

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA STAFF COMMENTS ON BRAC-133 DRAFT TMP

This document summarizes City of Alexandria Staff comments addressing the BRAC-133 Draft Transportation Management Plan dated 6/2/10. All comments received from the BRAC Advisory Group, other stakeholders, and the general public have been considered in the development of this document.

General Comments

1. The US Army did not include many of the transit improvements and TDM strategies recommended by City of Alexandria staff.
2. There are several elements of the TMP which are not as complete as they should be. For example, the section on proposed shuttle routes is preliminary. While City staff understands the shuttle bus plan will need to be revised periodically, a final draft plan should have been included in the TMP.
3. The TMP does not provide adequate information to feel confident that the proposed TMP will result in 40% reduction in single occupancy vehicle trips.
4. The TMP will need to be revised if the appropriations bill including the language added by Representative Moran is approved. The language limits the number of parking spaces that could initially be used to 1,000.
5. The BRAC TDM does not provide any indication of how people who are not counted in the 6,500 count will get to work. Does this count include contractors? Are people who do building maintenance, food service, or other functions included? If not, how will these people get there? Since these people may not be coming at peak times, we have to figure out how they will get there in order to minimize parking disruptions in neighbor communities. Will these people be able to use DoD shuttles or have the opportunity to obtain a parking permit? Good public transit options for these additional numbers are needed.

Mode Splits

1. 23% Metro assumption is higher than the assumption used in other studies. The BRAC building is not within walking distance of any Metro Station. City staff believes that the 23% Metro use will not be achieved.
2. The 5% bus transit assumption may not be achievable. The bus transit percentage was estimated assuming that routes providing service within one mile of the BRAC building could be considered as providing transit service to the site. One mile is not the proper standard. One-quarter mile or at most one-half mile should have been used for estimating bus transit usage. Most transit related studies show that 1000 feet (.19 miles) to 2000 feet (.38 miles) is an average distance people are willing to walk to a bus stop. Within the TMP under Pedestrian Access & Facilities, page 27, it states, "the existing pedestrian walkway system adjacent to the Mark Center site is in a poor condition with substandard effective sidewalk widths (4 feet or less) and pavement conditions, discouraging pedestrian mode of travel and posing a threat to pedestrian safety, especially to the disabled pedestrians." With such pedestrian conditions in getting to the site, it would be difficult to assume the 5%.
3. Explain the percentage of those using VRE and the percentage of those using Metrorail to assist in understanding where additional transit links/resources would be helpful.

4. On page 14, there is a table showing the anticipated mode split based on employee surveys. The anticipated percentages in this table are very different than the anticipated mode splits found on pages ES-2, 13, 17, and 18. Why such a variance / how was the survey on page 14 factored into the mode splits found on ES-2, 13, 17, and 18?
5. How does the general commute pattern as referred to in the Executive Summary compare with the surveyed commute pattern of WHS shown in Table 2-3?

Transit

1. The TMP states that 45% of employees use some form of transit. The large proportion of transit users is primarily related to the proximity of their place of work to Metro stations. Since BRAC is not near a Metro station, the percentage of transit users will be significantly lower.
2. The discussion of local bus transit needs to be more comprehensive.
3. The nearest bus stop for DASH AT1 and AT2 needs to be identified in the section on DASH service.
4. The description of Metrobus service seems to indicate that they are providing direct service to the Mark Center. They are not now, and would require additional subsidy to make local bus service viable. The exact location of the bus stops needs to be clarified.
5. Southern Towers does not equal Mark Center. Under the local transit section, please change the language from "serve Mark Center" to something along the lines as "stops near Mark Center", etc. The only public transit routes that 'serve Mark Center' are WMATA's 7A & 7F routes.
6. Fix Figure 3.5 to add missing bus routes. WMATA service needs to be updated to reflect correct current routes.
7. Discussion in 3.3.2 about using public transit services to serve BRAC is encouraging.
8. How do they address whether a transit route is diverted into BRAC? How do they address potentially turning deadhead trips into live trips?
9. Will WMATA and DASH buses be extended to BRAC?
10. Map on page A-5 showing bus systems and routes within 1 mile of BRAC-13 facility is incorrect.
11. All of the transit improvements included in Table 3.2 should be included as part of this TMP plan.
12. The transit program should include:
 - a. Provide a transit store at the Mark Center Transportation Center
 - b. Provide funding to DASH and WMATA to increase the frequency of bus routes from King Street and Van Dorn Metro station.
 - c. Provide funding to WMATA and DASH to make modifications to existing routes that currently serve the area within one mile of BRAC-133 to serve the Transportation Center.
 - d. Expand the Mark Center Transportation Center to include additional bus bays to accommodate the enhancements listed above.
13. On page 29, it shows a bus stop on Mark Center Drive (south - closer to IDA). Transit is unaware of a bus stop being installed at this location. Is this a private bus stop to be used by IDA shuttles? A bus stop at this location does not make too much sense as

buses coming from that direction will access the transit center, which is just a few feet to the north/east of the shown stop. Also, there is an existing bus stop on westbound Mark Center Drive at Highview Lane.

14. There is only one bus stop across the street from the Transit Center, not two as stated in the TMP.
15. Page 38, will Duke & IDA continue to run shuttles after BRAC 133 opens? If so, will these shuttles use bus bays within the transit center?
16. The TMP should include something on paratransit services available for employees and visitors with disabilities.
17. Include something on average commute times via transit - bus, Metrorail, VRE to - to the Mark Center from various points in the region such as from Quantico, Woodbridge, Lorton, Fairfax City, Centreville, Chantilly, Dulles, Leesburg, Bethesda, Rockville, Silver Spring, DC, Greenbelt, Largo, Suitland, Annapolis, Waldorf, and etc...

Shuttle Routes

1. The section on proposed shuttle routes is preliminary. While City staff understands the shuttle bus plan will need to be revised periodically, a final draft plan should have been included in the TMP.
2. Arranging a meeting with private companies to assess provision of transit connections from areas to the south (page 36) is not sufficient. Instead, the Army should initially provide shuttle service to Lorton/Quantico, Woodbridge and Fredericksburg. Successful service to these locations will help entice the private operators to provide the transit service from these locations.
3. The shuttle bus plan does not include service to Springfield Metro or Van Dorn Metro. Frequent shuttle service should be provided to these two Metro stations.
4. Include trip times for shuttle runs via various routes.

Carpool

1. Explain in more detail how the number for carpool (2.3 passengers per vehicle) is obtained and how this number ties in to the HOV-3 required on I-395.

Vanpool

1. Page 111, short distance vanpooling will be very difficult to do/organized and is not cost effective to those that use it. What is considered "short distance?"
2. Under vanpooling, the TMP mentions that there should be outreach done to get employees that live in Maryland to use vanpools; however, the TMP fails to mention park and ride facilities in Maryland. In most cases, vanpool pick ups are at park and ride facilities. This TMP should include both NOVA and Maryland park and ride facilities and their respective capacities.

Bicycling

1. The TMP discusses a bike station on page 118, which is an interesting idea. Has this been explored with the City?
2. In Section 5.9.4, "Recommended Improvements", WHS should include consideration of whether TMP funds may be directed to transportation demand management measures including participation in regional bicycle sharing programs.

3. Procedures, rules and regulations for bike locker usage should be developed.
4. The Transportation Coordinator should also act as biking coordinator to help serve as an advocate and point of contact for the biking community.
5. A thorough biking safety examination of bike ways in and out of the site and around the garage should be conducted with the Biking and Pedestrian Coordinator and the TDM Coordinator to help avoid future issues.
6. Does the site plan to host its own Bike to Work Day event separate from the Council of Governments regional bike to work day event?
7. Periodic Confident Cycling Classes that are coordinated by the Washington Area Bicycle Association should be conducted on site for prospective bike commuters.
8. Each of the proposed "Bicycle Safe Routes" in Appendix E contains text encouraging potential bicycle commuters to travel on "sidewalks" or "bicycle-designated sidewalks." In Alexandria, city code Sec. 10-7-4 says that "no bicycle shall be operated on any sidewalk in city, except such sidewalks or portions thereof which city council shall by resolution designate as bicycle routes." For this reason, bicyclists should not be directed to ride on sidewalks in the City. In Virginia, a bicycle is considered a vehicle when ridden on roads and streets and Sec. 46.2-904 allows localities to prohibit bicycles from using sidewalks, although this must be done with conspicuously posted signs. The City completed a Bicycle Level of Service analysis for the existing on-street bikeway network which grades roadways (A-F) for bicycle use. A map of current Bicycle Level of Service in Alexandria is online here >>
http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/localmotion/info/gettingaround/fig15Bicycle_Level_of_Service.pdf

Pedestrian

1. In Section 3.2.4 "Pedestrian Access Facilities", any references to off-site improvements that are not currently proposed for improvement as part of the site planning should be coordinated with proposed pedestrian improvements in the City's 2008 Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan >> <http://alexandriava.gov/localmotion/info/default.aspx?id=11418>

Telecommuting

1. The Draft TMP includes almost no discussion about telecommuting. More thorough treatment is needed.
2. For mid day trips, include something on video conference meetings via a conference room, laptop, notebook, smartphone, etc. to reduce the number of trips needed during the mid day (if feasible).

Slugging

1. Need more specifics regarding how slugging will occur. How will they deal with no HOV off ramp at Seminary and I-395?
2. The 3% for slug in the anticipated mode split is high for several reasons: there is only 140' of dedicated space for slugs; the nearest HOV entrance going southbound is 2.5 miles away, and the nearest HOV exit going northbound is at Franconia Springfield and the Pentagon; individuals in Fairfax, Burke, West Springfield, Springfield areas working at BRAC 133 using I-495 to access I-395 will have little incentive to slug as they will not be able to take advantage of the HOV unless they plan to drive to the Pentagon and

turn around. Is it safe to assume that traffic going southbound on I-395 in the AM peak will increase as more people will be traveling to places such as BRAC 133, Fort Belvoir, the EPG, Springfield, etc. Also, one must have a permit to park in order to slug from BRAC 133.

3. On page 15, the TMP mentions The Native Slugs of Northern Virginia study shows that 65 percent of sluggers travel to work anywhere from 10 minutes to greater than 30 minutes beyond the slugging drop-off point. Once dropped off, sluggers then either walk, bike, or take transit to get to their employment destination. Is this a correct assumption or is the assumption that people that are taking slugs will then drive 10 to 30 minutes more to their place of employment? Also within that particular study, the change of employment location was one of the main reasons why people decided to make a change to another mode other than slugging. Was this factored into the 3% for slug?
4. Employees with parking permits that drive slugs to the Pentagon or other drop off points would still require a parking permit at the Mark Center and would still impact the local roads and community. These should be included as part of the percentage of SOV trips, as they have the same impact as SOVs.
5. Slugs that arrive at the Pentagon and then take the DoD shuttle should be included in the transit percentages, not in the slug percentages.
6. If employees are able to arrive by slugging, the vehicle they arrive in for drop-off (if not a BRAC permitted vehicle) eliminates the need for parking, but still impacts the local road system and community.
7. The location of the dedicated slug lanes / off peak taxi stand adjacent to the transit center / parking garage may cause issues with traffic leaving the garage, those making right hand turns onto Mark Center Drive, and with buses making right turns to access the transit center.

Taxis

1. Under Slug Lines & Taxis, nothing is mentioned about taxis.
2. The TMP needs to expand on the plan to integrate taxi service at the facility.

TDM Plan

General

1. The branding of the WHS TMP should be strongly linked and subsidiary to Local Motion.
2. All employees should be enrolled in the WHS TMP.
3. The employee orientation materials and handbook should include information on Local Motion and bicycle maps.
4. There appears to be no mention of ongoing and/or regularly distributed forms or marketing and promotion, i.e. a webpage or website, newsletter, etc.
5. A contractor should be hired to assist with marketing, outreach and promotional events
6. The Site should reach out to the Patent and Trademark Office in Alexandria and the EPA buildings located in Arlington Potomac Yard to glean information on TMP/TDM best practices, successes, and failures.
7. Relationships should be created and maintained with the following organizations:
 - a. VPSI (area's largest vanpool provider for federal agencies),

- b. Commuter Connections
 - c. the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VA's TDM agency),
 - d. Bike/Walk Alexandria,
 - e. WABA,
 - f. www.slug-lines.com,
 - g. Telework!VA
 - h. Association for Commuter Transportation
8. There should be some sort of cash-out option for those that use alternative modes of transportation other than transit, including a provision for a mix and match program option for those that use multiple types of alternate modes.

Transportation Coordinator

1. Local Motion is the City's TDM Program, so it should be explicitly stated that a close relationship between the Transportation Coordinator and the program will be essential.
2. The Transportation Coordinator (TC) should be required to become a member of the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT). ACT is the TDM industry's largest trade association and it supports individual mobility management professionals and organizational members in their efforts to reduce traffic congestion, conserve energy and improve air quality.
3. The TC should be required to attend any employee orientations that the tenants have to discuss the all TDM programs and services and transportation alternatives to driving alone.
4. The TC should be required to regularly attend the regional Commuter Connection and Council of City Government planning meetings and trainings.

Commuter Store

1. The site needs to have a staffed permanent transportation center/transit store.
2. It will be very difficult to secure the Mobile Commuter Store twice a month let alone twice a week due to both price and capacity. Further definitive discussions with the Mobile Commuter Store need to occur and the inclusion of the Mobile Commuter Store in the TMP should be adjusted accordingly.

Transit Subsidy

1. Are Metro Fare Cards in the denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$30 available as indicated in 5.5.1(ii)a? The WMATA site seems to only list \$10 and \$20.
2. With the SmartBenefits program and the IRS mandate that begins on 1/1/2010, will Metro farecards still be distributed? Does DoD need to comply with the IRS mandate for SmartBenefits / the federal transit subsidy program? If so, the language on the distribution of farecards should be changed.

Ridematching

1. In response to purchasing ridematching software, Commuter Connections, a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, has a very comprehensive ridematching database that can be accessed online and used by BRAC-133 commuters.

Carsharing

1. The City's carshare incentive program, Carshare Alexandria program needs to be mentioned here to help incentivize employees to use the lone Zipcar in the immediate area.
2. Hertz Connect, a new Carsharing company in the area should be contacted about the possibility of adding a car on site.

Parking

1. Information on how many ADA parking spaces will be provided in each garage should be provided.
2. Information on how many carpool and vanpool parking spaces will be provided in the north parking garage should be provided.
3. Carpool and Vanpool parking spaces should be provided in their South parking garage.
4. What is the definition of "preferential" when referring to parking for car and vanpools?
5. It should be noted that spots for electric cars at the EPA Arlington/Potomac Yard building have not been utilized once since the building was constructed 4 years ago.
6. Signatures of the primary driver's supervisor should be required for carpool and vanpool priority parking applications.
7. The discussion/comparison of flex-time parking between the 2003 Mark Center TMP and the BRAC-133 TMP is confusing and should be further explained. For example, explain why "the BRAC 133 TMP is not able to guarantee flex-time parking for employees" and the impact of that practice on the parking.
8. Address how BRAC-133 is going to address overflow parking in public and private areas. The TMP should make provisions for providing gates for lots, etc when an overflow parking problem occurs due to BRAC employee parking.
9. The TDM plan calls for 48 disabled parking spaces in the parking facilities. What is the plan if more than 48 employees qualify for a disabled spot? Will the disabled employee be required to have a state-issued disabled license plate or placard?
10. Will the government vehicle parking include on-site vehicles as well as employees with take-home government vehicles? What is the number of take-home government vehicles among the combined tenant organizations?
11. Section 3.6.2 states that the many park and ride lots have excess capacity. Which of the park and ride lots are underutilized? How will this information be distributed to the commuting population?
12. A reference is made to free parking. The Army needs to provide the proper legislation that negates Circular No. A-118, dated August 13, 1979, in which the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced the establishment of a Government-wide policy dealing with Federal parking facilities. According to OMB, a basis for charging for the use of parking facilities needed to be established which was equitable among employees and consistent with related policies regarding air quality, energy conservation and reduced traffic congestion.
13. Section 4.5.2 mitigation effort number 8 states that some government vehicles may be made available for mid-day travel to off-site meetings. This language should be strengthened to say government vehicles will be provided, so that SOV trips due to mid-day off-sites will be discouraged.

14. Criteria for issuance of a parking permit should be established and consistent throughout tenant organizations.

Traffic Impact Analysis

1. The findings and recommendations included in the traffic analysis section are not reliable as the traffic micro-simulation models were not properly calibrated.
2. What do the recommendations from the TIA add to a TMP? Is the analysis and suggestion of recommendations appropriate for this type of document?
3. The CORSIM study area used for the analysis was very limited. The limitations in the study area reduce the validity of the transportation analysis.
4. Other On-Going Study Improvements (page 92): VDOT is also doing a detailed operational assessment of short-term improvements.
5. Page 22 refers to the HOV lanes in I-395 serving Seminary Road. Clarification is needed on whether there an exit or entrance from northbound or southbound HOV lanes, and if not, where the closest access would be for entry to or exit from the HOV lanes.
6. Section 3.2.1 refers to providing a “concrete barrier obstruction”. This needs to be replaced with “physical barrier.”
7. The study conclusion in Section 4.1.9 discusses the effect of turn lane improvements on the PM peak hour, but did not address the AM peak hour.
8. Section 4.4.8 needs to specify locations where the short distance merges are projected to cause traffic operational problems as referenced under “Other Concerns”.
9. The recommended roadway improvement number 4 in Section 4.4.9, “Provide a direct HOV access ramp from I-395 south to Seminary Road” is already in existence.
10. Include analysis for Recommended Intersection Improvement No. 1 in section 4.4.9.
11. The Recommended Traffic Control Improvements No.1 in section 4.4.9 has been completed.
12. Signage on private streets as suggested in Recommended Internal Circulation Improvements in section 4.4.9 should be coordinated with property owners.
13. Section 4.5.1 should include in its list of improvements being made by the Army the increase in number of buses on King Street to King Street Station.

Reporting

1. In order that the City and the DOD can continue to be partners in adjusting the TMP to minimize the impact of BRAC-133 on adjoining neighborhoods, a regular method of reporting information to the City, which the DOD is promising to collect, should be established in the TMP document.
2. The State of the Commute Report needs to be shared with the City of Alexandria. The TMP should state such within the document
3. On page 120, indicate that an Evaluation Report will be submitted to the City of Alexandria every six months.
4. The TMP should address what steps will be taken if goals are not met. The TMP should also address what the reserve plan is if the goals are not met.

Funding

1. Provide information on funding for implementation of TDM strategies. For example, amount available for implementation, annual monies available for operations, etc.