Summary of Workshop 2: Potential Development Sites

Held on Tuesday, March 23, 2010
Van Ness Elementary School Auditorium
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
and
Wednesday, March 24, 2010
Eastern Market – North Hall
8:30 AM – 10:30 AM

Bruce Jackson, Headquarters Marine Corps, welcomed and thanked participants for coming to the workshop. A brief presentation was given that provided background information about the Community Integrated Master Plan (CIMP) similar to what was covered at the beginning of Workshop 1. The study area has narrowed into an area of interest that is centered on the Marine Barracks Washington property; there are diminishing returns for the Marine Corps the further facilities are located from the hub of mission activities for Marine Barracks Washington – 8th and I proper, also referred to as the "Main Post." The vision, goals, and objectives have been refined based on input received during Workshop 1 and the revised versions are available on the project website: www.sedistrictcimp.com. Comments on these items will continue to be accepted and will be revisited later on in the planning process to make sure that they still apply to the end result of the CIMP process. Input on the list of potential community-military partnering projects continues to be solicited. Priorities have not changed based on input received since Workshop 1; however, in recent days there has been additional discussion about potential partnerships for military housing.

With regard to potential development sites, the process for identification and seeking stakeholder input on potential development sites for both the Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQ) and other facilities that could be packaged in the CIMP was discussed in line with goals for the workshop. Siting requirements and considerations were reviewed including the size requirements, security standoff distances, and functional land use relationships relative to the Marine Barracks Washington mission. An overview of the process used in the identification of the potential development sites was provided. Finally, the five candidate sites for the BEQ were identified and it was noted that the Potomac Gardens site had been eliminated at the request of the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA). The Marine Corps is looking for willing land owners in this process. DCHA representatives (Laurie Putscher at the Tuesday session, and Asmara Habte at the Wednesday session) answered follow-on questions on this topic, explaining that they have commitments to the 320 residents there, planned renovation work, and the DCHA timeline does not sync well with the Marine Corps timeline.

The workshop session consisted of the presentation of one conceptual layout for each candidate site, which was intended to provide an idea of one option for layout of a 150,000 square foot BEQ at each site. Many other options exist and additional site planning will be conducted for those sites that are carried forward into Workshop 3. Discussions of each site were as follows:

Marine Barracks Washington Annex

Pros

- It makes common sense to site the BEQ on a plot of land where other Marine Barracks Washington (MBW) BEQ facilities are located.
- There could be shared use of existing and new support facilities for Marines housed there.
- The co-location of the Marines achieves the esprit de corps morale goals of the Marine Corps.
- It minimizes the federal government footprint.
- The Annex has had a positive effect of increasing traffic to lower 8th St. south of the Southeast Freeway underpass and increased traffic would further this benefit.

Cons

- There was a fair amount of concern regarding the loss of the athletic fields if BEQ facilities were built atop them. It was noted that additional site planning options could potentially accommodate some of the BEQ requirements and not impact the soccer field.
- A related discussion point was how much the fields are currently used by the community, with some concerned that the fields were not open to the public and others asserting that they are used quite often. Field use is scheduled through the DC Parks and Recreation Department the same as any other athletic field in the city is scheduled; the difference is that the fields are not accessible for walk-up use. Marine Barracks Washington has worked with the adjacent Senior Center on an access program for them to access the fields for walking, etc.
- Disruption of K Street viewshed, although in the L'Enfant Street and Reservation Plan, should not be viewed as a showstopper. The Verizon Center was constructed over a street in the L'Enfant street plan.

Preferences

- Representatives from DC Office of Planning noted that the Annex site is in the top two options from their perspective.
- A National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) representative stated that NCPC favors reuse/better use of existing federal sites.

- It was noted that this option would be the most favored option if the fencing of the Annex was removed/fencing of the site is not expanded and access controlled by other means and if the soccer field remained.

Other

- Consider an option that extends the Annex site to the west to include the site for the planned Cappers Community Center. Replace the Annex parking garage with BEQ space and locate the planned community center at a different site. This would preserve the L'Enfant street plan corridor and meet the Marine Corps needs.
- Consider an option that creates a courtyard between the existing and a new BEQ, but retains the K St. Corridor.
- The question was raised if it is possible to increase the height of the existing Annex building to add the needed BEQ space.
- There was additional discussion regarding options that would promote accessibility, avoid 'militarizing,' apply creativity to the controlled perimeter requirements in context of the urban environment. The topography at the Annex site could be used with some creative ways to create barriers while allowing controlled access.
- Consider what kind of uses could be tucked under the playing field.
- If the ball fields are impacted, replacement fields would be needed. Could Virginia Ave. Park accommodate the fields? This sparked a discussion how plans in the area will be bringing other green space on line, with clarification added that the planned green space is not athletic fields.
- One participant (a resident) noted that he likes the iron fence and design of Annex.

Exxon Site, Virginia Ave. Park, and Adjacent Area

Pros

- Some of the affected properties are vacant and ripe for redevelopment.
- There is an opportunity to expand the site to include the area to the west and redevelop to include mixed use, family housing, etc. along with the BEQ. Historic structures could be refurbished as family housing and on the exterior of the BEQ and retail could be incorporated along M St. There was support for this being a potential option if historic resources are retained as they contribute to the historic significance of the area.

Cons

- There were a number of participants who expressed concern that this option would cause the loss of Virginia Ave. Park green space and the community needs more green space; the community gardens have a waiting list. The Marine Corps would need to mitigate for loss of community gardens and publicly accessible green space.
- Would the affected land owners be "collateral damage"?

- Concern for accessibility/fortress-like area along M St, particularly since the proposed streetcar would stop at this location.
- The northern part of the site includes the CSX tunnel – is it possible that the conceptual site layout currently depicts the northern part of the BEQ within the tunnel easement?
- Use of the site as a barracks is not consistent with the City's plan for M Street Corridor Plan for mixed use retail and commercial along north of M St from 11th St to the east.
- It was noted that 9 houses along Potomac Ave. are historic structures, but also noted that some requirements could still be met and preserve those structures.

Preferences

- Some noted their preference for this site over Square 882.

Other

- The number of impacted row houses noted on the slide (three) was questioned for accuracy, because it looks like more may be impacted.
- Disappointment was expressed that the site did not include all of Virginia Ave. Park in the land assemblage and speculation that this was to lower the "scoring" of the site based on the criteria.
- It was suggested that retail with hardening could be incorporated along M St. to provide consistency with the City's plan and also reduce standoff.

Tyler School and Adjacent Baseball Field

Pros

- None noted.

Cons

- Opposition to this site was noted by parents of students of Tyler Elementary School and neighborhood residents. One participant stated that she had the impression that data regarding school capacity and enrollment were gathered from the out-of-date DC Public Schools website, which does not accurately represent current enrollment of 315 students and enrollment projections show an anticipated increase. Other area schools are growing, have waiting lists, and would not be able to absorb displaced students. There are also special programs in place at Tyler Elementary School. Neighbors value the contribution of the school to the neighborhood and the green space provided by the baseball field. Neighbors were emphatic about their opposition to this site stating that there is slim to no chance to sway community support. Neighbors in the block bound between the "Main Post" 8th and I and Tyler Elementary School noted a particular opposition in that they would be bookended by two military installations. One participant stated that word of the Marine Corp's interest has sparked discussions of residents considering selling their property.
- The baseball field is used by the community and organized sports such as Sports on the Hill and also provides green space for the neighborhood.

Preferences

- The consensus preference was removal of this site from further consideration.

Other

- There were questions about what DC Public Schools said about this school when they were approached. DC Public Schools has stated that Tyler Elementary School is a growing school for which they have long-term plans for meeting elementary school needs in the area. DC Public Schools did not request that the site be removed from further consideration; rather, they thought it would be acceptable to present the option in this workshop and use public input to determine if the site should be carried forward for further analysis.

Square 882

Pros

- Residents noted that they welcome the opportunity to have more Marines living in the neighborhood.
- Adjacency to the existing Annex provides opportunities for synergy with the existing Annex property for more of a complex or campus type use.
- Residents noted that they favored the closure of L St. as shown in the conceptual layout plan (see additional discussion of L St. closure captured below under the subheading of "Other")
- Residents noted that there is continuity of use linking the Navy Yard with the Marine Barracks Washington Annex property and cited the historic importance of the Marines to the area.

Cons

- Several participants objected the conceptual site layout including closing L St. to traffic (see additional discussion of L St. closure captured bellow under the subheading "Other").
- Just as the Southeast Freeway is a barrier to north-south movement within the neighborhood, the Annex combined with Square 882 would become an east-west barrier.
- The "securitization" of the area would expand on that already present for the Annex, resulting in a loss of public space.
- There is a lot of investment in the planned uses for Square 882, for which the conceptual site layout does not account. Where would the displaced office space be relocated? The office space is part of the overall plan for the Cappers Carrollsburg plan in that it would provide the tax base and financing to support a more vibrant mixed-income level neighborhood. The DCHA has received stimulus funding to begin construction in support of the residential units (infrastructure), which is slated to begin in October 2010. Financing is still being worked for the office portion of the DCHA planned use for Square 882. Although the conceptual site plan included some Cappers Carrollsburg residential into the southern portion of the square, this is not consistent with DCHA's current plan for the apartments. There was some confusion/uncertainty

with regard to how ground-level retail for residential units in the southern portion of Square 882 would "play out." Ground level retail for residential units is not a part of the DCHA plan and would mean that less residential units would be constructed. Additionally, the planned office building in DCHA plans is more consistent with the City's future vision for M St.

Preferences

- The DC Office of Planning representatives stated their adamant opposition to this site, stating that they find it unacceptable and held it up as an example of how the City's 8 years of planning in the area have been ignored in CIMP process.
- Some local residents stated that this option is preferred, with one stating that even if L St. is closed off to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- Some noted that they do not like this plan because there would be a continuum of secured property that would have the same isolating/bifurcating impacts as the Southeast Freeway.
- An NCPC representative stated that this option is objectionable because the NCPC seeks to balance the impact of the fed government with the City's plan and make the federal impact as light as possible.

Other

- As the site concept layout depicted the closure of L St. to traffic, there was a fair amount of discussion on this potential element of siting a BEQ at Square 882. It was noted that it is not necessary for L St. to close in order for the site to accommodate the BEQ, but that the conceptual site layout shown incorporates the northern half of Square 882 for BEQ facilities and keeps the southern for other uses/a concept of the residential portion of the Capper-Carrollsburg plan for this square. There are certainly alternative site planning options that would not involve closure of L St. Several participants noted that L St. provides a main east-west passage and alternative to M St. and noting that there would be no vehicular east-west route between freeway and M St. if L St. closed. Other participants (L St. residents) commented that they favor L St. closure noting that currently traffic drives too fast through the area, as vehicles are taking L St. as a shortcut to M St. The option of retaining L St. as a pedestrian walkway with controlled access for residents was discussed. Some participants doubted this would ever happen and stated disfavor for placing bollards along the street noting that there are already too many bollards in the city. Some L St. residents stated that they would favor the closure of L St. even with no pedestrian access. DC Office of Planning representatives made note of the DDOT/City's process for addressing needs for traffic calming. Bruce Jackson, Headquarters Marine Corps, stated that the Marine Corps is committed to no net loss of uses already planned.
- For those workshop participants that were also Community Leadership Group (CLG) members, there was confusion as to why the conceptual site layout for this site had changed from the version presented at the CLG meeting on March 16th. That version had not included closure of L St. and had shown what could be possible with hardening of the structure to reduce standoff distance. It was explained that one of the recommendations from the CLG meeting was to depict all the conceptual site layouts

with the 82-foot standoff distance. With all the conceptual site layouts, the standoff distance could be reduced with the incorporation of hardening techniques. There are tradeoffs a hardened structure that would be included in follow-on site planning.

- Some participants stated that they would rather see the Marine Corps evaluate Square 881 west to include the site of the planned Cappers Community Center and evaluate reuse options for the square west of 882 where Van Ness Elementary School and Joy Evans Daycare is located . This would open up site planning for additional BEQ use by expansion of the existing site to the west. There would be some excellent opportunities for the Marine Corps to have a shared community center and day care facilities, assist DC Public Schools in siting a needed middle school, and removing the Annex parking garage perhaps to Building 20.

Washington Navy Yard

Pros

- This option seems logical as the Navy Yard is already secured behind "the wall" and does not increase securitized military facilities in the area.

Cons

- Displaced uses would need to be relocated, which could include a need for Navy Yard functions to be located in the community.

Preferences

- DC Office of Planning representatives stated that this is their preferred option.

Other

- Could we build on top of buildings there?
- Is it possible to protect historic structures at/near the site?

Building 20 Reuse Options

Reuse options for the existing Building 20/Building 20 site were presented and discussed.

- Clarification was sought on the security requirements for this building given its adjacency to the "Main Post" with height/visibility into 8th & I. What exactly would be the restriction on this parcel if it were privately owned? It was noted that the Marine Corps (or any Department of Defense installation) does not have requirements for security that extend to adjacent property. The Marine Corps has a Community Plans and Liaison program that addresses issues of compatible development adjacent to installations throughout the United States, but the Department of Defense cannot require adjacent land owners to comply with security standards/dictate restrictions on future uses, etc. Some participants noted that the Navy and Marine Corps had concerns about the office building planned for Square 882, and it was clarified that the Navy and Marine Corps raised those concerns as a neighbor following the City's normal plan review protocol and worked through their concerns in this manner.
- Other suggestions included:
    - A replacement site for the office use planned for Square 882

    - Navy Museum (with another participant noting that the Navy has plans to move this to the SW and noting that the outdoor/ship displays at the Navy Yard museum site could not be accommodated at Building 20)
    - Childcare facilities
    - Convert to a parking structure
    - Don't convert it to a parking structure
    - Marine Corps Heritage Museum
    - Joint use where the Marine Corps leased portion is less than 25% of the building occupancy
    - A replacement site for Tyler School
    - Demolish and keep underground parking, with green space above
    - Retain part for the Marine Corps' use and part for community use
- The existing height of Building 20 was questioned and the likelihood of getting a height approved in that location in the future questioned.
- It was noted that the architecture of the building is not compatible with the area (1970s style architecture adjacent to historic 8th & I architecture, fortress-like, etc.).
- It was noted that there are connections between Building 20 and the Main Post. It is really two buildings, with the western portion supporting the Main Post with HVAC. It was questioned as to whether the Marine Corps would need to retain the western portion. The Marine Corps does not have the answer right now and is exploring the options with legal and security experts.
- It was noted that the 9th Street ramp will be demolished as part of the 11th Street Bridge project and that this could open up more usable space at Building 20.

Childcare Center

The Marine Corps has identified a childcare need for 120 families and other federal agencies including the Navy, U.S. Department of Transportation, and Congress have identified a need for childcare facilities. The community also noted a need for childcare. A conceptual layout for a joint childcare center was presented and the following was discussed:

- Identify linkage between Marine Corps family housing and childcare – if family housing is built nearby, would there be an increased demand for local childcare? Do the family housing and childcare requirements go hand-in-hand? There is an obvious linkage, but some Marine Corps and the shared federal requirement would be there regardless of whether or not Marine Corps family housing is included in the CIMP.
- The Library of Congress is another big potential user of a shared childcare facility.
- It was questioned about how much of a community need there is for childcare and confirmed that this need has been identified a number of places.
- Consider childcare opportunities in the old Washington Post Building.

Other Potential BEQ Sites

Participants identified the following other sites that had not been considered for a BEQ site even if they would require bussing of personnel:

- RFK Stadium Area
- DC Armory

- National Park Service, other federal land in the area
- The Yards
- Green space that City has proposed with narrowing of the Southeast Freeway east of the 11th St. Bridges

Overall BEQ Site Prioritization

At the March 24th session, the group decided to prioritize the BEQ sites in lieu of going to breakout sessions to focus on potential development sites for other (non-BEQ) CIMP project sites. One participant ranked the sites in two categories. If there is no public access to the site/ no public access within the standoff distance, the priority would be:

1. Washington Navy Yard Site
2. Annex Site
3. Exxon Site – if leased property

In addition, under this scenario of no public access, eliminate the Tyler School and Square 882 sites, with the primary concern at Square 882 being closure of L St. Without the closure of L St. and potential public access the site were ranked as follows:

1. Washington Navy Yard Site
2. Exxon Site
3. Square 882 Site

One participant noted that the Exxon site is too close to bridge and the freeway and stated that they would prioritize the Square 882 site over the Exxon Site

There was a proposal to put the BEQ on the Annex site and use the Square 882 site for other Marine Corps uses or to put the BEQ in Navy Yard and use Exxon site for other support functions.

The question was asked, "What is the Marine Corps preferred site?" The site that best meets the Marine Corps initial siting criteria is Square 882. If simply looking at adjacency, the blocks immediately adjacent to 8th and I would be the top sites.

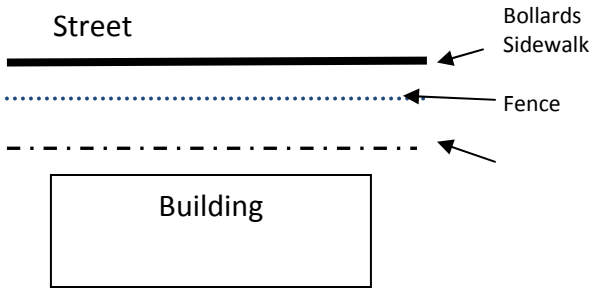
Prioritized List of Potential CIMP projects

Continuing input was sought for the prioritization of projects that could potentially be packaged with the BEQ. The following comments were made

- Neighborhood Support Retail should be reflected in the list.
- Family housing was noted as something that would be compatible with other plans in the area and should be pursued given the success with Public Private Venture housing for Department of Defense throughout the U.S.

Antiterrorism/Force Protection and Discussions

There continued to be questions about what might be possible/not possible as far as allowable activities within required standoff distances and how the government would control access within the standoff distance. One participant provided a sketch that demonstrated how bollards or other barriers could be placed along a sidewalk and unfenced green space standoff distance could occur for some distance up to a fence line.



There needs to be some way for the government to control pedestrian access and the most straightforward way to do that is with a fence, but options are still being explored given the urban environment in which the CIMP is working and to align with NCPC efforts on activating federal places. Participants noted that they would like to see some renderings of access control options so that they can better understand whether or not they would be palatable. How fencing will be used needs to be clear. Also, options for reduced standoff distance should be clearly presented so that they can be understood. It is difficult to evaluate individual sites with so many variables and unknowns.

The site concept layouts used the terminology "notional government controlled perimeter" and this sparked confusion. The intent was to 1) specify that the conceptual layouts were preliminary and no perimeter(s) had been decided and 2) indicate that the land did not necessarily need to be government-owned; leasing is an option.

Several participants noted that the presence of the Marines in the community is a benefit for overall neighborhood security.

Process

The following comments were made regarding the CIMP process:

- Appreciation for the Marine Corps reaching out to the community to explore potential joint solutions.
- The sites and the BEQ and non-BEQ uses should be planned together. We should be looking at all the options within that greater context. Only one site will ultimately host the BEQ, so alternative sites discussed tonight could be providing support functions if not used for the BEQ. Without planning for all variables, we could get further down the road and discover that the BEQ site will not work and we would have to start all over again. A commitment was made to attempt to address this comment at the next workshop.
- A request was made to have an architectural proposal (visual rendering) of the community with the new Marine buildings included because this would help the community to understand the site planning and provide more useful input on choices that are favored/not favored. A commitment was made to attempt to address this comment at the next workshop.
- The question of what happens if there is no solution was asked with the response being, that it will likely become evident to all if the CIMP effort is not resulting in a solution.