

**FINAL FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE MARINE CORPS RESERVE CENTER AT
JOINT BASE LEWIS-McCHORD YAKIMA TRAINING CENTER, YAKIMA
WASHINGTON**

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CPR] Parts 1500-1508) implementing procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Marine Corps Order (MCO) P5090.2A, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) Marine Forces Reserves (MFR) gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been issued for the construction of the Marine Corps Reserve Center (MCRC) at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) Yakima Training Center (YTC), Yakima, Washington. I find that the Proposed Action will not have a significant impact on the human environment and, therefore, an EIS is not required.

BACKGROUND

Marine Corps Reserve, Company B, 4th Tank Battalion (Company B) is part of the MFR, which trains to support the active component of the US Marine Corps (USMC) in irregular warfare, arms maneuvers, mountain warfare, amphibious operations, and jungle warfare. The unit is currently housed at the MFR reserve center located in downtown Yakima, Washington. The unit's primary training and vehicle maintenance facilities are located at YTC, 12 miles north of the MFR reserve center. This arrangement results in an inefficient use of operating funds and man-hours commuting from the reserve center in downtown Yakima, to the YTC where tank maintenance and training occur. MFR leases its current vehicle maintenance facility at YTC from the US Army and shares that facility with the Washington Army National Guard (ARNG). The current vehicle maintenance facility is not designed for the maintenance of tracked vehicles, and does not function in the optimum manner. The Proposed Action is needed in order to provide Company B with the necessary facilities to meet its training mission requirements, consolidate its operational assets, and maintain its combat readiness.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The Marine Forces Reserves proposes to secure a real estate agreement with the Department of the Army and construct a new MCRC that will provide combat vehicle maintenance facilities, vehicle holding sheds, tactical vehicle parking areas, wash racks, security fences, and reserve training center, which will collectively require approximately two acres of land, for Company B. The proposed location for the facilities at YTC is an undeveloped 12.5 acre parcel adjacent to the Transient Soldier Motor Pool, entirely within the Cantonment Area at YTC, referred to hereafter as the MCRC Site. It is in

close proximity to a former USMC tank park site and has access to a base road, tank trail, and utilities. Site preparation will entail grubbing, clearing and leveling the area for construction. The proposed MCRC will consist of a one-story steel framed structure with concrete foundation, concrete floor, masonry walls, metal doors with hardware, sloped metal roofing system, fire protection system, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, a specially constructed weapon storage area, assembly hall, classrooms, locker and shower rooms, workshops, and electrical and mechanical utilities. The project will conform to Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) standards. MFR would also prepare a landscaping plan for the portions of the MCRC Site not proposed for buildings, structures, or paved surfaces.

From an operations perspective, the Proposed Action would result in minor changes in the level or type of training that Company B conducts at YTC, and no changes to the level or type of cross-country maneuvers, live-fire training operations, and vehicle maintenance activities. Nine active-duty administrative personnel would be relocated from the downtown Yakima MCRC to YTC. Company B has an authorized strength of 133 personnel, including all active and reserve personnel but currently is comprised of only 62 reservists. These reservists, along with the active-duty administrative personnel, would be relocated from the downtown MCRC to the proposed MCRC at YTC for all periodic training activities (i.e., one 24-hour period per month) and annual 14-day training periods. The remaining Company B personnel already train at YTC.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

As part of the EA process, potential alternatives to the proposed activities were evaluated and compared to the Proposed Action.

Alternatives Considered but Eliminated

One alternative considered upgrading the downtown Yakima MCRC to AT/FP standards while continuing to share maintenance facilities with the Washington ARNG at YTC. While this alternative potentially resolved the issue of meeting AT/FP standards for the MCRC in downtown Yakima, it did not consolidate assets and operations in one location. This alternative also did not solve the problem of logistics and security associated with transporting personnel and weapons to YTC or the maintenance inefficiencies of leasing inadequate space and facilities from the US Army. This alternative was therefore dismissed from further consideration in this EA.

The second alternative considered consolidating vehicle maintenance activities at the downtown Yakima MCRC and upgrading that facility to meet AT/FP standards. Company B uses the YTC range for cross-country maneuvers and live-fire training operations. The logistical challenges and risks associated with transporting tanks in addition to weapons, ammunition, and personnel from downtown Yakima to the YTC range would be far more significant and costly than in the Preferred Alternative or the other alternative described in this section. In addition, transportation time from

downtown Yakima to YTC would reduce available training time. Therefore, this alternative was dismissed from further analysis in the EA.

After applying the selection criteria, the construction of a new MCRC (the Proposed Action) remained the only course of action that would fully address Company B's need to meet its training mission requirements, consolidate its operational assets, and maintain its combat readiness.

No-Action Alternative

The No-Action alternative was also analyzed as required by NEPA.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Land Use

The Proposed Action is consistent with the existing land use and current operations at YTC. Training and operations at YTC would not be impacted. The Proposed Action would adversely affect the scenic views from approximately six off-site residences within 500 feet of the MCRC Site. Lighting from the proposed MCRC would be noticeable to these residences. These effects would be minor in intensity, by the fact that the proposed MCRC facility would only be one story in height, would only occupy 2 acres of a 12.5 acre site, and is consistent in scale and nature with other facilities in the Cantonment Area. Consistent with mission-essential requirements, facility design and siting will minimize light pollution and disturbance of views for neighboring private property. Accordingly, the Proposed Action would have no significant impact on Land Use.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action would create no new permanent employment positions in the Yakima region; therefore no change in regional population would occur. The Proposed Action would involve permanent relocation of nine full time active-duty personnel and approximately 62 reservists (periodic training) from the downtown MCRC to YTC. YTC has approximately 500 permanent employees and hosts an average of 2,200 personnel during training exercises; therefore, this increase in personnel is negligible. YTC is within commuting distance of the existing downtown MCRC; therefore the consolidation of activities at YTC would not change the demographics of surrounding communities.

Construction activities would have a short-term positive effect on the local economy through the purchase of construction materials and the generation of construction wages and jobs. The direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Action would not cause disproportionately adverse environmental, economic, or health impacts on minority or low-income populations, or children near YTC.

The Proposed Action would have no significant impact on socioeconomics and environmental justice.

Infrastructure, Utilities, and Emergency Services/Medical Care

Although minor additional demands would be placed on YTC's infrastructure, the installation's existing capacities for potable water production, wastewater treatment, energy distribution, medical care, and solid waste disposal are adequate to support the Proposed Action. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no significant impact on Infrastructure, Utilities, or Emergency Services/Medical Care.

Subsequent to publication of the Preliminary Final EA, MFR learned that the potable water supply line designated to supply the MCRC has inadequate pressure to support fire suppression. As a result, the proposed water system now includes a new 1,500 foot long water main from the southeast. This system is in a higher pressure zone and the proposed water main will connect to it. The area between the MCRC Site and the new water supply line is entirely within the YTC Cantonment Area; accordingly, this revision to the Proposed Action's water supply does not affect the finding of no significant impact.

Transportation and Traffic

There would be a minor increase in Traffic on Firing Center Road over the short term as construction-related vehicles enter and exit the Cantonment Area until construction is complete. After completion of the MCRC, traffic volumes entering YTC would be negligible and would not exceed the capacity of the roadways or gate on Firing Center Road. Thus, the Proposed Action would have no significant impacts on transportation and traffic.

Air Quality

Construction activities associated with the Proposed Action would result in minor, temporary increases in criteria pollutant emissions. These temporary impacts would be generally limited to the immediate vicinity of the construction area. Operation of the new MCRC would include increased air emissions from two boilers, although these new emissions are expected to be minor, and would be at least partially offset by reduced emissions at the ARNG-operated vehicle maintenance facility currently used by Company B. Criteria pollutant emissions associated with construction of the Proposed Action would not violate National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), Washington State Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS), or impair visibility in any Class I Areas. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no significant air quality impacts.

Noise

Construction of the Proposed Action would create minor, temporary increases in noise in the vicinity of the proposed MCRC Site. Specifically, the use of heavy equipment for site preparation and development (e.g., vegetation removal, grading, and backfill) would generate noise levels above average ambient noise levels. Noise levels would be typical of standard construction activities and would only last through the construction phase. Noise from operation of the new MCRC would be consistent with background noise

levels already experienced at YTC. Thus, there would be no significant noise impacts from the Proposed Action.

Cultural Resources

No known archaeological or architectural resources are located within or in close proximity to the MCRC Site. MFR concluded that the Proposed Action would have no effect on any tribal resources or sites eligible for the National Register. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have no effect on cultural resources.

Natural Resources

The Proposed Action would have minor effects on existing topography and soils during clearing, filling, grading, and construction activities. There are no perennial streams or other surface water bodies, wetlands, or floodplains on the proposed MCRC Site, therefore the Proposed Action would have no effect on these resources. The Proposed Action would cause the loss of approximately two acres of grassland habitat. However, this habitat is already impacted by the presence of noxious weeds. No federal or state-listed threatened or endangered species are known to occur on the site. MFR concluded that the Proposed Action would have no effect on any listed species.

A field inspection documented one Townsend's ground squirrel at the western edge of the proposed MCRC Site and three burrow complexes that could provide habitat for either the Townsend's ground squirrel or the burrowing owl. Both of these species are considered Species of Concern by the USFWS and are designated as Candidate species by the WDFW. The field inspection found no burrowing owls. Nevertheless, MFR has committed to having a biologist on-site during site preparation to ensure that these species, if present, are protected and relocated to other suitable habitat at YTC.

Accordingly, the Proposed Action would have no significant effect on natural resources.

Hazardous Materials and Waste

There are no installation restoration sites, solid waste management units, or underground storage tank sites located within the proposed MCRC Site. The Proposed Action would not affect the generation, disposal, or handling of hazardous materials or waste. Hazardous wastes present at the existing MCRC in downtown Yakima would be disposed of following applicable federal and state procedures. Accordingly, the Proposed Action would have no significant impact on hazardous materials and wastes.

Mitigation

This EA has not identified any significant impacts resulting from the Proposed Action that require mitigation. MFR has already proposed to implement various measures and to follow specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) that can help further reduce minor impacts.

Mitigation Measures

MFR proposes the following mitigation measures as part of the Proposed Action:

- Provision of a stormwater retention pond, maintained in good operating condition;
- Provision of erosion and sediment control measures to address potential impacts to soils and topography;
- Provision of an oil/water separator at the vehicle wash rack;
- Ensuring the presence of an archaeologist and a biologist during site clearing and grading, in the event that any unanticipated archaeological artifacts or potential species of concern (e.g., Townsend's ground squirrel, burrowing owl) are found; and
- Control of Russian knapweed and any other noxious plants found on the site, in accordance with the YTC Integrated Pest Management Plan.

Best Management Practices

MFR proposes to employ the following BMPs in constructing and operating the Proposed Action:

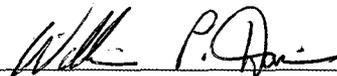
- Construction of the MCRC to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standards to reduce energy and water use;
- Provision of hazardous materials storage, including enclosed, separate structures for storage of hazardous materials, flammable storage for any flammable hazardous materials, and a satellite site for accumulation and storage of hazardous waste;
- Use of "low impact design" stormwater management techniques for the MCRC to minimize impacts on soil and water quality (including limiting stormwater drainage to Tipp Road);
- Preparation of a landscaping plan using and use of native and ornamental plant species for landscaping, aesthetics and control of erosion and stormwater runoff
Restriction of construction operations to 0730 – 1630 hours, Monday through Friday, to avoid unnecessary disturbance to residences adjacent to the YTC boundaries; and

- Consistent with mission-essential requirements, consideration of views from and minimization of light pollution to neighboring private property through facility design and siting.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Notice of Availability for the Preliminary Final EA was published in the Yakima Herald-Republic and the Ellensburg Daily Record from 25 February through 1 March 2011, and was also published in the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) register on 25 February. Copies of the Preliminary Final EA were placed in the Yakima and Ellensburg Public Libraries. No public comments were received during the 30-day comment period that ended 28 March 2011.

After careful consideration of the information and analyses contained in the Final EA, public comments, and other relevant factors, I find that implementation of the Proposed Action will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment, or generate significant controversy and, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.



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