# BASE REALIGNIMENT AND CLOSURE

# Community Profile

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# **Naval Weapons Station Concord, California**

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#### **State Contact:**

Not Applicable

#### Closure at a Glance

Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA):

City of Concord

Geographic area affected by closing:

City of Concord, Central Contra Costa County, California

Population of affected area (before closure): 124,000

Total Acres to be Disposed: 5,028 acres

**Estimated Job Loss Impact:** 

	Jobs Lost
Military Personnel	0
Civilian Personnel	71
Contractors	0

Source: BRAC Commission Report

#### **Economic Adjustment Challenges**

- Creating balance between types and amounts of development and parks/open space
- Creating a plan that is market feasible and fiscally sustainable in terms of provision of City services
- Balancing job creation with residential use/creating transit oriented land use to reduce vehicle miles traveled and reduce site's carbon footprint
- Integrating development with protection/preservation of sensitive habitat and threatened/endangered species
- Balancing commercial/retail development to avoid negative impact to existing commercial/retail development

### **Key Reuse Planning & Property Disposal Milestones**

3/07/07 Federal Surplus Determination 9/26/07 LRA Homeless Outreach Completed

1/31/09 Reuse Plan Received by Department of Housing and Urban

Development/Military Service

Pending HUD Determination on Submission

Pending National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Record of

Decision

Pending Base Closure

# Organization

The Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) designated the City of Concord as the Local Redevelopment Authority. The base is entirely within the jurisdiction of the City and the City Council, as the LRA, is directing the planning and implementation of the reuse of the base.

LRA is supported by a small project management office (PMO) including a Director of Community Reuse Planning, Project Manager, and Administrative Assistant. The PMO draws support from other engineering, legal, and planning departments within the City offices. The PMO is also supported by a team of consulting specialists. LRA also formed a community advisory committee (CAC) to work with the PMO staff and consultants to form a plan for base reuse. The CAC is a 21-member group representing local and regional stakeholders. Representation includes neighborhood associations, housing advocates, park/open space advocates, business interests, and green development advocates. The CAC is supported by Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs), which the LRA formed to address single issue interests in the areas of transportation; education; wildlife protection; and parks, recreation, and open space. These community groups were instrumental in development of a recommendation to the LRA on a preferred alternative for reuse of the base.

# Reuse Plan/Other Studies

### **Project Objectives**

The LRA, in conjunction with members of the community, developed an extensive visioning document including the following overarching goals, which constitute the overall project objectives (with no priority implied), for the Reuse Plan:

### World Class Project

- Adopt a long-term view to create a plan that benefits all future generations and engenders a sense of community pride
- Encourage creativity and innovation in the plan
- Develop a high-quality project that is recognized internationally for its innovative and progressive planning and development concepts

### Balanced Approach

 Balance multiple interests including a broad range of community needs, regional as well as local requirements, and the need for parks and open space with the need for jobs, housing, and community facilities

#### Economically Viable and Sustainable Development

 Maintain long-term economic viability of the project by ensuring that capital costs and future operations and maintenance costs are satisfied on a self-sustaining basis

#### Quality of Life

• Ensure that the plan builds on community assets and opportunities, addresses critical needs and issues, creates net positive benefits, and provides new opportunities to live, work, and play in Concord

There have been numerous specialized studies conducted in development of the preferred alternative including market feasibility/fiscal constraints, wildlife studies, hydrologic/hydraulic studies, traffic studies, health risk assessments, and infrastructure financing.



Figure 1: With funding support from OEA, residents and regional stakeholders and City staff participated in eight planning workshops designed to implement the communities' vision for the future.

The development of a reuse plan was a bottom-up community based effort. The community participated in more than 36 public meetings, including eight workshops, and developed three primary development themes and seven alternative concepts. All of the public meetings had live Spanish translation and one of the planning workshops was conducted completely in Spanish, to accommodate the needs of Concord's Latino residents who account for 25 percent of the City's population. The seven alternatives were also subjected to environmental review which allowed the CAC, in concert with the community, to reduce the field of seven to two alternatives and to recommend the Clustered Village plan as the "Preferred Alternative" to the LRA.

#### The Preferred Alternative: Clustered Villages

The Clustered Villages Alternative (Preferred Alternative) focuses on a series of villages connected by transit, allowing for a significant new diverse development balance while maintaining more than half of the site as parks, recreation, and open space. Living and working options would extend to Concord residents and others, offering a more sustainable lifestyle with mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods, and transit-oriented living along with single-family housing. The land use diagram for the Preferred Alternative (Figure 2) and the development program can be found on the City's Reuse Project Web site <a href="www.concordreuseproject.org">www.concordreuseproject.org</a>. Overall, the Preferred Alternative provides new land use to accommodate up to 12,272 residential units, 6.2 million square feet of commercial and retail uses, and 2,800 acres of improved parkland/open space and habitat preservation.

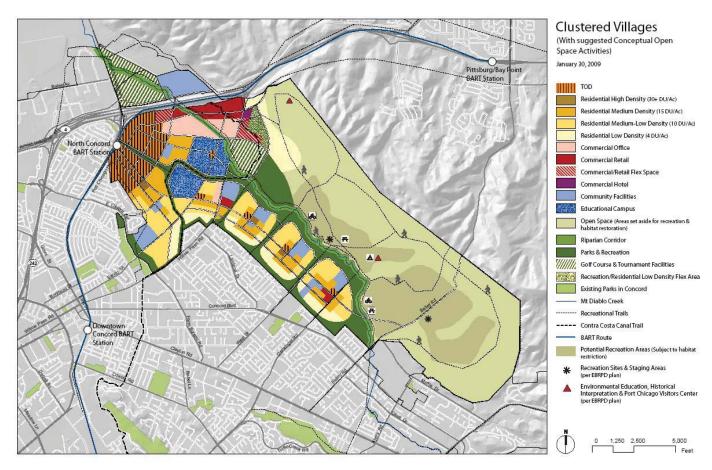


Figure 2: Concord's preferred alternative balances open space/recreation land use with clustered, mixed-use development, creating sustainable transit-oriented neighborhoods.

### **Homeless Submission**

The proposed activities covered by the Homeless Assistance Submission include the development and operation of an estimated 260 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless single individuals, youth and families, and the development of a two-pronged job training program for homeless people in both warehouse operations and food preparation and catering at the site of the new Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano County. The new food bank will be located on the CNWS site. An estimated 130 units, or 50 percent of the supportive housing units proposed, will be created on the site of the former installation through an obligation on the purchaser of the site to construct or cause the units to be constructed, while the remaining units may be developed off the installation with funds placed into a Homeless Assistance Fund for the creation of the proposed units. These activities are reflected in the three Legally Binding Agreements submitted in the Homeless Assistance Submission.

These activities meet a portion of the critical homeless needs in the vicinity of the installation by providing supportive housing for approximately 30 to 40 percent of those who are estimated to be homeless in Concord at a point in time and 14 to 18 percent of those who are homeless in the Study Area, as well as providing job training, placement, and retention services for a minimum of 70 homeless persons per year.

The accommodation proposed is significantly greater than would be ascribed to the area based on the installation's relative size. While the total land area covered by the inland portion of the CNWS site is a little over 5,000 acres and accounts for 25 percent of the area of the City of Concord, due to constraints on development, the developable portion represents only approximately 10 percent of the City and just over three percent of the land area in the Study Area.

#### **Outreach Process for the Homeless Assistance Submission**

The LRA began the outreach process with the general public, including homeless providers, as soon as the City of Concord learned about the possible closure of CNWS in 2005. In early 2006, the LRA began to collect data from Contra Costa County and homeless assistance providers in order to prepare the Homeless Needs Assessment portion of the Homeless Assistance submission.

On March 6, 2007, the Navy published its surplus notice regarding the CNWS in the Federal Register. On March 30, 2007, the homeless assistance screening process officially began when the LRA published its "Notice of Availability of Surplus Federal Property to State and Local Eligible Parties, Including Homeless Service Providers" in both the *Contra Costa Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In addition, the Notice of Availability (NOA) was posted on tThe Concord Reuse Project Web site. Announcements were also sent directly to a mailing list of approximately one hundred community organizations and agencies that had expressed interest in the subject matter.

The NOA set September 26, 2007, as the deadline to receive Notices of Interest (NOIs) from homeless assistance providers, providing the maximum response period of 180 days for NOIs to be submitted. The LRA conducted two BRAC workshops regarding both homeless assistance and public benefit conveyances, and provided site tours for interested parties. At the workshops, City staff gave further information on the NOI application process, provided a tour of the facility, and provided the opportunity for homeless providers to ask questions. HUD and City staff assisted with the process. An information package was made available to all attendees with the following materials: the Notice of Surplus for the CNWS, the Homeless Needs Assessment report, a list of buildings located on the surplus portion of CNWS, and two site maps. By the application deadline, the LRA received a total of nine Homeless Assistance NOIs.

# **Implementation and Partnering Strategies**

The designation by the LRA of a preferred alternative in January 2009 was a big step toward solving the challenges associated with providing balance in the mix and quantity of land uses. By involving the community in a bottoms-up planning process, staff and the consultant team were able to build consensus around the preferred alternative land use mix. Financial/fiscal modeling of the preferred alternative also allowed for an initial calibration on the sustainability of the plan, which helped to build consensus on the mix of uses. The primary challenge remaining in balancing the land uses is the process of entitlement which will assure the community that there is a codification of the land use and therefore the plan will become a reality. The staff will have to work carefully with local and regional stakeholders to ensure that the amendment of the City's General Plan will closely incorporate the principles of the adopted reuse plan, particularly around not creating "two Concords" and attracting a solid jobs base to allow people to live/work/play in the same general neighborhood.



Figure 3: Created in 1944, the Concord Naval Weapons Station was a major storage and export facility supporting military missions around the world.

The other two primary challenges are going to be more difficult to tackle, in part because the City is just now beginning the effort to define areas for habitat and species preservation and the densities needed for successful transit-oriented development. This will be a big shift from the lower and more traditional suburban densities in Concord. The staff is addressing these challenges in two different ways.

Habitat/species protection or enhancement will require permits from state and Federal agencies. The City has elected to seek a site-wide permit which will require collection of additional seasonal data, but has the upside of reducing long-term risk for new property owners. This is a costly effort, but one which has a high return on investment by making the transfer of property more attractive (higher return for the Navy) and accelerating development once the property has been transferred by eliminating redundant permitting. Part of the strategy for implementation is to work closely with the East Bay Regional Park District which maximizes relationships with regulators. We also will seek to collaborate with the Navy on its Section 7 consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

While the solution to the habitat/wildlife is strong science, the solution on the issue of density is more about education, illustration, and transparency. The staff is compiling a set of illustrations about walkable/bikable communities with narrower streets, mixed (stacked) land uses as well as local transit-oriented destinations residents can visit via Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and get a first hand sense of how higher-density design can work without losing the character of existing neighborhoods. The staff has started this effort as part of the amendment of the General Plan and formation of a redevelopment area.

## Successes/Lessons Learned

The success of the program to date has several learning moments:

- Be transparent in the process
- Be consistent, get agreement on small areas, and then set them aside while you work on bigger issues
- Use the opportunity to do something new, not more of the same
- Challenge conventional thinking