

Monmouth County Joint Land Use Study

Naval Weapons Station Earle

Preliminary Recommendations

September 2017

Since the first public open house in March, the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) team has reached out to a number of committees, municipalities and stakeholders. Based upon input and feedback received, the team has drafted a set of Preliminary Recommendations for actions to promote compatibility and coordination among the all partners involved in this project. This JLUS process has revealed opportunities to improve communication and coordination on infrastructure and land use planning, mutual economic development initiatives, regional and local transportation improvements, security enhancements around base properties, and coordinated climate adaptation and resiliency measures for waterfront areas. These mutual and agreed upon recommendations are presented as a guide for long-term effort to improve the quality of life for this region surrounding this important Department of Defense asset in central New Jersey.

Recommendation Categories

The Implementation Plan for this JLUS is organized into seven sections representing the different types of recommendations. These categories represent the issues facing the NWS Earle region in improving military-community compatibility. In some cases, they are typical of other military installations in other areas in the country, but in most cases, the recommendations are specific to NWS Earle and the type of operations at this base, as well as the local land use and economic conditions of the municipalities that surround the installation. The recommendation categories are:

- **Communication/Outreach:** Efforts intended to improve communication and coordination between the base and surrounding municipalities.
- **Land Use:** Proposed changes to land use planning, affordable housing, farmland preservation and other land-based compatibility measures that could be implemented within the Military Influence Area (MIA) surrounding the base.

- **Economic Development:** Mutually beneficial economic development initiatives that could have positive impacts in the areas surrounding NWS Earle.
- **Transportation:** Proposed improvements to transportation facilities on land, water (Raritan/Sandy Hook Bay), and air in the region surrounding the base.
- **Utilities:** Joint and mutually beneficial utility system projects.
- **Climate Resilience:** Joint efforts to reduce risk from sea level rise, coastal storm events and localized flooding.
- **Security:** Proposals to improve security around the military facilities and assets at NWS Earle.

It should be noted these recommendations are non-binding and result from the cooperative planning effort involved in this JLUS. Further action would be necessary to implement each recommendation. In some cases, individual municipalities or organizations can proceed on their own and in other cases, coordination might be necessary between multiple parties. This is typical of the JLUS process and has worked successfully in other communities facing similar issues across the country. An organizational structure similar to the Committee structure used for this JLUS could be helpful to further these implementation actions over time.

A. Communication/Outreach

As described in Chapter 3, there are already a number of on-going communication and coordination efforts that aid in the relationship between NWS Earle and the surrounding jurisdictions. Additional efforts were identified in this JLUS process that could further enhance this relationship.

Recommendation A.1: Pursue additional cooperation between the Navy, County departments, and NWS Earle municipalities addressing facility maintenance, security, emergency response, etc.

Recommendation A.2: Improve notification processes to share proposed land development submittals and plan amendments, zoning changes and comprehensive plan updates within 3,000 feet of the NWS Earle boundaries.

Recommendation A.3: Conduct noise study documenting sound levels and potential areas of impact from the NWS Earle Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) range. Develop mitigation plan jointly with any impacted communities.

Recommendation A.4: Continue to educate the general public about the NWS Earle mission and the need to respect security boundaries along Normandy Road, in Sandy Hook Bay, and on Bayshore beaches adjacent to the pier.

Recommendation A.5: Collect base employee data on residences (by zip codes) and spending patterns useful for municipal/county economic development purposes.

B. Land Use

Encouraging compatible land use and putting into effect controls to regulate this is a goal for many communities next to military installations across the country. Few of the current planning documents at the local level recognize NWS Earle. The recommendations in this category could enhance local planning by establishing buffer areas around the base in which municipalities would consider future land use and zoning to encourage more compatible development. In addition, preserving farmland and conserving environmentally sensitive areas around the base as a natural buffer is recommended to prevent encroachment and increase the safety of citizens throughout the region.

Recommendation B.1: Formally recognize 3,000 ft. buffer from NWS Earle boundaries in jurisdiction planning documents. Encourage compatible land development and zoning within this buffer. Direct residential and institutional development to more suitable areas outside the MIA. Consider implementing applicable land development controls recommended in the toolbox.

Recommendation B.2: Encourage the NJ Military Ombudsman and the New Jersey Office for Planning Advocacy to discuss the mission of NWS Earle with other state agencies to educate them regarding the need to maintain compatible land uses within in the MIA. Discourage incompatible uses such as high density housing particularly within the Earle buffer.

Recommendation B.3: Identify and pursue purchase of land that could provide additional NWS Earle buffer, storm/flooding protection, and/or environmental enhancement.

Recommendation B.4: Pursue REPI funding to preserve farms and undeveloped or under-developed properties in the MIA and immediately adjacent to the Normandy Road corridor to maintain these compatible uses.

Recommendation B.5: Encourage additional farmers in the MIA to enter into farmland preservation programs.

C. Economic Development

The base contributes to the economic vitality of the surrounding communities and the region but has not been considered in the economic development goals of local stakeholders. Growing populations and increased development in surrounding municipalities require more collaboration between the base and the local economy. The next generation of planning documents and economic development programs should consider the spending power of base personnel, the hiring potential of the Navy, as well as shared safety concerns amid growing activity.

Recommendation C.1: Conduct educational events for local contractors about Federal contracting opportunities at NWS Earle.

Recommendation C.2: Create local workforce development programs in conjunction with active Navy training and staff recruitment activities.

Recommendation C.3: Coordinate efforts on marketing NWS Earle land and water assets to attract additional Federal or other government tenants over time.

Recommendation C.4: Conduct a study of compatible uses for the Route 33/34 corridor that could spur economic development and/or redevelopment, including the provision of new services for personnel stationed at NWS Earle.

Recommendation C.5: Continue to engage NWS Earle and the County as part of the Port Belford redevelopment planning group and similar local initiatives.

Recommendation C.6: Promote recreational amenities in the Bayshore Region, as outlined in the Bayshore Region Strategic Plan (2006), in conjunction with NWS Earle requirements near secure waterfront areas and the pier.

D. Transportation

Monmouth County has multiple modes of transportation available to provide residents with links to both the New York City and Philadelphia metro regions, including a private executive airport, NJ Transit rail and bus lines, privately run Ferry services to lower Manhattan, and a roadway system that has classifications from Interstate to County and local routes. Transportation-related recommendations address issues related to these transportation systems serving both the base and the surrounding communities.

Recommendation D.1: Conduct corridor study along Route 33-34 to improve traffic conditions including STRAHNET access /egress. Include recommended roadway & intersection improvements in MPO transportation project lists for priority funding.

Recommendation D.2: Review options for modifying signalization for at-grade intersections along Normandy Road corridor to alleviate current issues identified by NWS Earle municipalities.

Recommendation D.3: Conduct a study of traffic calming measures to alleviate speeding through Farmingdale on CR 524 (Main Street), which is a local connector between I-195 and NWS Earle (NJSH 33/34).

Recommendation D.4: Improve notification at all local marinas of the secure/restricting boating zone around NWS Earle piers.

Recommendation D.5: Encourage support for accelerated maintenance of Sandy Hook channel.

Recommendation D.6: Coordinate with local airports and FAA to reinforce overflight limitations over NWS Earle property. Provide airports with maps illustrating restricted airspace boundaries.

E. Utilities

Enhancing municipal utility systems that jointly serve NWS Earle and the surrounding communities can be a direct benefit to all parties. Providing uninterrupted utility service during storm events is particularly important to maintain critical assets on both the civilian and military sides of the fence.

Recommendation E.1: Encourage joint participation in Microgrid Feasibility Studies to analyze the potential for establishing uninterrupted power supplies that provide additional resiliency for key government functions.

Recommendation E.2: Pursue solar options to provide supplementary power to the installation and surrounding community. Coordinate this with other BPU-funded microgrid studies.

Recommendation E.3: Investigate additional flood-proofing measures to protect TOMSA sewage treatment plant which serves NWS Earle and surrounding neighborhoods.

F. Climate Resilience

One of the main goals of this JLUS was to address climate resilience. NWS Earle suffered \$50 million in damage from Superstorm Sandy. The region at large also had significant storm damage during this event including loss of power over an extended period of time. A number of Federal, state and local efforts are underway to take proactive steps leading towards better resilience of the region's critical assets, including facilities at NWS Earle.

Recommendation F.1: Encourage coordinated Federal, State, County, and Middletown Township effort to implement a naturalized beach erosion/shoreline protection project protecting both Navy and community waterfronts.

Recommendation F.2: Develop Marsh & Dune Restoration Plan that identifies where Navy dredge material can be beneficially used for storm protection. Coordinate with all parties prior to the Navy's next navigational channel and ship berthing dredging effort

Recommendation F.3: Investigate potential joint stormwater management improvement projects to reduce local flooding in the Leonardo community adjacent to the Navy Waterfront property.

Recommendation F.4: Continue to work with NJ FRAMES as they develop resiliency recommendations.

Recommendation F.5: Conduct site specific vulnerability assessments of critical assets exposed to future flood hazards, including: TOMSA (Township of Middletown Sewerage Authority facility), Ferry Terminals, Marinas, etc.

Recommendation F.6: Consistent with economic development plans, identify water-dependent uses in the study area and determine future adaptive capacity and other working waterfront uses.

Recommendation F.7: Continue to encourage improvement in Community Rating System (CRS) certifications by leveraging additional resilience efforts to generate analyses that will qualify for CRS points.

Recommendation F.8: Consistent with the identification of work locations, identify critical transportation routes that may be subject to future storm damage and periodic inundation from nuisance flooding that would prevent commuting or base access to NWS Earle.

Recommendation F.9: Water level rise raises the baseline conditions for all types of coastal flooding. Revise County and local planning documents to reflect water level rise and exposure assessment that is integrated into coastal flood hazard planning using frameworks consistent with the Navy Handbook and Federal guidance. Also, work with the NJ Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on integration consistency.

G. Security

Security at NWS Earle is paramount to the Base mission and a major focus for Base leadership. Gates, fences, surveillance, and security patrols help maintain this at the four land and water based facility assets that make up the base: Mainside, the Waterfront, Normandy Road/Railroad, and the Pier Complex. This security is also conducted as a joint effort through cooperation between on-base security forces and local law enforcement agencies at both the County and municipal level.

Recommendation G.1: Work with local flying clubs/organizations and the state to establish legislation enforcing limits on drone operations over military installations in NJ.

Recommendation G.2: Add additional signage to limit pedestrian circulation on the beach near the secure area surrounding NWS Earle piers during low and high tide conditions. Coordinate security patrols by Navy and local law enforcement.