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## Master plan sets stage for the future

By Col. H. Charles Hodges Jr./Joint Base Lewis-McChord commander

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Vietnam-era veterans who visit JBLM say it's "nothing like they remember." Thanks to the JBLM Master Plan, decades from now we'll say the same thing.

This plan will guide future JBLM development. It's used by planners, designers and contractors when doing construction, demolition and facility restoration.

The JBLM Master Plan should be ready in January. It replaces separate Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base plans. The JBLM plan creates a single "vision" that supports multi-service mission needs, plus the needs of JBLM's service members, their family members, civilian workforce and military retirees.

This effort started in January, when a cross-section of Army and Air Force members, spouses, and students met to revamp the master plan's overall vision. Later visioning sessions generated additional input from JBLM personnel.

Throughout these sessions service members asked, "Why is it so hard to get around? And why is everything so far apart?" They're right. JBLM is a big place and its services are spread out over a large area. That's why JBLM's master plan showcases communities with walkable neighborhoods, identifiable town centers and connecting streets. It shows how residents will easily reach JBLM's food, gas, shopping, medical, entertainment services, housing and work areas by foot, bicycle or private automobile.

Lewis North's Town Center exemplifies this approach. Its Exchange Mini-Mall and gas station, dental clinic, gymnasium, dining facility and Warrior Zone are in a centrally located area, surrounded by barracks, headquarters and motor pools. That makes the area walkable, sustainable and identifiable.

We've divided JBLM into 18 neighborhoods across the base. Each neighborhood gets its own area development plan, based on a series of design principles. In 2007, ADPs were created for Lewis Main and Lewis North. We're now updating three McChord Field ADPs — the McChord center near the Exchange, the flight line and the Carter Lake housing area. The ADPs guide each neighborhood's future development.

A fourth ADP is being created in the area between Lewis Main and McChord Field called the McChord-Lewis Link. This ADP features a new road to allow secure, unimpeded access between Lewis Main and McChord Field without passing through a security access point.

A master plan drives future development by identifying what space is available for new construction. It also identifies what facilities can be repurposed. Planners can use the plan to review a potential expansion area, consider a facility's purpose and choose a suitable location. In 2007, using the Fort Lewis Master Plan, we identified space and facilities for an additional brigade or two within JBLM's cantonment area. Knowing we had this space, we were able to add the 16th Combat Aviation Brigade and the 7th Infantry Division headquarters on Lewis Main and Lewis North.

Additional growth, however, won't be so easy. Future development can't reduce range, training land and airspace. Recognizing this, the JBLM plan uses higher density facilities that use less real estate by building up and not out. The plan calls for taller buildings on main streets, two stories or more, like those in the construction area along Pendleton Avenue on Lewis Main. We're also using a more mixed-use approach that allows us to locate a shoppette near a residential neighborhood or build workspace over retail shopping areas. This approach is an essential element to the master plan, since JBLM's population has nearly doubled since 2003.

Finally, we're creating public spaces in the master plan — places where people can gather during their off-duty hours. The future "Freedom Crossing" on Lewis-Main near today's Exchange and commissary is a good example. It will include a new main street that's

anchored by a green area. Our goal is to build every neighborhood around a “center” within convenient walking distance. Once the JBLM Master Plan is complete, it will set the stage for a new and improved JBLM 30 to 40 years from now — a JBLM almost unrecognizable to you and me.

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