

BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE

Community Profile

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Arlington, Virginia, Leased Space

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Closure at a Glance

Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA):

Lead Agency: Arlington Economic Development Geographic area affected by realignment: Arlington County, VA including: Crystal City, Rosslyn, Ballston, Clarendon, and Virginia Square

Population of affected area (before closure):

County population of 198,267 (2005 estimate)

Total Building Square Footage Vacated by DoD:

4.2 million square feet leased office space

Estimated Job Loss Impact:

Jobs Lost	
Military Personnel	4,000
Civilian Personnel	13,000
Contractors*	10,000

Source: Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission Report;
*Arlington County Estimate

Economic Adjustment Challenges

Workforce Transition: Supporting relocated personnel, in current or searching for new positions in the area – impact on industry.

Crystal City Redevelopment: 13,000 of the 17,000 affected jobs, and 3 million of 4.2 million square feet of leased space, are in Crystal City – impact on business, commercial, residential, hospitality, and transit networks.

Business Retention and Attraction: Contractor impact is unclear, number of contractors that may need to be relocated outside the gate of receiving bases is unclear; whether that relocation will be full operation or Component; attracting new business to replace lost activities with a focus toward diversification.

Key Reuse Planning & Property Disposal Milestones

No federally owned property will be declared surplus to the needs of the Federal Government. Thus, no base redevelopment plan or environmental analysis is required for property disposal. For those leases extending beyond September 2011, the General Services Administration will be responsible for backfilling. The redevelopment plan will guide revitalization of Crystal City.

Organization

In response to the Department of Defense (DoD) vacating leased space in Arlington County, VA, the Arlington County Economic Development Commission recommended to the Arlington County Board the formation of a BRAC Transition Task Force. In January 2006, the Arlington County Board appointed the task force to develop strategic recommendations to address the anticipated impacts and opportunities from the BRAC action. The task force included workforce, education, business, defense, economic development, and commercial development experts from the community with support from workforce and economic development County staff.

The BRAC Transition Task Force targeted four topic areas believed of gravest concern for Arlington: workforce; small business/hospitality; physical redevelopment; and re-tenanting. A six-month research and analysis process ensued with presentations from experts in each field, and resulted in a great deal of careful thought and deliberations. In June 2006, the Task Force presented 34 recommendations to the Arlington County Board, organized into 8 categories: Infrastructure, Planning and Development Policies, Business and Workforce Assistance, Business and Tenant Incentives, Communications and Outreach, Federal and State Legislative Initiatives, Marketing Strategies, and Monitoring/Management/Evaluation. These recommendations were reiterated in the "Top 10 First Steps" provided by the task force to help guide the Arlington County Board's response; and included initiation of a formal planning process to create a new vision to revitalize Crystal City and establish a workforce transition center.

The Crystal City Planning (CCP) Task Force was established to respond to the specific impacts in Crystal City (Figure 1). The CCP Task Force included residents, property owners, transportation commission members, planning commission members, retail tenants, arts commission members, office tenants, the BRAC Task Force, parks and recreation commission, and neighboring residential associations. Arlington County planning, transportation, parks and recreation, economic development, and housing staff supported the CCP Task Force. Charged with generating a vision for the next generation of Crystal City, the CCP Task Force began its work in April 2006. The CCP Task Force held public meetings to solicit feedback from the affected community, which was used to guide the adopted policy framework and concept plan for Crystal City revitalization. The adopted plans are now being vetted by the various Arlington commissions, led by the Long Range Planning Commission.

The Higher Education Council of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce which includes: George Mason University, Georgetown University, George Washington University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Marymount University, DeVry University, and Northern Virginia Community College, committed resources to provide education and training to affected workers. The Higher Education Council will also collaborate with affected industries to ensure relevant curriculum and training programs to support workforce transition.

Arlington County is also responding to the growth at the Army National Guard Readiness Center (ARNGRC). With the support of County BRAC staff, two Arlington community groups -- Alcova Heights Civic Association and the Barcroft School and Civic League -- were organized in response to this growth. The ARNGRC staff have provided quarterly briefings, and attend community meetings as requested.

Reuse Plan/Other Studies

Following the BRAC Transition Task Force recommendations, a formal planning process was initiated to create a new vision to revitalize Crystal City, an area long dependent on defense-related employment. The CCP Task Force, chaired by the former BRAC Task Force Chair and co-chaired by the Arlington County Planning Commission Chair, oversaw the planning initiative which has resulted in a long-term vision and development framework for Crystal City. A range of development scenarios were prepared to address a feasible balance of density, height, use mixes, open space, security, and transportation to encourage reinvestment in support of non-DoD Federal agencies and private industry. The planning process included an economic feasibility study, retail study, residential study, and transportation analysis with the results becoming an integral part of the adopted policy framework. Regular community meetings are held to assess progress to date and provide a forum for affected populations.

Implementation and Partnering Strategies

Workforce

Arlington opened the BRAC Transition Center in Crystal City in November 2007 to serve the workforce, businesses, development community, employers, residential communities, and other BRAC stakeholders as a hub for Arlington BRAC activities. BRAC staff members conduct brown bag meetings and participate in Defense Agency town hall sessions as requested to inform personnel of the available services; and assist them through their transitions.

The Transition Center hosts three monthly workforce information sessions for affected workers on navigating the Federal employment application process; developing the “Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities” sections of Federal applications; and networking and interviewing. Hearing from the workforce allows BRAC staff to tailor programming to worker needs. To date, several hundred have completed these training sessions, with the majority completing all three. Workforce sessions are also conducted inside agencies by request. These activities are also available for the retail and contracting community.

Site visits to affected retailers and contractors reveal the breadth of the BRAC impact; including challenges with space, labor, contracting opportunities, permitting, etc. These site visits provide the foundation for business service delivery. Individual counseling sessions are conducted with workers seeking individual support. These individual sessions usually continue until the worker has found alternative employment in the region or at the receiving installation. Workers are asked to complete surveys after each information session to ensure programming is relevant and helpful. Agencies are also asked to identify needs in order to customize service delivery for their employees.

In support of BRAC Transition Center activities, Arlington County received grant awards from the Virginia National Defense Industrial Authority to secure space for the Center and to cover its operating costs through December 2010. The U.S. Department of Labor has provided grant funds to hire workforce staff and provide career enhancement programming and training support to the affected workforce.

Crystal City Redevelopment

Crystal City is most affected by 2005 BRAC decisions. In Arlington County, 13,000 of the 17,000 jobs – and 3 million of the 4.2 million square feet of leased office space – are located in Crystal City. The leased office spaces represent a third of the commercial market in Crystal City. With DoD’s departure, Crystal City stands to lose its primary economic anchor – one that has dominated the landscape for more than thirty years. A key strategic response is to find other tenants, including private sector tenants, to occupy the vacated space. However, much of the DoD-occupied office space, including defense contractors, is older, functionally obsolete, and non-competitive in the private sector office market.

In Crystal City, BRAC affects 22 buildings, of which more than half are Class B or C buildings. Many of the buildings are older, with floor plans much smaller than modern office building standards, and have outdated mechanical systems. Only two of these buildings have been substantially renovated – one more than ten years ago.

The opportunity cost of maintaining the status quo in Crystal City is high, in terms of fiscal and economic impact. In February 2006, Arlington Economic Development (AED) contracted a special economic impact study to compare net tax revenues under two scenarios: a baseline of current buildings and a redevelopment scenario. The study showed that the fiscal differential with redevelopment is approximately \$161 million over 15 years.

As a result, the Arlington County Board approved the creation of the CCP Task Force to formulate a planning foundation, to demonstrate growth over 50 years. This planning included an illustrative concept plan of what Crystal City can become by designating spaces for commercial, residential, parks/open spaces, transit networks, and the arts. A policy framework guides development based on considerations such as density, building heights, sustainability, and land use. This planning process included residents, property owners, building tenants, transportation, planning, parks and recreation, arts commission members, and neighboring residential civic association members. The Arlington County Board subsequently adopted a policy framework and concept plan for Crystal City redevelopment. To support

this work, OEA awarded Arlington County a grant to hire planning consultants to work with County staff, the CCP Task Force, and the community to develop the Crystal City redevelopment plan.

Business Retention and Attraction

Due to BRAC 2005 and its impact on DoD, Arlington may experience a sizeable contractor attrition as these businesses follow their contracts. Recognizing this potential, the BRAC Transition Task Force specifically outlined actions for the purpose of re-tenanting Crystal City. While difficult to quantify, County BRAC staff conduct site visits to identified contractors to ascertain the impact of BRAC on their operations. The staff visits are intended to determine whether their work requires the contractors to relocate “outside the base,” and if so, whether they are considering moving their entire operation, a portion, or none at all. These visits are also intended to ascertain whether contractors will have labor impacts – either downsizing or growth – and assess implications for their space needs. The BRAC Business Manager works with AED’s Business Investment Group (BIG), to prepare a relevant response to the contractors’ needs and continues efforts until the needs are fulfilled. BRAC staff also respond to space inquiries from brokers and businesses directly. As inquiries are made, BIG and BRAC staff work with these entities to identify potential space options. BRAC staff also work with the Crystal City Business Improvement District (BID) to support activities that will attract residents, visitors, and business to the community. The Crystal City Redevelopment Plan is being used as an attraction tool for business.

Efforts are also underway to support the retail and hospitality sectors in affected areas. BRAC staff work closely with the BIDs in affected areas and with the major building owners in Crystal City to conduct outreach to this population. Staff members completed walking tours of affected communities to better understand their location, worker usage, and accessibility. Staff also completed several site visits to introduce the redevelopment project and engage communities in the process. Plans are underway to host several “BRAC Weeks” utilizing retailers as “locations of the week” in order to build on current outreach efforts.

To support the business service delivery, Arlington is partnering with the Small Business Administration to provide business services to the affected population and aspiring entrepreneurs through the Transition Center and other AED programs. The County is funding a full-time Business Development Manager to manage the BRAC business programming.

While the 2005 BRAC actions are relocating approximately 17,000 jobs from Arlington County, previous BRAC actions historically show only an estimated 30 percent of the affected workforce followed their jobs, which could leave a significant base of highly-skilled laborers to attract new business and retain workforce skills in Arlington County. For Crystal City, Arlington County is taking advantage of the opportunity BRAC presents to diversify the economy and build clusters that take advantage of economies of scale and established networks. Private industry is increasingly seeking presence in Crystal City, desiring space that will be vacated by the BRAC moves and a location that places them close to the government, public transit, and the airport.

Additionally, Arlington is working to expand its science and technology presence with the clustering of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), National Science Foundation, Office of Naval Research, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, and the Homeland Security Advanced Research Projects Agency in Ballston along with the location of the Virginia Tech Research Center and George Mason University. AED worked to establish the Ballston Science & Technology Alliance (BSTA), which sponsors *Café Scientifique*, a monthly event that showcases science innovations from around the country. The focus of BSTA is to increase the dialogue around science and technology; bringing the experts to the local level to engage the general public; and show how science impacts everyday life. This synergy of activity is expected to attract public and private investment, thereby creating new jobs and expanding markets.

The breadth of impact of the 2005 BRAC actions on Arlington has made it vital to build collaborations and partnerships with stakeholders to manage the transition. There is a significant community impact that requires the input and commitment of all components to position Arlington for growth and expansion beyond the transition. Because the mandate is to vacate privately owned leased office space there is no physical property to be transferred, nor is a base redevelopment plan necessary. Therefore, Arlington County does not have a local redevelopment authority. Yet, all of

the components that come together, when physical property is a consideration, or when growth is the outcome, are still critical to identify and coalesce.

Additionally, the County is collaborating with the receiving installations to track construction progress job relocations. This allows BRAC staff to keep affected workers updated and to provide employment information to interested parties. Moreover, BRAC staff are working with planners to build sustainable environments that incorporate public and private use and are environmentally sensitive. This relationship lays the foundation for our work with commercial and residential developers to build physical infrastructures that will attract and support workforce and business needs now and in the future. Similarly, the BRAC staff have worked with parks and recreation to create environments that encourage the use of public spaces and spaces that add to the users' quality of life; and with transportation to create routes and nodes that take advantage of public transit networks and lessen the reliance on personal vehicles. With all of the affected populations, timely and reliable communication has proven invaluable.

The County has also worked very hard to gain the trust of the leadership of the relocating activities. They are part of the community and possess critical information related to move timelines and workforce decisions. These relationships better inform the implementation of our plans. The County has initiated contact and participated in meetings with the Military Departments and Agency leads to build a network of information sharing and transition support. While this has been a challenge, illustrating their importance as a member of our community helps to calm security concerns and fosters an environment of trust and mutual benefit. As a result, several agencies have requested workforce services to support their transition service delivery to employees. Additionally, these agencies encourage their workers to take advantage of the monthly workforce seminars offered at the BRAC Transition Center.

Working with the affected workers allows BRAC staff to understand the labor needs and match them with respective employers in Arlington or the region and/or educational/training resources, thereby maintaining the high-skill level of the workforce. This availability of ready skilled labor is a marketing tool to attract and retain business and industry in Arlington. Moreover, the presence of the Pentagon and 23 other Federal agencies in Arlington – mostly on public transit routes – gives us a locational advantage that, when married with the workforce capability, positions us for future growth and expansion. As investment in the sciences, energy, and technology continue, contractor support will increase in proximity to these activities, and the availability of a skilled workforce will be important location criteria.

Transportation concerns have become the greatest challenge to moving the workforce around the Washington D.C. region to new work locations. Arlington County, recognizing that many of the personnel from Arlington County are realigning to other installations in the region, has partnered with Fort Belvoir to sponsor a Transportation Open House. The Open House will showcase relocation services available to agencies and workers. The County is also collaborating with other installations in the region to engage in deliberations regarding workforce transportation issues.



Figure 1: Map of Crystal City

Successes/Lessons Learned

Arlington County has achieved several BRAC Task Force recommendations: the BRAC Transition Center is operational and serving clients; the Permitting Department has established new permitting guidelines that allow a 48-hour application turn-around for specific projects; the Crystal City framework has been approved by the County Board; Federal and state grant awards are being leveraged to build partnerships and to provide programming and services to affected populations; research has been completed to gather information and formulate plans for affected workers and businesses; the BRAC Coordinator was hired to manage Arlington BRAC activities; a work plan was created to identify and assign tasks and resources to Arlington's BRAC plan; and a monitoring tool was created to manage and evaluate progress toward full implementation of Arlington's delineated recommendations.

Additionally, the Arlington County planning consultants have completed the Crystal City redevelopment plan and policy framework which was approved by the County Board and currently being vetted by the Long-Range Planning Committee. The plan and framework will be open for public hearings before the final report is submitted to the Arlington County Board in June 2010. The economic impact study consultants helped determine the financial feasibility of Crystal City plans and provided planning guidance to County staff to incorporate in the redevelopment plan. County personnel continue to meet with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, the Federal Aviation Administration, and consultants to establish a new procedure for evaluating the impacts of recommendations from the proposed development plan of Crystal City on airspace requirements.

The BRAC Coordinator and the BRAC Project Assistant are fully engaged in overseeing the implementation of the recommendations guiding the project. They are monitoring activities at receiving installations for impact on County redevelopment plans; working with appropriate DoD staff to obtain the numerical impact of relocations and projected timelines; serving as liaisons for affected neighborhoods to respective expansion projects; initiating and facilitating meetings as necessary; participating in regional planning; responding to local, regional, and federal inquiries; monitoring relevant legislative activity; seeking funding support for project implementation; and providing data and information to affected populations.

These efforts reflect the partnerships and collaborations established with business, economic development, education, community groups, commercial and residential developers, planning, transportation, and workforce groups to assist Arlington in managing this transition. Many of these partners have participated in or currently sit on advisory committees designed to represent the impacted components of these BRAC actions in the decision-making process.

The value of collaboration and partnerships for downsizing communities cannot be stressed enough. Arlington County's response to BRAC requires us to interact not with one Military Department, but with all three of them and a number of DoD Agencies as well. This has required a deliberate evaluation of impacts that produced clear priorities, but also established a flexible/adaptable response based on data gathering and move timelines. The latter has proved invaluable as Arlington's plan cannot be completed until the DoD activities have relocated to the receiving installations; the DoD activities cannot relocate until the receiving installations are complete; and the receiving installations cannot complete their construction projects until funding is provided. Consistent, timely communication is critical to ensure all parties are moving along the same timeline, and the same set of data is used in decision making.