

Request for Early Input

Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Construction and Operation of the Fort Meade Barracks Project Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

All Interested Parties: The U.S. Army Garrison, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland (FMMD) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 United States Code Section 4321 *et seq.*), herein known as NEPA. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is responsible for issuing regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508) and implementing the provisions of NEPA. CEQ regulations, in turn, are supplemented by procedures adopted on an agency-specific basis. For the Department of the Army (DA), the pertinent regulations are contained in 32 CFR Part 651, Environmental Analysis of Army Actions, which specifically includes in its list of Army actions that normally require an EA [32 CFR 651.33 (c)] changes to established installation land use that generate impacts on the environment. An EA is intended to assist agency planning and decision-making. While required to assess environmental impacts and evaluate their significance, an EA is routinely used as a planning document to evaluate environmental impacts, develop alternatives and mitigation measures, and allow for agency and public participation (32 CFR 651.20). This EA will be developed pursuant to these laws and regulations. NEPA requires all Federal agencies to give appropriate consideration to potential environmental effects of proposed and alternative major actions in the planning and decision-making processes.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide adequate, safe and modern housing on FMMD, that will be designed to meet Army Unaccompanied Enlisted Personnel Housing (UEPH) standards for approximately 1,600-1,800 active duty enlisted personnel (ranks E1-E6) assigned to units at FMMD and the National Security Agency (NSA) at FMMD.

The need for the Proposed Action is to improve cohesiveness for the E1-E6 ranks through modern, co-located housing that is also cost effective in the long term for FMMD. These Service members are required by regulation to live on-post to promote improved morale and increase human health and safety. Currently, personnel are living off-post or in sub-standard, antiquated barracks where the following conditions exist:

- The current Korean War-era on-post barracks constructed in 1954 are dilapidated and unhealthy. Mold and mildew from failing air conditioning systems and leaking roofs has caused these structures to be unsafe. Also, these barracks are located within the East Campus Integration Program (ECIP) project area of NSA and needed for future mission operations (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Actions involving these barracks have been previously analyzed as part of the March 2017 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the ECIP.

- The shortage of adequate on-post housing for Service members requires them to find housing off-post. This is more costly than on-post housing and does not foster unit cohesion.
- The newer Freedom Center Barracks Complex, constructed in 2001, can only accommodate one-third of the necessary housing requirement for NSA and FMMD (the deficit is 1,600-1,800 personnel).

The Proposed Action includes design and construction of a total of up to nine (9) new barracks buildings to house a total of 1,600-1,800 unaccompanied enlisted personnel (E1-E6). The barracks would be constructed in three phases. Each phase would construct up to three barracks. All of the barracks in all phases would be constructed in close proximity to one another within the existing property boundary of FMMD (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Phase I would be funded by the Army and the NSA.

The No Action Alternative is to continue housing Service members in antiquated barracks that do not meet current Army standards for unaccompanied enlisted personnel and to continue use of Certificates of Non-Availability (CNAs) to house Service members off-post. Funds will continue to be spent on maintenance and repairs of antiquated barracks that have long surpassed their usable life. The cost of funding CNAs will further increase after NSA assumes the land where barracks currently are located to meet their mission requirements. This alternative continues the current noncompliance with Army policy of housing lower enlisted ranks on post where command presence can ensure Soldier safety, welfare and morale for young Soldiers.

In accordance with 40 CFR 1500-1508, the Army invites you to provide early input on the Proposed Action that should be considered in our analysis of each alternative in the forthcoming EA. Due to the COVID-19 quarantine, this early agency correspondence notice is being provided via email instead of a mailed letter. This notice is also being distributed to other organizations known to have an interest in natural resource conditions at FMMD.

Additionally, once the draft EA is completed, your organization and the public will have an opportunity to review and provide comment during a 30-day review period, which will be announced in a notice published in local newspapers and on the FMMD website. All materials will be provided online on the FMMD website under Environmental Public Notices at the following link: <https://home.army.mil/meade/index.php/my-fort/all-services/environmental>. Additionally, printed copies of the draft EA will be made available at local libraries.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and request your review and written comment within 30 days of receipt of this letter. Should you require any additional information or have any questions, please contact the US Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District Project Manager, Ms. Connie Ramsey at Connie.L.Ramsey@usace.army.mil. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this unprecedented time.

Enclosure 1: Figures 1 and 2

Enclosure 2: Contact List

Enclosure 1

Figure 1 Proposed Barracks Locations on FMMD

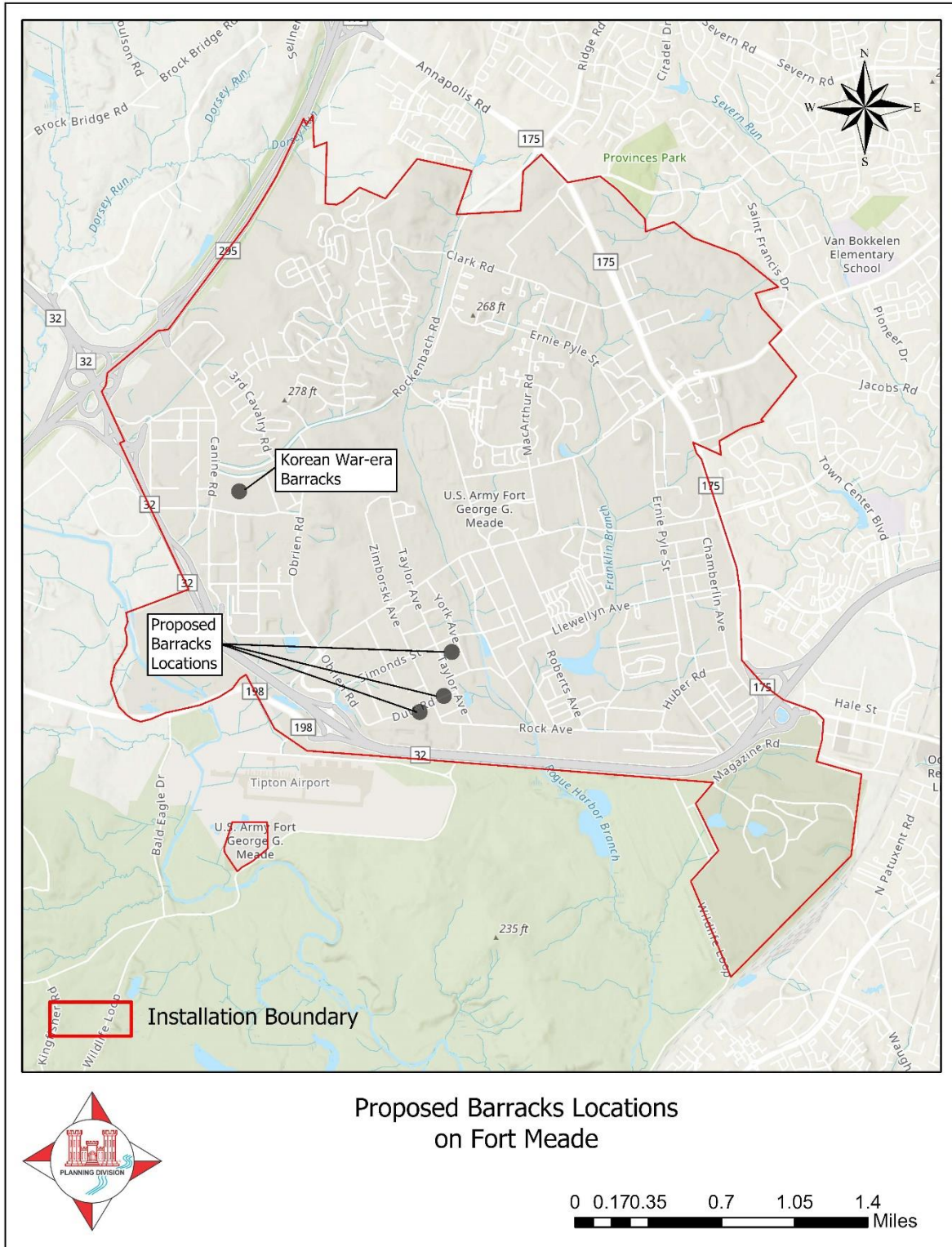


Figure 2 Proposed Barracks Locations by Phase



Enclosure 2 – Stakeholder Contact List

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