

December 10, 2007

Mr. Royce Hanson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Subject: M-NCPPC "directives" to Bethesda Naval BRAC EIS

Dear Mr. Hanson:

According to the new EIS for the Bethesda Naval Hospital expansion, the Navy plans to substantially increase the percentage of the facility's employees who commute in single-occupancy vehicles and reduce transit usage. The EIS projects that visitor and commuter trips associated with a 2200-new- employee expansion will add 921 new trips in the PM peak hour, compared to 418 trips[1] that would be added if the travel patterns associated with new employees are identical to those associated with existing Bethesda Naval employees.

To accomodate the planned shift toward single-occupancy commuting, the Navy is asking county and state taxpayers to pay for road widenings that will not be needed if current commuting patterns are maintained. The Navy will also add 1800 parking spaces; this is far more than needed by 2200 employees, many of them working night and weekend shifts.

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According to the EIS, the modeling methodology that generated these numbers was chosen because of "directives provided by M-NCCPC staff." [Appendix C, p. 50] I find it very hard to believe that Planning Board staff would issue directives that directly contravene the county's support for alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commuting. I urge you to write to the Navy, explain that their transportation analysis is based on a complete misunderstanding of County policy, and ask them to redo the analysis using trip generation rates based on current behavior and on improved transportation demand management.

Sincerely,

Ben Ross
Vice President

cc: Mike Knapp, County Council President
Phil Alperson, County BRAC Coordinator

[1]See Table 13a, Appendix C, p. 50. Note that the "Locally Derived Rates" in the table are calculated for 2500 new employees, while the actual number of new employees that is projected is 2200. The figure of 418 new peak pm trips was calculated by multiplying the 475 trips in the table by 2200/2500