

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION

E. Goldkind

**NCPC File No. MP059**



## NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER MASTER PLAN UPDATE

8901 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Montgomery County, Maryland

Submitted by the United States Department of the Navy

January 29, 2009

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### Abstract

The United States Department of the Navy has submitted a Master Plan Update for the National Naval Medical Center located at 8901 Rockville Pike in Bethesda, Maryland. The update has been prepared in response to the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Action, which required the establishment of a single premier military medical center at the site. The Master Plan Update incorporates previously planned renovations and expansion projects and identifies additional development needed to accommodate the projected growth in campus populations that will result from the BRAC Action.

### Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of Master Plan Update pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722 (b)(1).

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### Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

**Approves** the Master Plan Update for the National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 3101.30(05.00)42608.

**Notes** that the Final Master Plan is based on the Preferred Alternative presented and analyzed in the Navy's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) dated March, 2008; and includes mitigation outlined in the Navy's Record of Decision.

**Encourages** the Navy to continue collaboration with local planning and regulatory agencies to develop and implement federally-funded traffic and transportation improvements related to implementation of the Master Plan.

**Recommends** that the Navy continue to coordinate individual project reviews with the Montgomery County Planning Department prior to submitting to NCPC for review.

**Commends** the Navy for developing a master plan update that continues to respect and enhance the historic and cultural resources of the campus, for their efforts to mitigate external impacts of the mandated expansion, as well as for their outreach and coordination with affected parties.

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Site

The National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) is located at 8901 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD, located just northeast of the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). The campus is comprised of approximately 243 acres and is bounded on the west by Rockville Pike, on the northeast by I-495, and on the south by Jones Bridge Road. The land uses in the immediate area are the National Institutes of Health across Rockville Pike, Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart and medium-density residential housing to the north, Rock Creek Park and North Chevy Chase Park to the east and Columbia Country Club and medium-density residential housing to the south across Jones Bridge Road.

The topography of the campus includes gently sloping areas where development is concentrated, and some areas of moderately steep terrain. There are significant areas of mature trees that provide edge buffers between the Medical Center and adjoining land uses. A forested area in the center of the campus around Stoney Creek and its 100-year flood plain bisects the campus from southwest to northeast. The topography created by the eroding action of the stream creates variations in land form with some steep slopes. The total change in elevation is from a high of approximately 330 feet above sea level in the southwestern corner of the campus to a low of approximately 210 in the northeastern area of the campus adjacent to I-495.

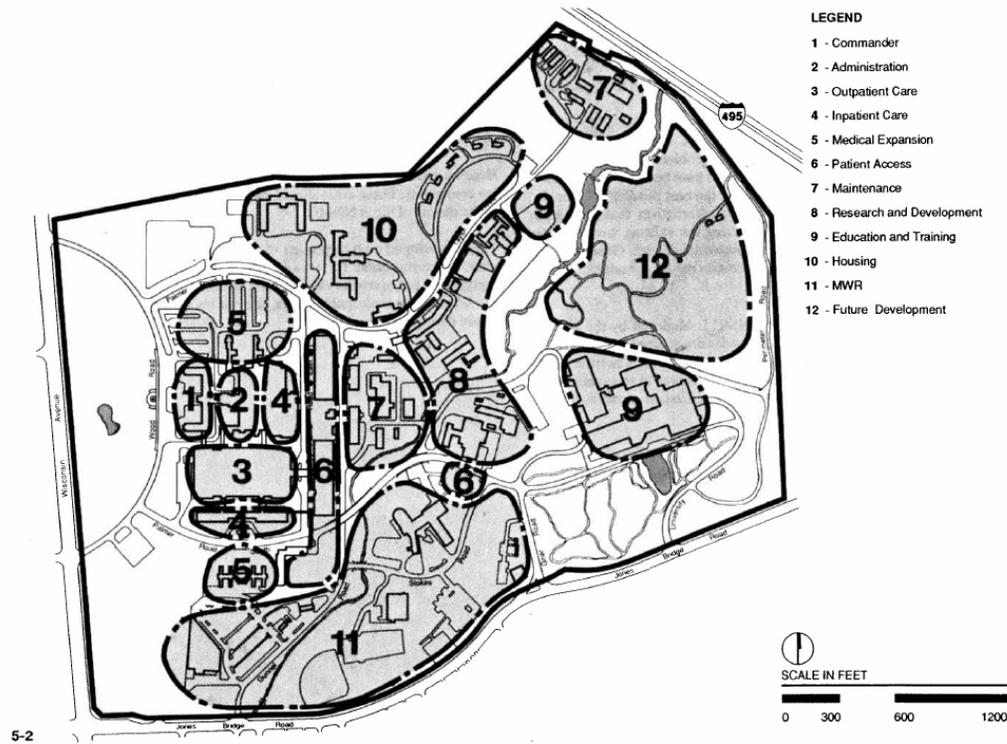
The front lawn includes bronze flagpole with granite base, two anchors, and a spring-fed pond that has been named “Lake Eleanor” in honor of Mrs. Roosevelt. The lawn is considered a historic landscaped area that is to remain open space; and a series of trees and pathways in this western portion of the campus are also maintained as part of the historic landscape of the site.

### Prior Commission Actions

The Commission approved the last Master Plan Update for the Medical Center at its March 1, 1990 meeting. The proposed update retains, and expands upon, much of the prior land use planning and general development principles; with the main difference being modifications needed to meet the requirements of the 2005 BRAC Action.

**PROPOSED LAND USE**

Figure 5-1 Proposed Land Use



**1990 NNMC MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Three of the largest new construction projects included in the Master Plan Update have already been reviewed and approved by the Commission (due to the stringent BRAC implementation schedule) include the Medical Facility Additions (NCPC Project 6759, approved June 5, 2008), the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NCPC Project 6849, June 5, 2008), and the Patient Parking Garage (NCPC Project 6868, approved December 4, 2008).



**BUILDINGS A and B**



**NICoE**



**PATIENT PARKING GARAGE**

## Background

As a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, the existing Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) located in Washington, D.C. will be closed and military medical services in the National Capital Area (NCA) will be realigned between two primary facilities serving the northern and southern portions of the NCA. The southern NCA will be served by a new hospital at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, and the existing National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda, Maryland will be expanded and renovated to serve the northern NCA. All existing tertiary (sub-specialty and complex care) medical services currently provided at WRAMC will be relocated to Bethesda. At the time of the relocation, by September 15, 2011, the expanded NNMC will become a tri-service facility and will be renamed the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda (WRNMMC).

The Master Plan Update is intended to provide direction for long-term growth of the campus, adhering to the following planning goals and objectives:

- Support the Medical Mission. Provide a land use master plan to accommodate anticipated growth, but flexible enough that as the scopes of specific projects are developed and change, the master plan will remain viable.
- Maintain and enhance the aspect of security, both for the overall installation and individual projects.
- Recognize positive features in the built and natural environment and maintain and enhance those features.
- Preserve the historic character and value of the campus and the natural resources.
- Strive to cluster functions to facilitate a walkable campus.
- Provide compatibility with the surrounding neighbors by maintaining buffers on the perimeter as required.

## *Transportation*

The NNMC is well served by the regional and local roadway network, as well as by public transportation. Rockville Pike, which runs north-south along the campus' western edge, is classified as a Major Highway by the County and connects the site with Washington, DC to the south and with the City of Frederick, Maryland to the north. This roadway also provides connections to other regional areas via an interchange with the I-270 / I-495 Freeway System situated just to the north, and intersections with major east-west arterials along other segments to the north and south of the campus. Jones Bridge Road, the southern east-west boundary of the campus, is classified by the County as an Arterial Road between Rockville Pike and Connecticut Avenue.

The campus is located at the "Medical Center" Metrorail Station on the Red Line of the Metrorail system. The station is also a major stop/transfer point for seven Metrobus routes and six Montgomery Ride-On bus routes. Heavy rail commuter service is available via the Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) "Brunswick" rail line, which has trains originating in Maryland and West Virginia, and connecting to Metrorail's "Rockville" station (approximately six miles to the north of the NNMC campus) and to Union Station in Washington, D.C.

## PROPOSAL

The United States Department of the Navy has submitted a Master Plan Update for the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) at Bethesda; according to the applicant, the proposal is the result of a thorough assessment of the BRAC Action as well as prior master planning efforts. The key planning principles and objectives for the Master Plan Update include the following:

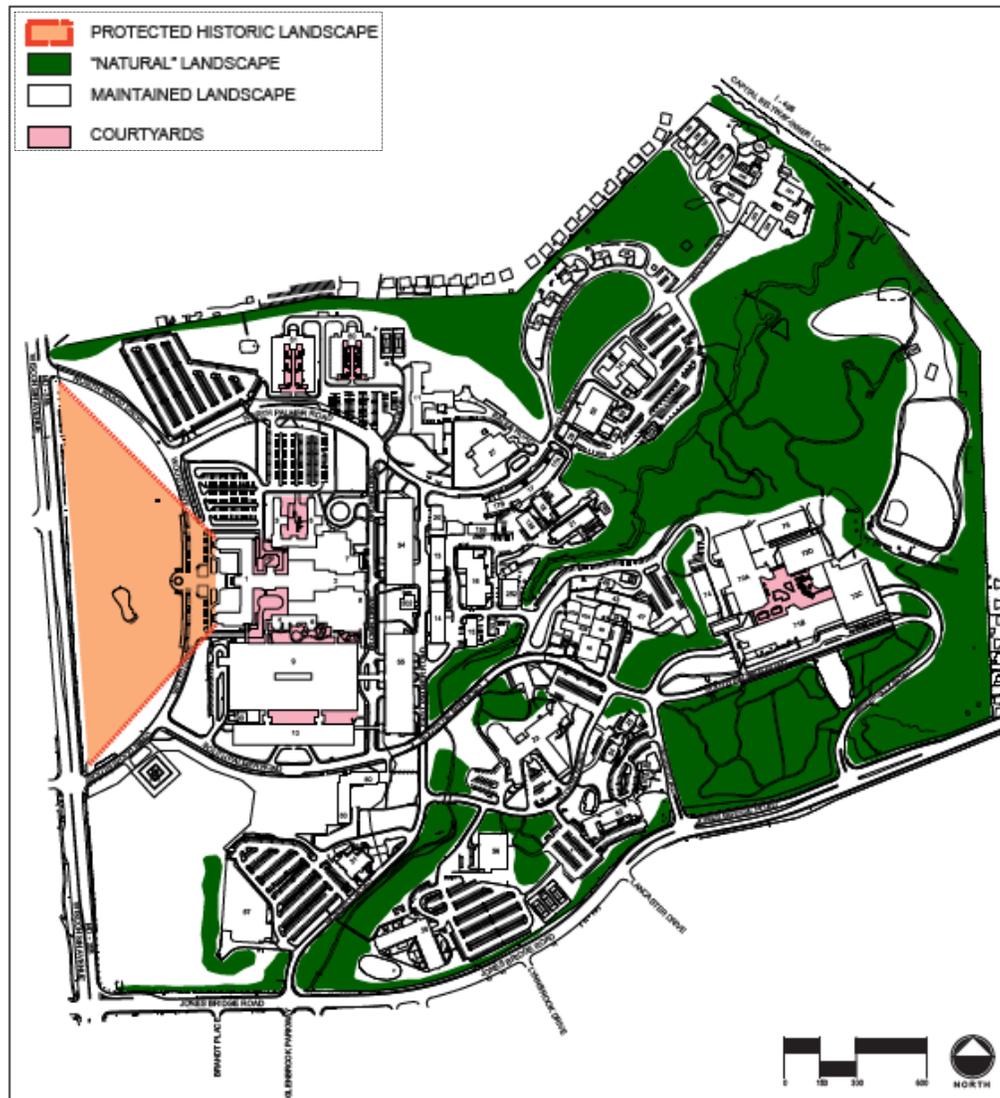
- Development to accommodate the growth in population should follow existing land uses and building functions wherever possible to ensure efficiency of operation for both staff and patients.
- The forested areas around Stoney Creek should be preserved and respected as a central feature of the campus. The established perimeter buffers should remain to the greatest extent possible.
- The historical significance of Building 1, the Tower, should be respected and construction within the medical core should enhance its setting as the showpiece of the campus.
- Expansion of medical functions should be located within the medical core area or convenient to this central hub.
- New requirements should be met with a combination of new construction at previously developed sites, redevelopment of existing structures, and renovation to the greatest extent possible.

The Navy has a programmatic need to expand medical, administrative, and other related functions; the Master Plan includes planned expansion by 2011, required by the BRAC Action, as well as other planned increases in staffing and administration to the year 2016. Staffing is expected to increase from 8,000 personnel to a total of 10,500 (including a 2,200 BRAC-driven personnel increase and an additional 300 support personnel). Patient/visitor use of the facility is expected to nearly double from 497,000 (2005) to 981,000 visits per year. Facility space is expected to increase by approximately 36 percent, from 4.7 million gross square feet (gsf) to a total of 6.4 million gsf; at completion of the Master Plan Update implementation, the medical core areas will account for approximately 33% of the total gsf.

A summary of the program follows:

	Existing	2016
Total Acreage	243 acres	243 acres
Total Campus Personnel	8,000	10,500
Annual Patients and Visitors	497,000	981,000
Building Areas	4,700,000 gsf	6,350,000 gsf
Parking Spaces (total)	6,083 spaces	8,087 spaces
Surface Lots	2,621 spaces	1,594 spaces
Structured Parking	3,092 spaces	6,275 spaces
Street Parking	370 spaces	218 spaces

The project will continue the general land use patterns established in prior Master Plan updates, including development clusters related to medical, administrative, permanent housing, temporary housing, community services, and education. The landscape patterns of the campus, categorized as “man-made” and “natural”, will also continue to be respected; buffers between the campus and the adjacent residential communities will be retained.



### EXISTING LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Implementation of the Master Plan Update will include extensive renovation/modernization of existing facilities, and related site work such as landscaping and infrastructure improvements (including utility upgrades to support facilities related to the proposed expansion). The historic medical core at the West end of the campus, comprised of Buildings 1 through 10 and historic landscaping/courtyards, will be preserved and any new construction will be designed to enhance the existing historic buildings (already evident in the designs for Medical Facility Additions, NPC Project 6759). General *Development Guidelines* are also included in the update, and provide fundamental design recommendations to ensure that new developments is developed in a way that is complementary to the existing campus architecture and landscape; guidelines address the following areas: Building & Siting; Building Additions; Security Installations; Landscaping and Streetscaping; Building Setbacks and Heights; Viewsheds; Ground Level Activity and Use; Rooftop Elements; Cultural Resource Management (including historical and archeological resources); Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation; Parking; Exterior Signage; and Lighting.

The following are the most significant building projects for the campus:

- Renovations of Existing Medical Facilities: 317,000 gsf
- Medical Facility Additions (Buildings A and B)\*: 533,000 and 157,000 gsf, respectively, flanking Building 1
- National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE)\*: 80,000 gsf, replacing historic Building 12
- Patient Parking Garage\*: 341,000 gsf / 939 parking spaces, east of Medical Facility Outpatient Addition (Building A)
- Navy Exchange (NEX) Expansion: Additional 100,000 gsf and 120 employees, existing NEX location
- Multi-Use Parking Garage: 406,000 gsf / 1,204 parking spaces, northeast of Fisher Houses
- Multi-Use Parking Garage: 200,000 gsf / 484 parking spaces, northeast of site adjacent to new fitness center
- Fitness Center: 98,000 gsf, northeast of site
- New Fisher Houses: 16,000 gsf (3 at 21 rooms each)
- Uniformed Services University (USUHS) Expansion: 200,000 gsf
- Bachelors Enlisted Quarters and Dining Hall: 225,000 gsf
- Lodge Expansion: 120,000 gsf
- Physical Security and Design Improvements at Perimeter Entry Points: 5 locations
- Transportation/Transit Improvements: local road modifications and high-speed elevators from Metrorail station - external to the campus (pending Congressional approval/funding)

\* Asterisks indicate medical core projects reviewed/approved by the Commission and currently under construction (see *Prior Commission Actions* section of this report).

New security requirements have also been introduced as part of the Master Plan Update. In addition to conventional construction standoff distances (varying between 33 feet and 148 feet, depending on site conditions), the Master Plan call for continuous perimeter fencing, active barriers at all gated entrances, and additional measures. Existing green areas surrounding the historic core at its edges and along its courtyard spaces will be maintained or widened to meet Antiterrorism / Force Protection (AT/FP) stand-off requirements. Security elements, such as physical barriers, would need to be submitted to NCPC for individual project review.

### *Parking*

Parking for employees and visitors to the Campus will be provided in several large parking structures that will be located throughout the site. Parking structures, which will replace surface parking lots in many cases, will be sited to take advantage of changes in topography, where below-grade construction can be used to minimize the visual impacts to the existing campus buildings and to complement the existing scale of the campus as a whole. New parking structures will be of compatible materials and will incorporate landscaping to further minimize visual impacts.

The current employee parking ratio is 1 parking space per 2.5 (1:2.5) employees, which exceeds the recommended Comprehensive Plan ratio of 1:3 for suburban facilities within 2,000 feet of Metrorail. The Master Plan adjusts the total number of employee parking spaces to meet the Comprehensive Plan ratio for employees by 2011, and applies the Department of Defense Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) to determine all non-staff parking. In summary, a total of 8,087 parking spaces are programmed as part of the Master Plan, including 3,279 for employees. The remainder of parking spaces will be reserved for full-time residents, patrons of the Navy Exchange, and up to 1,862 daily patients and visitors to the campus.



### *Transportation Management Plan (TMP)*

The Navy has prepared a TMP that addresses existing and proposed site access and roadway networks, vehicular circulation, transit and pedestrian facilities, planned developments and improvements, and intersection capacity analyses. Informed by additional traffic and transportation analyses included in the FEIS issued March, 2008, the TMP includes various transit and road improvements, as well as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that effectively allow the DOD to meet the planned employee parking ratio of one vehicle for every 3 employees (1:3) by 2011, in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan recommendations for suburban federal facilities within 2,000 feet of a Metrorail station.

The TMP outlines aggressive goals to reduce the number of single occupant vehicle trips to the site (through alternative modes of transportation as well as limiting employee parking), to reduce traffic congestion, and to improve air quality. The most significant of those goals and objectives of the TMP include the following:

- Increase Average Vehicle Occupancy (AVO) ratios from 1.12 to 3.0 by 2011.
- Increase transit mode share from 11.3% to approximately 30% by year 2011 (encouraged by transit subsidies as well as shuttle service).
- Increase ridesharing mode share from 13.5% to 24% by 2011.
- Increase Car/vanpooling, with designated parking.
- Promote compressed and flexible work schedules.
- Encourage use of Express Bus service from remote park-n-ride lots.
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle facilities on campus, including showers and lockers.
- Fund external transportation improvements, including funding to modify county roads (see summary below).
- Seek funding to support access to the Medical Center Metrorail station from the east side of Rockville Pike.
- Continue coordination with the County, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and RideOn in order to continually support improvements to public transportation access to the campus.

### *External Transportation Improvements*

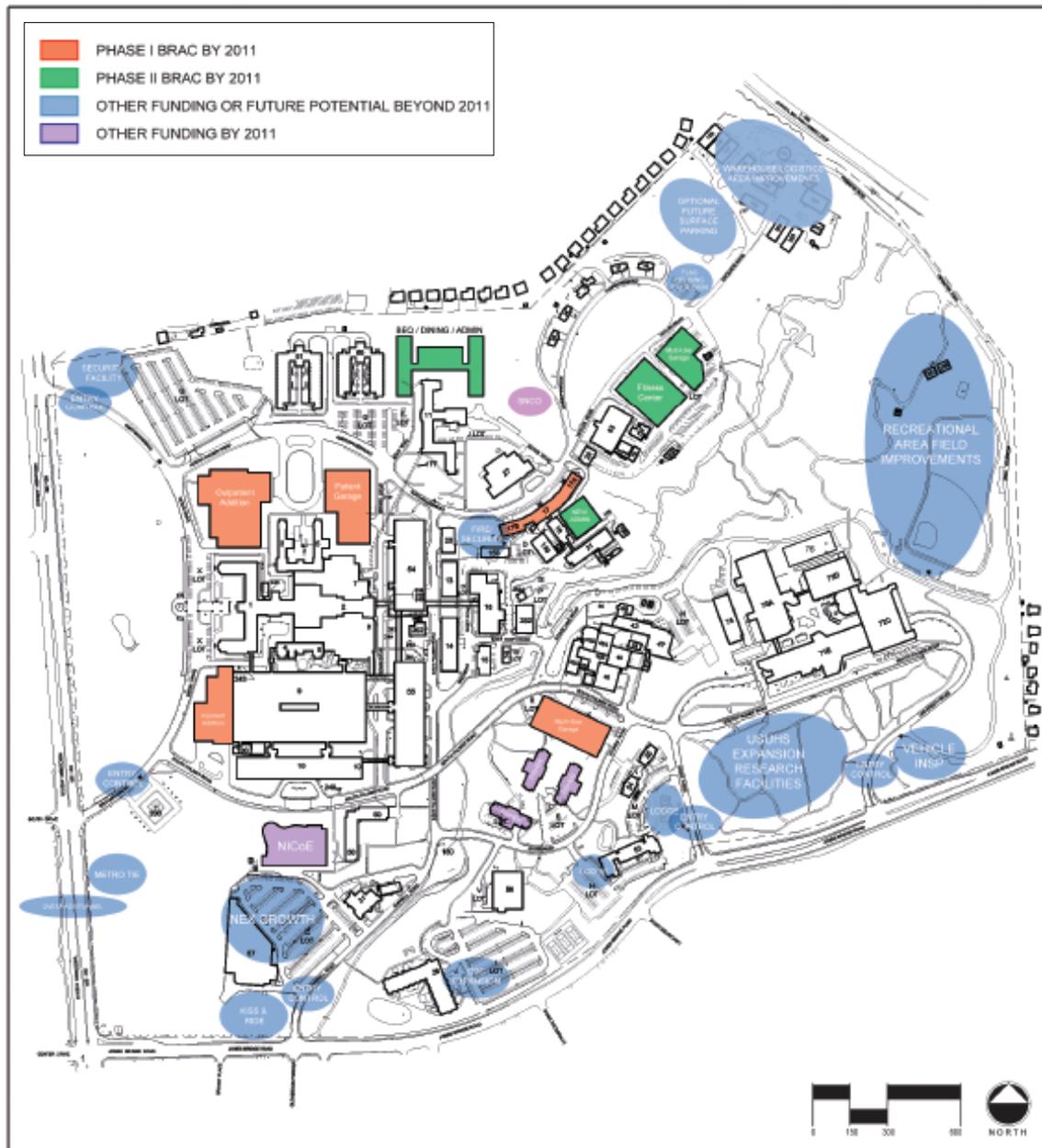
The Navy has been collaborating with Montgomery County agencies, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the State Highway Administration, and WMATA on several projects at the campus periphery or adjacent areas to further minimize transportation impacts and to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety to, from, and around the Medical Center. The Master Plan Update includes planned improvements to the North Wood Road/355 Intersection; the U.S. Army has reviewed the Navy's Defense Access Roads (DAR) Needs Report regarding potential improvements to the intersection, and determined that DAR Certification is not necessary for the Navy to implement this project. The Navy is pursuing improvements to the North Wood Road intersection as part of the on-base transportation improvements; and the Department of Defense has committed to funding these improvements in fiscal years 2010/2011.

The BRAC program also includes improvements to the five campus Entry Control Points, which will also be funded by the Department of Defense in fiscal years 2010/2011.

The Navy has been collaborating with WMATA to plan for the use of DAR funding to provide high speed elevator access to/from the Medical Center Metrorail station on the east side of Rockville Pike. The Navy has submitted a \$20 million request in support of the planned improvements, but funding has not yet been approved.

*Phasing*

The Master Plan Update is expected to be implemented in four phases, with much of the work being completed in the next three to 5 years. The initial phase has commenced and includes the construction and activities required to meet the BRAC deadline of 15 Sep 2011. The second phase will include projects that are desirable to support the WRNMMC but are not part of the BRAC law; they have been identified for funding and are anticipated to be completed by 2011. The third phase consists of projects to support WRNMMC that are being privately funded and expected to be completed by 2011. The fourth phase includes projects that are desired to improve campus support, but the scopes and requirements are not yet firm or they will be provided through an alternative funding source; these projects are anticipated to be completed beyond 2011.



**PHASING PLAN**

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

The proposed Master Plan Update provides a well developed and programmatic approach to meet the challenges and requirements related to the campus expansion mandated by the 2005 BRAC Action as well as other long-term planning goals. The Navy should be commended for developing a master plan update that continues to respect and enhance the historic and cultural resources of the campus, for their efforts to mitigate external impacts of the mandated expansion, as well as for their outreach and coordination with affected parties.

### *Traffic/Transportation*

The Master Plan Update conforms to the *Parking*, *TMP*, and *TDM* policies of the Comprehensive Plan by developing a detailed Transportation Management Plan, including commitments for extensive use of public transportation, limitations on employee parking to meet the Comprehensive Plan ratio of 1:3 for suburban areas within 2,000 feet of Metrorail, and provisions for other incentives to reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles.

Where parking is proposed, large structures are planned to replace surface lots in many locations, allowing for an efficient building program needed to meet the requirements of the 2005 BRAC Action.

The NNMC has also hired an Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) who is already working with staff to work toward the goals of the TMP. The ETC will promote alternative modes of transportation and will also review and revise the TMP on a regular basis as conditions change.

As identified in the FEIS, staff notes the critical need to improve the local transportation network to minimize congestion related to increased traffic to the campus. The Navy is pursuing improvements to the Rockville Pike/North Wood Road intersection as well as improvements to the five campus entry control points as part of the BRAC-required on-base transportation improvements. The Department of Defense has committed to funding these improvements in fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

Staff also supports the ongoing coordination and efforts by the Navy and WMATA to provide direct access from the Medical Center Metrorail station on the east side of Rockville Pike, as well as their efforts to provide funding for the project. Since the final design option has not yet been selected by WMATA and DoD funding has not been allocated, this project will require additional coordination.

**The Navy is encouraged to continue collaboration with local planning and regulatory agencies to develop and implement federally-funded traffic and transportation improvements related to implementation of the Master Plan Update.**

### *Coordination*

While the Navy has agreed to conduct Section 106 consultations for individual projects, as agreed to with the Maryland Historical Trust, a request has also been made by the Montgomery County Planning Department to have individual projects reviewed by that agency. While NCPC does not require such coordination once a Master Plan is approved, it will potentially benefit the region and the applicant if coordination is continued to ensure that county and regional master planning efforts are complementary to each other.

**Staff recommends that the Navy continue to coordinate individual project reviews with the Montgomery County Planning Department prior to submitting to NCPC for review.**

### CONFORMANCE

#### Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The proposed Master Plan Update is not inconsistent with the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, and particularly conforms to the goals and policies of the Federal Workplace and Transportation Elements of the plan. While the 2005 BRAC Action requires a portion of the WRAMC to be relocated to NNMC (an action that does not fully conform to the Federal Workplace Element), by expanding federal facilities in close proximity to public transportation and by collaborating with other federal and local entities, the proposed action is likely to provide opportunities to benefit both the local and regional economy, adjacent transportation systems, and quality of medical care for military personnel.

#### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

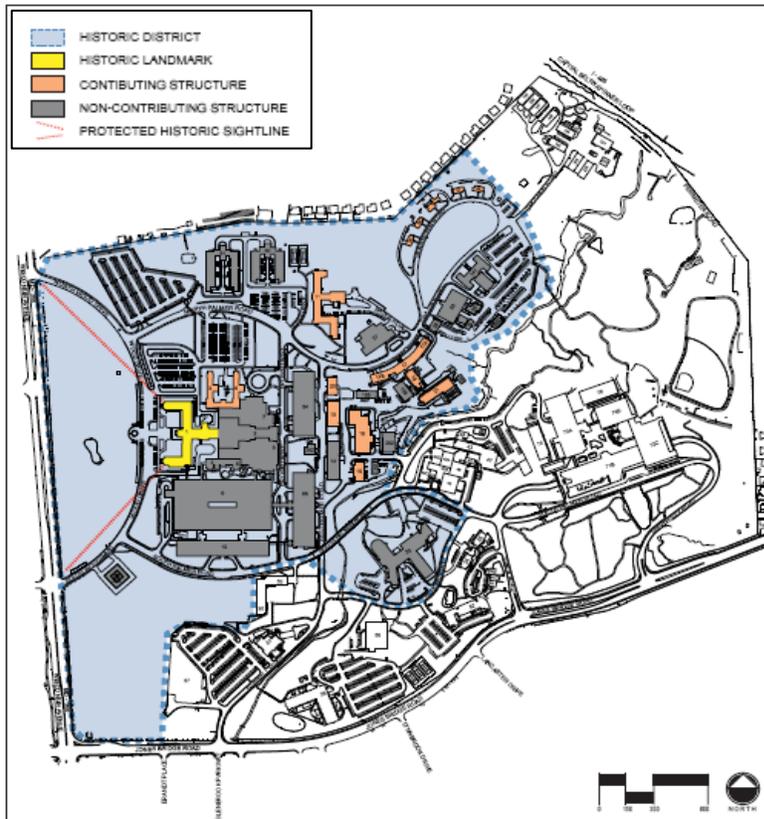
A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was completed for the NNMC in March 2008. In addition to a No Building alternative, the Navy evaluated two Build alternatives that would meet the purpose and need of the action; those alternatives are referred to as the “Preferred Alternative” and “Alternative Two.” Both Build alternatives would provide the campus with an equal amount of building area (1.6 million gsf), as well as approximately 1,800 parking spaces. The two alternatives share similar plans for renovation and expansion of the medical facilities, but differ in their siting of other required facilities to support the planned growth of the Medical Center.

Although the No Build alternative was the environmentally preferred alternative, it did not meet the purpose and need of the action and would not comply with the BRAC law. The Preferred Alternative was selected over Alternative Two since it had superior functional efficiency with regard to placement of new facilities and reused approximately 85,000 gsf more of existing structures. The Preferred Alternative also had lower environmental impacts, with conversion of 28 percent less land to impervious surface; placement of new construction further from existing woodlands and the endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrel habitat; and other impacts being the same for both Build alternatives.

The EIS has identified anticipated adverse impacts resulting from the campus expansion, particularly with regard to an increase in local traffic. These impacts are expected to be mitigated with the implementation of the Transportation Management Plan, included in the Master Plan Update.

NCPC does not have independent NEPA responsibility for federal projects outside the District of Columbia.

### National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)



**NNMIC HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Building One was listed in the National Register of Historic places in 1977. Constructed during the administration of President Roosevelt and based on a design concept originated by the president (he sketched a rough plan and elevation for the new Naval hospital on White House stationery), it is significant for its association with Roosevelt, World War II era military development, and the association with architect Paul Philippe Cret and the Navy architectural staff under Fredrick W. Southworth. A striking and architecturally significant building, the integrity of the tower remains intact as a highly visible landmark and the key defining element of the campus.

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) has reviewed the Master Plan Update and made a determination of “no adverse effect” subject to individual project reviews by the MHT. Also affecting the proposed update is a Memorandum of Agreement executed by the MHT and the Navy related to demolition of historic Building 12 (in order to construct the NICoE on that site). The MOA requires the Navy to rehabilitate historic building 17 and to retain historic buildings 18 and 21 for future use; and to rehabilitate the historic landscape west of Building One. All work will be carried out in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties.

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) has reviewed the Master

NCPC does not have independent Section 106 responsibility for federal projects outside the District of Columbia.

### CONSULTATION

Shortly after announcement of the 2005 BRAC Action, the military began efforts to evaluate and plan for the impact on NNMIC and the community. Community outreach and coordination has been continuous since that time, and the Navy considered community comments in its completion of the FEIS as well as the Master Plan Update.

The Master Plan Update has also been referred to affected agencies through the Maryland State Clearinghouse for review and comment. The Maryland Department of Planning determined the proposed project to be generally consistent with their plans, programs, and objectives. Comments from other agencies are as follows:

#### Maryland Department of Transportation

The Maryland Department of Transportation determined the proposed project to be generally consistent with their plans, programs, and objectives, and addressed issues relating to planning coordination, support by the Navy of the WMATA Purple line, increase pedestrian safety at Rockville Pike, and federally-funded transportation alternatives included in the Master Plan Update. The submitted comments also expressed concern that the proposed increase in parking would not be sufficient to accommodate the increase in staff, patients, and visitors.

#### Maryland Department of the Environment

The Maryland Department of the Environment determined the proposed project to be generally consistent with their plans, programs, and objectives, and noted potential issues relating to hazardous materials and waste; construction waste and recycling, and lead paint abatement.

#### Maryland Historical Trust

The Maryland Historical Trust found that the project will have no adverse effect provided that individual projects are submitted for review and approval by the MHT. The Navy has concurred with this approach as part of their master planning coordination with the MHT.

#### Montgomery County

Montgomery County (MDOT/SHA/MTA) urged the Navy to take responsibility for the construction of an entrance to the Medical Center Metrorail station, provide regular and frequent shuttle service, and construct turn lane, traffic flow, and pedestrian safety improvements at main entrances along Rockville Pike.

#### Montgomery County Planning Department - Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in Montgomery County

The Montgomery County Planning Department determined the proposed project to be generally consistent with their plans, programs, and objectives, and provided several comments related to the proposed transportation-related improvements described in the Master Plan Update. The Transportation Planning Division (TPD) requested that the Navy continue to coordinate individual projects with the County as the Master Plan is implemented, supported the inclusion of additional on-campus housing, and requested consideration for relocation of the helipad as well as creation of a kiss-n-ride facility at the campus perimeter. The TPD also recommended mechanisms to further encourage non-SOV travel and means to combine shuttle services with the National Institutes of Health.

Montgomery County BRAC Implementation Committee

The Montgomery County BRAC Implementation Committee (MCBIC) had comments very similar to the County comments (MDOT/SHA/MTA – see above), and also requested that the Navy establish a formal, long-term office of community liaison.

While the Navy plans to establish a forum for interaction with the neighbors in the short term, their current plan is to continue to disseminate information and receive feedback through the MCBIC.

Maryland Department of State Police

The Maryland Department of State Police did not have any comments.

Maryland Departments of Natural Resources and Business and Economic Development

No comments were received from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources or the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development.