fort Belvoir, the EPG site, and southeastern Fairfax County will be debilitated.

Even without the planned BRAC relocations, state funding for transportation is in a dire state of under-funding with the state providing little more than maintenance funds and the required match for federal construction dollars. As an example, the VDOT Secondary Program for Fairfax County, included a total 6-year program allocation of only \$78.3 million for FY 2007-2012, compared to \$210.5 million for FY 2002-2007. As a result, planned improvements to Telegraph Road in the vicinity of Fort Belvoir had to be dropped from the Program.

Fairfax County is already funding a substantial portion of public transportation services and highway improvements to make up for these state shortfalls. The County spends over \$65 million per year on public transportation and has put more than \$740 million in County general obligation bonds into transportation capital projects. In view of the grim picture at the state level and the existing resulting burden on Fairfax County government, other funding streams will need to be identified to support BRAC-related traffic, including federal funding to support this federal project.

Fairfax County is not asking you to delay or cancel BRAC's recommendations to relocate, consolidate, and realign facilities or to fix all the transportation woes of the region; rather, we are asking that those initiatives be accomplished responsibly by redirecting a portion of the considerable anticipated savings to the transportation infrastructure that will be needed to deliver employees to their new work sites. Any other developer in the County or the state would be expected to provide infrastructure so as not to further degrade the surrounding transportation network and to safely and efficiently move employees onto and off of the job site.

Fairfax County is depending on our Congressional delegation to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the federal government lives up to its responsibilities resulting from the BRAC decisions. We will do our part to ensure a smooth transition for all involved, but this will require a close partnership between the federal government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and Fairfax County. We still have many months and years of work ahead of us, and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors looks forward to working with you to mitigate the traffic impacts of the opportunity before us.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to discuss the BRAC project and for considering potential solutions to alleviate traffic congestion in and around Fort Belvoir and EPG.