

Virginia Delegate Vivian E. Watts - 39th District
Statement submitted to
Government Reform Committee Oversight Field Hearing:
"...A Review of BRAC's Impact on Traffic Congestion and Quality of Life in our Region"
August 31, 2006

Although I was not designated to make a full statement, on behalf of my constituents, the immediate neighbors of the Engineer Proving Grounds (EPG), I request that the record include the following:

I am confident that the scheduled panelists reflect my consternation about the regional transportation impact of imposing a Pentagon-size workplace – housing twice the number of employees as the largest employer in Fairfax – in a location where the transportation network is already overloaded. However, the panel testimony may not reflect the following issues that specifically impact the residents of my legislative district, in which the entire EPG is located:

(1) Access from the North via I-395 or Metro

All employees using I-395 or those being shuttled from Metro if Metro is not extended will have to use the Franconia Springfield Parkway (Rt 7900) between I-95 and EPG. This travel pattern was not addressed at all in the Siting Analysis of road capacity. It constitutes upwards of 10,000 commuters who do not currently use this stretch of road and who were never anticipated in its projected capacity use. Two construction projects are imperative: First, a grade-separated intersection must be built for the only at-grade intersection in this section of the Parkway at Spring Village Dr/Bonniemill Ln, which is not addressed at all in the Siting Analysis and will cost \$35 million. This intersection serves many residents, including over 2,000 residents of Greenspring Village a major continuing care retirement community. Second, improved ramps to and from EPG from I-95 (#3 on Off-Post Transportation Improvements) must be completed before employees are re-located to EPG.

(2) Access from the North via Backlick Rd or Rolling Rd

This travel pattern was not addressed at all in the Siting Analysis. The Analysis' geographic division separating employees commuting from the North and those from the West obfuscates this commuting impact. The North grouping includes Annandale (22003), North Springfield (22151), Springfield 22153, Barcroft (22044) and Lincolnia (22312). These employees will use Backlick Rd. In the West grouping, employees from Kings Park (22151), West Springfield (22152), a good portion of Burke (22015) and some of Fairfax (22032) will use Rolling Road. Sizable portions of Backlick and Rolling are two-lane and/or were built as subdivision streets with homes on 1/2 acre lots with front yards and driveways on both sides directly facing the street. At least, Route 1 was built and developed as a commercial highway. Addressing safety issues on Backlick and Rolling roads will be costly to the state and forever change these neighborhoods.

(3) Access from the West via the Fairfax County Parkway (Rt 7100)

Because it is so central, I am confident that designated panelists have addressed construction of the Parkway across EPG; however, I want to underscore the criticality of significantly expanding its capacity. The Siting Analysis severely under-estimates the growth in commuting from the West by focusing on currently employee's place of residence instead of making a 20-year projection of travel patterns, which is the standard for road improvements. Because of the cost of housing, EPG employees will increasingly come from Centreville, Chantilly and Herndon to the West. In addition, the travel pattern was not addressed at all of the projected one million visitors to the Army Museum, many of whom will also be drawn to the Air and Space Museum at Dulles, impacting the Fairfax County Parkway to the west.

Mr. Assistant Secretary, I implore you to include funding in the Army's congressional budget request for these specific off-base transportation improvements and for the other critical projects in the Siting Analysis. I know Congressman Davis and Congressman Moran agree that our constituents deserve no less than a full and honest costing of BRAC's impact so that he is in the strongest position to assure Congress delivers. Finally, given the tight time frame imposed for completion of this re-alignment, adequate analysis and review will be challenging. As someone who has driven the roads on the EPG side of I-95 for 40 years and a former Virginia Secretary of Transportation, I stand ready to help.

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