

**TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM D. EUILLE
MAYOR, CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**

**NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING ON PROPOSED
BRAC-133 AT THE MARK CENTER SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN**

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the commission: I am William Euille, Mayor of the City of Alexandria, Virginia. I speak on behalf of myself, six other colleagues on the Alexandria City Council, and the 140,000 residents of our City. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed BRAC-133 at the Mark Center.

The BRAC-133 buildings and site will be one of the most visible landmarks on the west end of Alexandria. Because of its height alone, these 15- and 17-story buildings will be very visible along I-395 and other portions of the City. It is also likely the site, because of its height and proximity to I-395 traffic, will be one of the most looked-at military locations in the Washington D.C. region. The City of Alexandria is pleased with the architectural improvements, but we still have some serious concerns about the building design, and that is why I am here today.

First, the top of the building needs to be refined, and needs to be curved. Lighting also needs to be incorporated as an integral element in the building-top design. Finally, the rooftop mechanical penthouses need to be better integrated into the architectural design elements of the building.

Second, the City continues to be strongly opposed to locating a remote inspection facility at the Mark Center site. This opinion is shared by the City's Congressional delegation, including

Senator Webb, Senator Warner, and Congressman Moran. We are very concerned about placing a remote inspection facility adjacent to hundreds of residents, major office buildings and an interstate highway. Any incident that occurs could cause extensive problems for those who live, work or travel near the facility. An incident could also affect I-395, a major traffic artery and a strategic mass evacuation route within the National Capital Region.

In addition, the City of Alexandria has identified the current location of the remote inspection facility as a potentially viable option for a direct access point from I-395 to serve the Mark Center. Direct access could help alleviate traffic and minimize nearby gridlock. If the remote inspection facility is located at the proposed site, it will preclude us from considering this as a transportation alternative.

Let me be clear: no one is arguing against any inspection facility, but we feel that this could take place offsite at another location, which has precedent at other regional Department of Defense facilities, such as the future DoD DARPA site in Arlington, where no remote inspection facility will be established.

Third, the City is concerned about the design of the northern parking structure. Unlike most of the parking within the City, which is located below-grade, this facility has five levels—only two of which are located underground. The City generally does not support above-grade parking structures. We recommend that the north parking structure be designed to better integrate with the campus setting of the Mark Center. Possible options include:

- Refinement of the garage design, as described in our written submission

- Incorporation of public art
- Integration of appropriate signage into the design

As part of the growing environmental initiatives being undertaken by Alexandria, and by the Federal government, the City also urges the Department of Defense to consider incorporating some green elements into the parking structure. Although we understand it is not financially feasible to incorporate a green roof, the City requests that other options be explored. Possible alternatives include a trellis structure that could support landscaping, or a comparable shade structure.

Finally, the landscaping plan needs to be enhanced with additional street trees and landscaping inside, as well as adjacent to, I-395 and Seminary Road.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed BRAC-133 at the Mark Center, and I urge you to consider the issues that we have raised and the alternatives we have presented to you today. Thank you.