

BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE

Community Profile

November 2009

Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove, Pennsylvania

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Closure at a Glance

Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA):

Horsham Township Authority for Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NASTRB)

Geographic area affected by military installation growth:

Bucks and Montgomery Counties, Pennsylvania

Population of affected area (before closure):

Montgomery 795,618; Bucks 621,342 = Total 1,416,960

Total acres to be disposed: 53.5 acres

Estimated Job Loss Impact:

Jobs Lost	
Military Personnel	968
Civilian Personnel	679
Contractors	5

Source: Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission Report

Economic Adjustment Challenges

Unknown at this time

Key Reuse Planning & Property Disposal Milestones

1/02/09	Federal Surplus Determination
7/15/09	LRA Homeless Outreach Completed
Pending	Reuse Plan Submitted to Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)/Military Service
Pending	HUD Determination on Submission
Pending	National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Record of Decision
Pending	Base Closure

Organization

The Horsham Authority for Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NASJRB) Willow Grove (HLRA) is a planning LRA. BRAC 2005 closed NASJRB Willow Grove. The community expected the main base located in Horsham Township, Montgomery County, and the off-site housing located in Warminster Township and Ivyland Borough in Bucks County to be surplus property. To prepare for this change, a nine-member Executive Board of the HLRA was organized. The Executive Board is comprised of the following: two Horsham Township Councilmen; single representatives from the Horsham Township Industrial and Commercial Development Authority, Montgomery County Industrial Development Authority, Hatboro Horsham School District, Bucks County, Montgomery County, Horsham Business Community; and one local resident. The HLRA is a corporation established under the Pennsylvania Authorities Act. In addition, there are five committees that were established and report to the Executive Board. The committees are: Economic Development, Reuse, Housing and Homeless, Environmental, and the Bucks County Offsite Housing Committees.

Reuse Plan/Other Studies

Surplus property was not declared until January 2, 2009. As a direct result of special federal legislation establishing the Horsham Joint Interagency Installation, only 53 of the total 804+ acres has been declared surplus. The surplus property is the military housing located in Warminster and Ivyland. The reuse planning is currently underway. The LRA hired a consulting firm in July 2009 to develop an economic diversification plan, to assist the LRA with outreach to the homeless and others interested in public use of the property, and most importantly, to take these inputs and other information to produce a redevelopment plan. The outreach period was completed in July 2009 allowing the consultant to assist the LRA with evaluating the four Notices of Interest (NOI).

Homeless Submission

As stated above, the reuse planning is now underway. There are two Homeless NOIs that were submitted and they are currently under review.

Implementation and Partnering Strategies

The reuse planning is currently underway.

Successes/Lessons Learned

Although the community was disappointed that “Save the Base” efforts were not successful, once the BRAC decision was rendered, the community and the HLRA actually looked forward to the reuse planning. Our area is a high-growth region with plenty of employers looking to expand their facilities and home builders looking for more property to develop. This would be a perfect opportunity to create a vision for the future of the region. We were advised to proceed with our reuse planning before surplus was declared and to be aware that no two BRAC properties or plans were the same. Little did we know that the special legislation would be passed effectively eliminating local input and planning with the exception of the 53 acres declared for surplus. As of yet, there is no real business plan for the use of the main base and the local residents and HLRA have little opportunity for input.

The HLRA learned that one small paragraph in a 140 page bill can have serious impact. The paragraph begins, “Not withstanding any law to the contrary....”