

Mark Center EA
Draft Purpose & Need Statement
06/07//11

As part of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, by late 2011 the Department of Defense will be relocating 6,400 personnel to the Mark Center in the City of Alexandria near the Interstate 395 (I-395) interchange with Seminary Road. In addition, expansion of the Institute for Defense Analysis will bring another 600 employees to the Mark Center. The site will include a publicly-accessible Transportation Center attached to the North Parking Garage, located on Mark Center Drive west of Seminary Road. The Transportation Center will include bus bays that will be available for shared-use by public and private transit providers. In addition, there are two bus stops located on the west side of Mark Center Drive, directly across from the Transportation Center. These stops will remain in place and be coordinated by the City of Alexandria.

The Virginia Department of Transportation's February 2010 Mark Center (BRAC 133) Access Study¹ indicates unacceptable levels of service (LOS)², substantial delays, and severe traffic congestion at the following locations due in part to traffic moving to and from the Mark Center:

- On-ramp merge from Seminary Road to southbound I-395 general purpose lanes (2035 PM Peak – LOS E)

- Off-ramp diverge from northbound I-395 to Seminary Road (2015 & 2035 AM Peak – LOS F)

In order to minimize traffic impacts, the Department of the Army has developed a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) for the Mark Center. The TMP includes multiple transit-related initiatives including rideshare activities and providing shuttle service to Metro stations. The TMP has a stated goal of achieving forty (40) percent or more non-Single Occupancy Vehicle trips to the Mark Center site. The only access from I-395 to the Mark Center is via the general purpose lanes. The TMP proposed the evaluation of a direct High Occupancy Vehicle access ramp from I-395 to Seminary Road as an improvement to address a large percentage of employee travel demand originating south of the Mark Center.

The purpose of the project is to address the need for adequate transit vehicle and High Occupancy Vehicle access to the Mark Center, and to relieve forecasted AM peak traffic congestion on the northbound I-395/Seminary Road off-ramp and forecasted PM peak congestion on the southbound Seminary Road/I-395 on-ramp.

¹ The study is available for review at www.vamegaprojects.com

² The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) 2001 manual defines Level of Service (LOS) as "characterizes the operating conditions on the facility in terms of traffic performance measures related to speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, and comfort and convenience. The levels of service range from LOS A (least congested) to LOS F (most congested)."