

Frequently Asked Questions

May 2008

Stakeholder Process

1. What is the history of the community outreach process and how can I be involved moving forward?

The Army named the City of Seattle the Local Reuse Authority (LRA) in July 2006, making the City responsible for the redevelopment of Fort Lawton. A series of public meetings were held in 2006 and 2007 to inform the public of the process and receive input from the community. Beginning in 2008 the City has held a number of planning workshops on the development of the reuse plan for Fort Lawton which will continue through July of this year. The schedule for the remaining planning workshops can be found at the City's website at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac/>

2. What is negotiable at this point?

It is the goal of the reuse plan that Fort Lawton becomes a diverse mixed income community that balances the identified priorities for a range of housing opportunities including market rate housing, self-help homeownership opportunities (Habitat for Humanity) and housing for homeless individuals and families, providing open space, and wildlife habitat. Through the community planning process, community members will provide input and feedback on the character and qualities of how this will be done.

Fort Lawton Reuse Plan

1. What is the overall concept for the reuse plan?

The reuse plan is a strategic plan for the reuse of the entire installation which the LRA must submit to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Defense (DoD). The reuse plan addresses many factors, including a description of the overall redevelopment of the installation in a comprehensive and coordinated manner and describing the proposed land uses. The plan will include a description of the property and improvements and address how the plan will fit with any plans the community already has in place.

2. Is the plan based on an existing community model?

The plan is *not* being directed to look like any other development. However, the city and SHA are committed to a strong green design similar to that employed at SHA's High Point development, though the specific environmental solutions and housing types may be very different. The purpose of the community planning process is to craft a master use development program that balances the identified priorities and is consistent with the unique qualities and characteristics of the Magnolia community.

3. What is the current zoning at Fort Lawton and will it be rezoned?

The current zoning is SF 7200. To achieve the desired balance of homeless housing, self-help homeownership housing, market rate housing, open space and heron habitat the plan may need to consider clustering and/or a rezone. Clustering can be done without a rezone through a Planned Residential Development (PRD). The City's Comprehensive Plan has been amended to allow for the consideration of multifamily uses at the site, should the reuse plan, developed in consultation with the community, call for such uses.

4. How many units can be accommodated with the current zoning?

Using Department of Planning and Development (DPD) density estimates and assuming the reuse of the existing buildings, the City estimates Fort Lawton could accommodate up to approximately 300 units under current zoning. This estimate does not benefit from the various studies the City's consultant team will produce to inform more accurate density projections at future workshops.

5. Can the existing buildings be reused?

Consultants are currently assessing the condition and viability of reusing the existing buildings as market rate housing and/or housing for the homeless.

6. When will the Environmental Impact Statement process take place?

Before disposing of any real property, the Army must analyze the environmental effects of the disposal action under National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). The City's submission of the redevelopment plan triggers the NEPA process. The Army's analysis will include the redevelopment plan and consider a range of reasonable disposal alternatives and assess their environmental effects. The LRA's redevelopment plan will be given substantial deference in the final decision making process. The State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) is typically triggered as part of a rezone or permitting process.

7. How will the City maintain existing home/property values in the immediate neighborhood?

Utilizing a solid planning process and implementing a good design are keys to creating an integrated community in which everyone can thrive. National studies indicate that affordable housing, including housing for the homeless, have little or no impact on surrounding property values. One such study completed in Connecticut can be found at:

<http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=3244>

Homeless Housing

1. In the BRAC legislation, is homeless housing a higher priority than community needs?

As part of this BRAC, the Army has informed the city that in the Local Reuse Plan we must “achieve a balance between meeting the needs of the homeless, approving public benefit conveyances [e.g., parks, Habitat for Humanity], and meeting [the city’s] economic redevelopment while obtaining fair market value for the Army.”

2. Does BRAC allow for homeless housing location trading?

While the BRAC process does allow the LRA to consider providing homeless housing off-site, this is only allowable if the proposed use for the site is incompatible with homeless housing (such as a port facility, shopping mall, etc.). In addition, the provision of homeless housing off-site must be provided at the LRA’s expense as opposed to the no-cost option of providing homeless housing on-site.

3. How did the City select the homeless providers?

Per the Federal BRAC requirements, the City solicited Notices of Interest (NOI) for potential homeless and public benefit conveyances of property and buildings at Fort Lawton. The City selected the homeless providers from the NOIs received. The City selection process included participation of an interdisciplinary team of City staff and a Mayoral appointed Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which included representatives of the Magnolia community. Note that while the LRA was required to select among the providers that submitted NOIs, the LRA was not required to accept the NOI exactly as proposed in the NOI application. Rather, the LRA can work with the selected homeless provider(s) to develop housing that best responds to the needs of the homeless and balances the needs of the community.

4. Will the homeless housing include a shelter (cots in a gym) or be transitional in nature?

No, there will be no homeless shelter as part of the Ft. Lawton redevelopment. The homeless housing will be permanent rental housing, meaning there will be no time limits imposed on residency.

5. What will be the profile of the homeless living at Fort Lawton?

The homeless housing units will house formerly homeless families and individuals. Households will have experienced homelessness resulting from a range of issues including fleeing domestic violence to simply not having sufficient financial resources to afford housing in the market. Households may have histories of substance abuse, mental illness, and/or physical disabilities that limit their housing options.

6. Will homeless households move to Fort Lawton directly off the streets or will there be a period of stabilization in transitional housing?

It is unlikely homeless households will move in directly from living on the streets. However, the period of stabilization in a homeless shelter or transitional housing can vary from days to years based on the presenting issues of the homeless family or individual.

7. What supportive services are planned on site?

Supportive services will consist primarily of in-home case management for the residents. Counseling offices for staff and community space will be provided to support additional resident services and programming.

8. What input can the community have on the homeless housing planned for Fort Lawton?

The City has scheduled a series of Community Relations Plan meetings between the homeless housing providers and the community. Information concerning these meetings can be found on the City's website at: <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/fortlawton/brac/>.

The goal of the Community Relations Plan is for both the homeless housing providers and neighborhood to work together and to both commit to ensure the housing is successful in the neighborhood. The plan may address strategies for ongoing neighborhood relations and communications, tenant behavior, building design, and security.