
Executive Summary

Background

On July 1, 1995, Naval Air Station (NAS) Key West was designated for realignment by the Secretary of Defense Commission on Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) pursuant to the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510). On May 2, 1996, the Department of the Navy (Navy) declared eight properties at the NAS surplus, including the Truman Waterfront. These properties are available for use by non-federal public agencies for public benefit purposes, by eligible non-profit groups, and by homeless provider groups, pursuant to the Base Closure Community Redevelopment Assistance Act of 1994.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is disposal and reuse of a portion of the NAS Key West Truman Annex (Truman Annex) in accordance with the preferred alternative for this property, as identified in the Key West Chapter 288 Military Base Reuse Plan prepared by the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) and adopted by the City of Key West as the approved Reuse Plan on September 8, 1999.

The portion of Truman Annex to be disposed of is known as the Truman Waterfront and comprises 41.4 acres (16.6 hectares [ha]) of land. The property consists entirely of filled land, including a 7.6-acre (3.0-ha) Mole (a massive seawall used as a breakwater) that encloses a 50-acre (20-ha) harbor, known as Truman Harbor. The Mole, or Mole Pier, contains berthing and wharf space, paved roads, utility infrastructure, and two buildings. The remaining 33.8-acre (13.5-ha) portion of the property contains 10 storage buildings and eight other structures, including a dining facility, fire station, port operations building, and Naval Exchange Branch.

The proposed Reuse Plan incorporates the following land uses:

- Recreation and open space areas with uninterrupted public access to the waterfront;
- Berth for calling cruise ships along the Mole Pier;
- Professional marina and a public marina;

- Ferry terminal operation center;
- Mixed-use development of affordable housing, retail, and social service uses;
- Preservation and enhancement of Fort Zachary Taylor;
- An interagency visitor and educational center; and
- Waterfront port-related, non-cargo use.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to comply with the 1995 BRAC Commission recommendation that the Secretary of Defense realign NAS Key West to a Naval Air Facility and dispose of all property not required to support operational commitments, including certain portions of Truman Annex and Trumbo Point (including piers, wharves, and buildings). The installation is being realigned for the purpose of reducing military infrastructure and saving operation and maintenance costs over the long term.

Alternatives

Two alternatives are considered in this Environmental Assessment (EA), the Proposed Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action Alternative is disposal and reuse of the Truman Waterfront property according to the Reuse Plan prepared by the LRA. The No Action Alternative is continued ownership of the property by the Navy. These alternatives are described below.

Truman Waterfront Reuse Plan Alternative (Proposed Action)

The Truman Waterfront Reuse Plan Alternative is the Reuse Plan developed by the LRA through an intensive public planning process initiated in May 1997. The reuse planning process was designed to satisfy federal base reuse planning requirements to maximize community participation and ensure that the plan "appropriately balance the needs of the various communities for economic redevelopment, other development and homeless assistance," in accordance with federal regulations.

The proposed Truman Waterfront Reuse Plan is designed to extend the minority neighborhood known as Bahama Village into the property and strengthen the existing community through improved vehicle and pedestrian circulation systems. The proposed land uses generally divide the site into a village component and a harborside, mixed use element.

Mole Pier and Truman Harbor would provide facilities for cruise ships, ferries, and other

vessels. The outer Mole berth would continue to serve as a berth for calling cruise ships, as it has since 1995 under license from the Navy. Berthing areas for port vessels, including tugs and pilot boats, as well as for visiting ships, would be provided along the north and center inner side of the Mole Pier and the northern portion of the eastern quay. Passenger ferry operations are proposed for the southern portion of Truman Harbor. Port administration functions would be located in an expanded facility at the southern end of the inner Mole Pier. The port would also administer an area located along the southern quay that could be leased for light- and medium-industrial marine uses, such as boat and skiff manufacturing, customizing of boats, repair, dry dock, boat storage, riggings, chandlery, and other activities.

A large open space and recreational park is proposed for the northeastern portion of the site, between the existing Truman Annex Development (an area of the former Truman Annex Naval Station previously disposed of as surplus in 1987 and developed as a residential community in the 1990's) and the eastern side of Truman Harbor. A public marina facility is envisioned for the southern portion of the harbor adjacent to this large park. A mega-yacht berthing area would be designated for the northeastern portion of the harbor, and a recreational boat marina, protected from wind and wave action by a breakwater, would be located to the south. Additional open space would connect Bahama Village to Fort Zachary Taylor. A harbor promenade would connect cruise operations on Mole Pier, Fort Zachary Taylor, passenger ferry operations, the interagency visitor center, and recreation and open space areas.

An area of medium-density affordable housing is proposed along the eastern edge of the Truman Waterfront property. Light commercial retail areas and a village marketplace adjacent to Bahama Village would serve as an extension of the commercial uses on Petronia Street (the primary commercial corridor in Bahama Village) and appeal to both the Bahama Village community and area visitors, especially cruise ship passengers from the Mole Pier. A multi-use center providing a variety of social services and economic development enterprises for Bahama Village and other Key West residents would be developed using the Enlisted Dining Facility, Building 1287.

The Bahama Village marketplace, the enhanced Fort Zachary Taylor historic property, and the visitor center would be developed to draw both tourists and residents to the Truman Waterfront property. Fort Zachary Taylor would be restored and expanded into a major site amenity and destination. The entrance to the park, as well as the Ranger Station, would be relocated, and a new parking area would be provided northeast of the Fort. The properties east of the Fort would be dedicated as an archeological preserve.

Vehicular traffic would be distributed over several ingress/egress points, including Southard

Street through Truman Annex Development and Petronia Street, Olivia Street, and Truman Avenue through Bahama Village. Traffic associated with cruise ship activities could be routed through Bahama Village, giving increased visibility to its retailers. The Navy has an easement and continued plans to use Eaton Street for access on an as-needed basis.

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would entail limited, intermittent use of the Truman Waterfront property. The Navy would retain ownership of the property and continue to maintain it under "caretaker status." The Navy would continue licensing the City of Key West to use the Mole Pier for berthing of cruise ships, which has the potential to generate more than \$1 million per year in revenue for the Navy. The Navy would maintain the Mole Pier utilities and access roads to the pier.

Environmental Impacts of the Proposed Action

Reuse of the Truman Waterfront property would have both minor beneficial and adverse effects on water quality. Redevelopment of the site would improve water quality by providing better stormwater treatment than currently available on the property, thereby reducing the amount of stormwater pollutants entering Key West Harbor. The impact on water quality from limited dredging and marine construction in Truman Harbor would be localized and short-term. Accidental petroleum and hazardous material spills from port-related activities or the light-industrial area could cause short-term acute or long-term chronic impacts to water quality. However, these potential impacts may be mitigated by preparation and implementation of spill contingency plans, which would be required under the Florida Pollutant Discharge Act if refueling capabilities are proposed for Truman Harbor. Adverse impacts to water quality from illegal sewage disposal in Truman Harbor would be minor.

The proposed action would indirectly cause long-term, adverse effects on water quality from increased vessel-generated turbidity. However, no significant impacts to water quality would occur from increases in vessel-generated turbidity, because applicable federal and state regulatory permits and approvals (e.g, state sovereign submerged land lease, state Environmental Resources Permit [ERP]) must be granted before the cruise ship berth, ferry terminals, and marinas that would support such vessel traffic could be constructed and/or operated. The City of Key West would have to demonstrate that the construction and operation of the proposed harbor facilities (including operation of vessels that use the facilities) would comply with state water quality standards or provide adequate mitigation to compensate for impacts to water quality. These regulatory reviews and approvals would likely take into account information on the effects of vessel-generated turbidity from the proposed

United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) study of Key West Harbor (assuming the study is completed prior to permit decisions.) Therefore, because of these regulatory approvals that require the City to demonstrate that the proposed projects can comply with applicable state water quality standards or to provide adequate mitigation of impacts prior to receiving permits and/or leases, no significant impacts to water quality are anticipated from reuse of the Truman Waterfront.

No significant, adverse, short-term or long-term air quality impact would result from the proposed action. Air emissions during proposed construction would result from the operation of vehicles and machinery and the generation of fugitive dust. The effects of these activities would be short-term and minor. Due to the relatively small increase in the number of vehicles, the increase in air pollutant loads would be negligible and unlikely to affect the current attainment status. The increase in vessel traffic anticipated as a result of the additional proposed harbor facilities would not significantly affect existing air quality.

Implementation of the proposed action would not likely result in any potential for significant adverse environmental contamination. Environmental contamination has been previously documented at six sites on the Truman Waterfront property—the Truman Annex Defense Reutilization and Marking Office (DRMO) Waste Storage Area, Former Location of Building 136, Building 103, Buildings 102 and 104, Building 223, and Former Lube Area—and is being cleaned up by the Navy. Cleanup of all contamination is consistent with the land uses proposed in the Reuse Plan. Land use restrictions prohibiting residential development will be required at the Truman Annex DRMO Waste Storage Area and the Former Location of Building 136, because contamination at these sites has been sufficiently remediated for proposed land uses, but may still exist at levels potentially unsafe for residential use. Environmental contamination at the other four sites on the Truman Waterfront property has been or will be cleaned up prior to transfer of the property such that no further actions will be required. However, any development of these sites other than that consistent with the Reuse Plan would require conformance with all applicable laws and regulations governing the cleanup and disposal of any existing environmental contamination prior to redevelopment.

The proposed action would not cause direct or indirect impacts to terrestrial vegetation or wildlife of the area.

The direct impact of the proposed Reuse Plan on marine resources would be negligible. The installation of pilings and breakwaters as part of construction of the ferry terminal and marinas would cause a minor loss of benthic habitat in Truman Harbor. Increased visitation of sensitive marine resources in the vicinity of Key West by motorized private and commercial boats moored in Truman Harbor could result in increased disturbance to bird rookeries and impacts to seagrass beds and coral

reefs from anchoring and propeller scarring, an indirect effect of the proposed action. The operation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) proposed environmental education center would have a cumulative beneficial effect on the marine environment due to increased environmental awareness, particularly among tourists who are likely less-informed than residents about the potential adverse effects of their actions on the marine environment. The increase in boat traffic associated with implementation of the proposed Reuse Plan would contribute to cumulative adverse impacts on seagrass and coral reef ecosystems, but these impacts would not be significant due to monitoring and management programs under the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS).

Based on available information, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concluded that the proposed action is not likely to affect federally-listed threatened and endangered species. Furthermore, no designated critical habitat is present in the vicinity of the project site or would be affected. The direct and indirect effects of the proposed action, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, would not result in any significant cumulative impact to threatened or endangered species.

Implementation of the Reuse Plan would have a positive and long-term impact on the economy, employment, and income of the region. No adverse impacts to the region's taxes and revenues are anticipated as a result of the Reuse Plan. The proposed action would have a beneficial effect on recreation in Key West, by creating an additional 30 acres (12 ha) of open space.

Implementation of the Truman Waterfront Reuse Plan would potentially have an adverse or beneficial impact on the overall affordable housing situation in Key West. The actual impact would depend on a number of factors, including the number of affordable housing units to be built on the Truman Waterfront property, the number of low-wage jobs created by the proposed action, and the timing of construction of the proposed housing units versus the creation of low-wage jobs.

Implementation of the Truman Waterfront Reuse Plan generally would encourage both economic development and quality of life opportunities for residents of Bahama Village, which is considered an environmental justice-sensitive community. In addition to the potential benefits of implementation of the Reuse Plan, potential adverse impacts would occur in the Bahama Village community from increased traffic, housing gentrification, and displacement of long-term businesses and residents. However, the net effect of these impacts on Bahama Village socioeconomic and quality of life conditions would be generally beneficial.

On-site development constraints would not be a significant, adverse impediment to the proposed land use activity locations for the site. Land use restrictions prohibiting residential development will be required at two sites (Truman Annex DRMO Waste Storage Area and Former

Location of Building 136) where environmental contamination may still exist at levels potentially unsafe for residential use. No significant, adverse, short-term or long-term internal or external land use conflicts would result from implementation of the Reuse Plan. Generally, proposed land uses would be compatible. Implementation of the proposed action would not be expected to result in a significant conflict with future plans for Bahama Village. Redevelopment of property, as proposed by the Reuse Plan, would generally enhance the aesthetic features of the site and provide a beneficial aesthetic impact to adjacent residential areas. No significant, adverse, cumulative impact would occur to land use from implementation of the Truman Waterfront Reuse Plan.

Implementation of the proposed action would decrease the operating level of service (LOS) for local roadways and increase roadway travel time. The cumulative effect of the proposed action would contribute to a direct adverse impact to the operating conditions on impacted local roadways adjacent to the Truman Waterfront property.

The proposed action would not result in significant adverse impacts on existing infrastructure systems. Water, sewer, and electrical lines on the Truman Waterfront Property would have to be replaced to meet utility company standards before planned redevelopment can occur. However, although certain lines would need replacement, any additional demands generated as a result of the proposed action would be within the existing or planned capacities of the overall water, sewer, and electrical systems.

Rationale for Proposed Action

The No Action Alternative would not allow the City of Key West to implement the community's vision for reuse of the Truman Waterfront property. Although implementation of the No Action Alternative would not affect environmental conditions, the land would remain vacant and have limited use, which is inconsistent with the Key West Comprehensive Plan. Transportation, public utilities, and community services would not be affected by this alternative. The No Action Alternative would not result in a significant economic impact to the City other than lost opportunity. Costs to maintain the property would be incurred by the Department of Defense (DoD); however, the federal government would continue to realize income under the existing license for cruise ship berthing. Regardless, the No Action Alternative would not be in accordance with the 1995 BRAC decision for realignment of NAS Key West.

The Truman Waterfront Reuse Plan Alternative (the proposed action) would not be expected to result in any significant, adverse impact to environmental or socioeconomic resources. The proposed action would increase available open space and recreational facilities, expand the City's use

of the Truman Waterfront for port activities, enhance economic opportunities for Bahama Village, create connections between Bahama Village and the waterfront, and provide needed affordable housing and community services.

Furthermore, the LRA, through extensive public participation, has selected this Reuse Plan as the preferred alternative.