

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Army is reducing its force structure in response to changing global security requirements, resulting in fewer Army installations needed to station the smaller force. The process to determine the installations that would be closed and/or realigned was established in the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (1990 Base Closure Act), Public Law 101-510. The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Commission's 1991 recommendations for base realignments and closure, commonly referred to as BRAC 91, require Fort Ord, California, to be closed and the 7th Infantry Division (Light) (IDL) to be relocated to Fort Lewis, Washington. The 1990 Base Closure Act specifies that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is applicable to base closures during the process of property disposal. The act does not require nor specify a time limit for disposing of the excess Fort Ord land. The Conference Report for House Resolution 2100 (HR 2100) the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal years 1992 and 1993, directed the Army to proceed immediately with an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the disposal and reuse of Fort Ord specifically addressing socioeconomic effects of the Army relocating from the Monterey Bay area. These two legislative actions (1990 Base Closure Act and HR 2100) have helped define the proposed action for this EIS and the level of impact analysis required to support the action.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action analyzed in this EIS is the disposal of excess property made available by the closure of Fort Ord, with the retention of the U.S. Army Reserve Center and establishment of a Presidio of Monterey (POM) annex. The socioeconomic impacts of relocating the active Army from the Fort Ord community are analyzed in this EIS, following the language of the conference report for HR 2100. Reasonable alternative uses of the property after disposal are identified and evaluated.

Fort Ord is operated as a permanent installation of Headquarters, Department of the Army, Forces Command. The primary mission of Fort Ord is to train troops, but it also provides command, administration, and logistical support and other functions necessary to operate and maintain facilities at Fort Ord and its subinstallations, the Presidio of Monterey, and Fort Hunter Liggett. It also supports active Army tenant units and other activities as assigned, attached, or stationed, including satellite activities off the installation.

Fort Ord is an Army installation located along the Pacific Ocean in northern Monterey County, California, approximately 100 miles south of San Francisco. Fort Ord occupies approximately 28,000 acres adjacent to Monterey Bay (a national marine sanctuary) and the Cities of Marina, Seaside, Sand City, Del Rey Oaks, and Monterey. The Southern Pacific Railroad and State Highway 1 (also known as State Route 1) cross the western section of Fort Ord, separating the beachfront from the majority of the installation. Fort Ord is bordered on the east by undeveloped land. Of the total Fort Ord acreage, 73% (approximately 20,000 acres) is in unincorporated Monterey County, 15% (approximately 4,100 acres) is within the Seaside city limits, and 12% (approximately 3,400 acres) is within the Marina city limits.

As the 7th IDL realigns from Fort Ord, the Army will place structures, utilities, and operation and maintenance systems into a caretaker status until property disposal decisions are implemented. If environmental restoration is not accelerated, the Army may retain segments of the lands remaining outside the POM annex and reserve center in a caretaker status until restoration is complete.

Remediation and cleanup of contaminated sites are ongoing activities. All sites known to be contaminated shall be remediated by the Army to levels that meet federal, state, and local regulations and protect human health and the environment; shall be remediated to appropriate levels, considering available technology, cost, environmental factors, and interim and future uses; and shall be certified clean by proper authorities before they are reused, transferred, or sold. Unexploded ordnance also will be cleared to appropriate levels, considering available technology, cost, environmental factors, and interim and future land uses.

A real estate screening process is being used to determine other governmental agencies' interest and requirements for lands excess to Army needs, as well as Stuart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney Act) requirements. After interest in lands has been identified, applicable real estate procedures will be used at the Army's discretion to determine the appropriate disposition of available lands. Approximately seven federal agencies, five California state agencies, and 14 local agencies and organizations have expressed interest in Fort Ord lands.

The processes associated with disposal and reuse are shown in Figure ES-1.

Approximately 26,500 acres, or 95% of the installation, will be available for disposal. The remainder of the installation will be retained as a POM annex and reserve center. The Army will dispose of the property as governed by the 1990 Base Closure Act; the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended; and federal property management regulations.

The Army plans to establish a POM annex of approximately 1,500 acres to provide support to the Presidio of Monterey. The Army also plans to retain, under military control, a 12-acre parcel of land with a 21,000-square-foot reserve center, located at Imjin Gate near Reservation Road.

The primary focus of this EIS is to evaluate the environmental impacts of disposing of excess Fort Ord property after closure. The Army intends to initiate the disposal process consistent with the results of real estate screening and ongoing negotiations with federal, state, and local entities. The process includes some interim actions to maintain the property and provide cleanup needed to support future uses. Disposal will ultimately result in the transfer of title to property from the Army to other federal, state, and local agencies or to private parties. Reuse of the property, which is an action to be taken by others, is analyzed in this document as an indirect or secondary effect of executing the proposed action.

The reuse development process is evolving, plans are continuously being revised, and new plans may be forthcoming. The Army has identified five levels of development intensity to categorize foreseeable reuse alternatives. These categories are sufficiently defined to identify planning-level effects for consideration by the public and Army decision makers.

This EIS presents a range of reuse alternatives, which represent the range of options presented to the Army through scoping and public involvement. The environmental effects of those alternatives are qualitatively and, in some cases, quantitatively described. The Army plans no further analysis of future uses of the excess property.

The future use of the Fort Ord property, as ownership changes from the Army to a yet unknown owner, is an issue of significant interest to the affected communities. The Army acknowledges its responsibility to ensure, within the limits of its authority, that succeeding uses do not lessen the quality of the community life or degrade the environment. The Army will take steps to ensure that succeeding owners protect historic or cultural resources, endangered species, wetlands, and other valuable resources to the extent possible.

The Army has been working cooperatively with federal, state, and local agencies and the Fort Ord Task Force to determine a broad range of reasonably foreseeable reuse alternatives for inclusion in the draft EIS.

This EIS analyzes the proposed action of disposing of excess Fort Ord property in the following reuse alternatives:

- Alternative 1: High-Intensity Mixed Use,
- Alternative 2: Medium-Intensity Mixed Use,
- Alternative 3: Low-Intensity Mixed Use,
- Alternative 4: Institutional Use,
- Alternative 5: Open Space, and
- Alternative 6R: Anticipated Reuse (Revised).

Each reuse alternative inherently includes the Army's proposed action, which includes retaining Fort Ord lands to establish a POM annex, retaining a reserve center, and disposing of excess Fort Ord property not retained by the Army. For some of the reuse alternatives, subalternatives that do not include the Army's proposed POM annex also are considered and include:

- Subalternative A: No Presidio of Monterey Annex/No Reserve Center,
- Subalternative B: Seaside's Recommended Presidio of Monterey Annex/No Reserve Center, and
- Subalternative C: Partial Variation of High-Intensity Mixed Use.

The no-action alternative, or not disposing of excess Fort Ord property and retaining it in caretaker status, is also analyzed.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

Proposed Action

Pre-Disposal and Disposal

Caretaker actions will include modifying buildings, changing infrastructure, and altering land management and installation operations. Some areas of Fort Ord may be in caretaker status long-term or until contaminated sites can be cleaned. Analysis of the closure actions leading to downsizing the installation and placing it in caretaker status is not within the scope of this EIS.

Disposal of Fort Ord property may entail transferring land and changing the property from exclusively federal legislative jurisdiction to state and local jurisdiction. A positive effect of disposal on the local communities would be the addition of real estate to private interests into the state and local tax base. Economic activity would increase from the hazardous and toxic waste remediation actions, unexploded ordnance disposal, and infrastructure modifications.

A potential negative effect of disposal of large areas of land include temporarily saturating some segments of the local real estate market and reducing sales prices, losing land currently leased from the Army, and altering existing traffic and circulation patterns. Additionally, the transition from federal ownership or management may increase the demand for some municipal services and could result in the loss of federal protection for biological and cultural resources.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Office has been initiated for the proposed action, a biological assessment was prepared and is being used to obtain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biological opinion pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, during the caretaker period and before property disposal, the Army will conduct cultural resource investigations and coordination as required by the BRAC cultural resource Programmatic Agreement to meet its Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act.

Establishment of Presidio of Monterey Annex and Retention of Reserve Center

The POM annex would employ approximately 1,000 civilian employees. This would include a caretaker force; administrative support staff; and employees of the commissary, post exchange, child care center, and other facilities at the annex. The existing 340-person Army reserve center would remain as it presently exists. Establishing the Army's POM annex and retaining the reserve center would not require new construction or development in currently undeveloped areas.

Establishing the Army's POM annex could result in impacts from building modifications, public service systems, infrastructure modifications, traffic accessibility, security conflicts, and loss of emergency services. Building modifications and renovations of 14 buildings would include demolition and repairs that could result in noise, air emissions, and hazardous materials impacts.

Establishing the POM annex would create the need for providing access to the annex. Approximately 5,000 daily trips would be generated, by the Army's POM annex. The main gate on Light Fighter Drive would provide the principal access to the POM annex, but a secondary access route (such as the Broadway Gate or the 12th Street Gate) would also be established. No capacity problems are anticipated. Access would also need to be retained to and from the reserve center.

Establishing Seaside's recommended POM annex would require the City of Seaside to replace all developed facilities that would be lost from the Army's proposed POM annex in the Main Garrison area, except for the two Army golf courses, which would become part of the City of Seaside. This would result in various impacts on watershed hydrology and water quality within the installation; loss of vegetative cover, including rare plant habitat; and changes in basin hydrology. Water demand would decrease to approximately 2,900 acre-feet per year because of the elimination of 400 acre-feet per year of nonpotable water requirements for the golf courses.

The construction of new buildings and roads east of North-South Road would require archeological surveys, new infrastructure, generate traffic, and create air emissions from several sources. Construction and traffic noise impacts would also result. Buildout of Seaside's recommended POM annex would result in the loss of coastal coast live oak woodland and coastal scrub habitats. Species of special concern and special-interest wildlife species would be adversely affected by habitat losses and potential direct mortality during construction. Highly sensitive views along the coast would be adversely affected by construction of new buildings, renovation of existing buildings, and infrastructure modifications. This could result in a substantial reduction in visual quality for views from State Route 1 and other important visitor use areas in and around Monterey Bay.

Reuse

Alternative 1: High-Intensity Mixed Use. Alternative 1 generally represents the Fort Ord Economic Development Authority (FOEDA) vision for the Cities of Marina and Seaside, the City of Sand City vision, information provided by the Cities of Del Rey Oaks and Monterey, and Monterey County's vision for remaining unincorporated areas. Under this alternative, approximately 65% of the undeveloped land would be developed, with dense urban uses over all of the installation except the far eastern portion. The buildout population would be approximately 250,000.

Alternative 1 would have severe impacts on most environmental resources. The large populations, great expanse of dense urban development, large water and wastewater requirements, endangered species impacts, and conflicts in land use and transportation plans for the region would make this alternative unlikely to be implementable as it is now formulated. Changes would need to be made to be more compatible with physical and environmental constraints and be economically feasible for development and operation within Fort Ord and in the region. It would need to comply with federal laws and policies concerning air quality, endangered species, floodplains, the California coastal zone, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, historic preservation, and noise.

Alternative 1, Subalternative C represents the FOEDA vision for the Cities of Marina and Seaside and Monterey County's vision for remaining unincorporated areas. Under this subalternative, approximately 70% of the undeveloped land would be developed, with dense urban uses over all of the installation except the far eastern portion. The buildout population would be approximately 282,600. The primary difference between Alternative 1 and Subalternative C is that Subalternative C includes substantial new development in the coastal zone and, therefore, would result in additional impacts on the coastal zone.

After review of the EIS and as a result of comments received on the draft EIS, this reuse alternative and its subalternatives have been eliminated from further consideration. This alternative does not adequately reflect the results of the real estate screening process and would result in significant environmental impacts if implemented as formulated. No new analyses have been conducted for the final EIS.

Alternative 2: Medium-Intensity Mixed Use. Alternative 2 generally represents the county vision in all of the unincorporated areas and the FOEDA vision in the incorporated areas of the Cities of Marina and Seaside. Under this alternative, approximately 40% of the undeveloped land would be developed, with dense urban uses over the western and northern portions of the installation and much less density in the central and eastern portions. The buildout population would be approximately 112,800.

Alternative 2 would have severe impacts on many environmental resources. The population increases, great expanse of new development, large water and wastewater requirements, endangered species impacts, and conflicts in land use and transportation plans for the region would require substantial revisions and mitigation to be implementable. Changes would need to be made to make this alternative more compatible with physical and environmental constraints and be economically feasible for development and operation within Fort Ord and in the region. It would need to comply with federal laws and policies concerning air quality, endangered species, floodplains, the California coastal zone, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, historic preservation, and noise.

After review of the EIS and as a result of comments received on the draft EIS, this reuse alternative and its subalternatives have been eliminated from further consideration. This alternative does not adequately reflect the results of the real estate screening process and would result in significant environmental impacts if implemented as formulated. No new analyses have been conducted for the final EIS.

Alternative 3: Low-Intensity Mixed Use. Alternative 3 generally represents the Fort Ord Task Force recommendation. Under this alternative, approximately 15% of the undeveloped land would be developed, primarily in the north-central portion of the installation, except for a small portion of low-density development in the southern portion. The buildout population would be approximately 82,900.

Alternative 3 would have significant impacts on many environmental resources. The population increases, location and extent of new development, new water and wastewater requirements, endangered species impacts, and conflicts in land use and transportation plans for the region would require revisions and mitigation to be implementable. Changes would need to be made to make this alternative more compatible with physical and environmental constraints and be economically feasible for development and operation within Fort Ord and in the region. It would need to comply with federal laws and policies

concerning air quality, endangered species, floodplains, the California coastal zone, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, historic preservation, and noise.

After review of the EIS and as a result of comments received on the draft EIS, this reuse alternative has been eliminated from further consideration. This alternative does not adequately reflect the results of the real estate screening process and would result in significant environmental impacts if implemented as formulated. No new analyses have been conducted for the final EIS.

Alternative 4: Institutional Use. Alternative 4 generally represents preliminary proposals received from other federal, state, and local agencies and incorporates institutional uses from the vision plans proposed by the local agencies and the Fort Ord Task Force. Under this alternative, approximately 10% of the undeveloped land would be developed, primarily in the north-central portion of the installation, except for a small portion of low-density development in the southern portion. The buildout population would be approximately 31,000.

This alternative would have significant impacts on many environmental resources. The location and extent of new development, new water and wastewater requirements, endangered species impacts, and conflicts in land use and transportation plans for the region would require revisions and mitigation to be implementable. Changes would need to be made to make this alternative more compatible with physical and environmental constraints and to be economically feasible for development and operation within Fort Ord and in the region. It would need to comply with federal laws and policies concerning air quality, water quality, endangered species, floodplains, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, historic preservation, and noise.

After review of the EIS and as a result of comments received on the draft EIS, this reuse alternative has been eliminated from further consideration. This alternative does not adequately reflect the results of the real estate screening process and would result in significant environmental impacts if implemented as formulated. No new analyses have been conducted for the final EIS.

Alternative 5: Open Space. Alternative 5 represents preliminary open space proposals from other federal and state agencies and incorporates open space uses from the vision plans proposed by the local agencies and the Fort Ord Task Force. Under this alternative, approximately 1% of the undeveloped land would be developed, primarily in the southern portion of the installation. The buildout population would be approximately 4,800.

This alternative would not have significant impacts on most environmental resources. The large amount of open space and recreation resources would be a significant environmental benefit. Operation of this alternative would be costly. The economic effects of the closure of Fort Ord would be significant in the region and would not be offset by this alternative. Modifications to this alternative would be possible to allow development within previously developed areas and the inland range area (impact area) after unexploded ordnance is removed without destroying key biological resources. This would allow a combination of open space and economic backfill uses that would have many of the same environmentally positive effects while allowing for substantial economic recovery or expansion.

After review of the EIS and as a result of comments received on the draft EIS, this reuse alternative and its subalternatives have been eliminated from further consideration. This alternative does not adequately reflect the results of the real estate screening process and would result in significant economic impacts if implemented as formulated. No new analyses have been conducted for the final EIS.

Alternative 6R: Anticipated Reuse (Revised). The revised Alternative 6 represents the Army's preferred alternative for the POM annex, reserve center, and disposal of lands excess to Army needs. Under this alternative, approximately 23,500 acres of Fort Ord that have been requested by other federal, state, and local agencies through the real estate screening process would be transferred to public agencies for the

uses identified in the screening process. The Army will seek fair market value in disposing of the property. The remaining excess land (approximately 3,000 acres) would be disposed to private entities without the Army determining future use. Future use of these lands would be established by the new owners in accordance with local land use requirements and the requirements of regulatory agencies. Under this alternative, approximately 14% of the undeveloped land would be developed. The buildout population would be approximately 22,800.

Infrastructure at Fort Ord, including water supply and distribution, electricity and gas distribution, sewage collection and disposal, roads and street lights, solid waste collection and disposal, storm water collection and disposal, telephone service, and cable television, would be retained by the Army in the short-term to serve the POM annex, reserve center, and any interim uses approved prior to land disposal. The Army would complete engineering analyses of these systems to determine condition and remaining life, and would upgrade the systems as necessary to support the remaining mission at Fort Ord. In the long term, the Army would transfer ownership of these systems to appropriate local entities as reuse occurs and seek local entities to contract for operation and maintenance of the systems serving the remaining Army properties.

This alternative would result in the transfer of most sensitive environmental areas to other federal and state agencies that are able to manage the lands without significant environmental impacts. Transfer of portions of Fort Ord to local agencies would allow for development of educational, recreational, airport business, and institutional uses that would offset the economic effects of closure of Fort Ord. A cooperative agreement is being developed with local agencies, under which the local governments would determine appropriate uses for these lands and coordinate sales to private owners.

Potential Hospital Operation. It is not known if the existing Silas B. Hays Army Community Hospital will be used. Each of the reuse alternatives could be modified to include a variety of hospital scenarios, including no-hospital, combined-care facility, and outpatient facility. A hospital is not included in Alternative 6R because it was not requested through the real estate screening process.

No Action

The No-Action Alternative represents 1991 baseline conditions and is not a reasonable alternative because of the BRAC 91 directive to realign the 7th IDL to Fort Lewis, Washington. "No action" also refers to the retention of the Fort Ord installation by the Army in a caretaker status.

Preferred Action

The Army's preferred action is retention of the U. S. Army Reserve Center, establishment of the Army's proposed POM annex, and initiation of the disposal of lands excess to Army needs in accordance with federal property law. The disposal process will give priority to federal, state, and local agencies who have requested lands during the Army real estate screening process. Lands not transferred to these government agencies would be disposed of to private interests. Approximately 26,500 acres would be disposed. The revised Alternative 6R is the Army's preferred reuse alternative. It is the only alternative that reflects the results of the real estate screening process and includes considerations to avoid or mitigate the significant environmental impacts described in reuse Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6.

Mitigation Responsibility

The following mitigation will be implemented by the Army. Other measures are available to mitigate the impacts of Alternative 6R, which could be implemented by other federal, state, or local agencies and private entities responsible for development; they are described in Section 6.0, "Detailed Analysis of

Alternative 6R", in this volume. Mitigation responsibility of others for Alternatives 1-6 is described in Volume II.

- Limit properties that may be outgranted and restrict access to remediation areas.
- Encourage additional CHAMPUS/PRIME providers.
- Provide for public utilities easements.
- Maintain facilities that collect wastewater from areas outside of the POM annex and reserve center.
- Provide for public utilities easements.
- Disclose information on buried utilities to the underground service alert.
- Conduct periodic maintenance.
- Maintain cable service.
- Create a joint powers agreement to ensure proper oversight and maintenance.
- Disclose information on buried water distribution infrastructure to the Underground Service Alert.
- Implement measures during renovation to minimize NO_x emissions (for establishment of the POM annex only).
- Develop and coordinate an installation-wide multispecies habitat management plan. (Agencies and entities receiving Fort Ord lands would implement the HMP.)
- Maintain historic buildings and condition their sale or transfer with protective covenants.
- Conduct archeological surveys of Fort Ord lands.
- Contact California Native American groups that may have traditional cultural properties located on Fort Ord lands.

The majority of mitigation is related to reuse, which is not the Army's action, and would need to be implemented by non-Army entities.

