DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Fort George G. Meade
Fort Meade, Maryland 20755-5115

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Proposed Department of Defense (DoD) Cyber Crime Center (DC3) at Fort George G. Meade

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential impacts on the quality of the human environment associated with constructing and operating a new, efficient, and effective Department of Defense (DoD) Cyber Crime Center (DC3) facility in the northeastern corner of Fort George G. Meade (FMMD), Anne Arundel County, Maryland. This EA was prepared pursuant to the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) of 1969 (42 *United States Code* § 4321 et seq.); the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations that implement NEPA (Title 40 *Code of Federal Regulations* [CFR], Parts 1500 to 1508); and 32 CFR Part 651, *Environmental Analysis of Army Actions*.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to consolidate the DC3 operations into one facility located on Fort George G. Meade (FMMD). The Proposed Action is intended to increase collaboration with other agencies with similar missions on FMMD and provide adequate facilities for full-time personnel and students of the academy.

The need for the Proposed Action is to facilitate optimal mission performance of the DC3. In 2015, the Secretary of the Air Force directed the DC3 to terminate further leasing of commercial facilities and pursue funding for military construction on FMMD. Since 2000, DC3 has leased 105,511 square feet (SF) of space in three separate buildings in Linthicum, Maryland. These leased facilities are aging, lack the proper security, and would require substantial upgrades by the government for unique heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, electrical systems, and ancillary support for the multiple information technology infrastructure systems necessary to sustain the unit's mission. For example, the forensic laboratory requires up to three full workstations with sufficient memory per examiner to run multiple analyses. Continued use of the current leased space would conflict with the 2015 directive, require extensive and costly renovations to commercial facilities, and severely limit DC3's collaboration with other agencies with similar missions located on FMMD.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

3.1 Proposed Action

3.1.1 Conceptual Details

The Proposed Action includes the construction and operation of a new, approximately 238,800-SF facility. Because the DC3 encompasses two major missions, an operations program and an academy program, the building design concept consists of two wings: the operations wing (two four-story buildings and a four-story connector building) and an academy wing (one four-story building and a one-story connector building). The site design also includes a parking structure, sidewalks, landscaping, stormwater management facilities, and utility service connections. The buildings would serve full-time personnel and students of the academy.

The Proposed Action would involve clearing and grading 33-acres of mature wooded forestland for the construction of the DC3 headquarters complex on FMMD. Early conceptual designs also include construction of a 7.3-acre access road to the DC3 building and 11.7 acres of parking lots and walkways. The Proposed Action would be constructed in three phases, or "packages," over a two-year period. The Proposed Action also includes site development, utilities and connections, lighting, paving, parking, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, storm drainage, information systems, landscaping, and signage.

The Proposed Action would be designed to operate with stormwater management systems that comply with the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) Stormwater Design Manual Volumes I & II with Environmental Site Design requirements, the MDE Stormwater Management Guidelines for State and Federal Projects, MDE's applicable Technical Memorandums, and Code of Maryland Regulations stormwater management regulations. In addition, sustainable site design strategies would be used to maximize Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) site credits. The designer of record would be responsible for obtaining stormwater management and erosion and sediment control approval from MDE prior to construction.

Measures by the DoD Minimum Antiterrorism for Buildings standards would be provided. Access for individuals with disabilities would be provided in compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act. Facilities would be designed for a minimum life of 40 years by DoD's Unified Facilities Criteria 1-200-02 including energy efficiencies, building envelope, and integrated building systems performance. Sustainability and energy enhancement measures would be included to meet the LEED Silver requirement.

3.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. This entails DC3 continuing to use the current leased buildings in Linthicum, Maryland. The No Action Alternative does not address the needs of DC3 to securely consolidate its operations and collaborate with other co-located federal agencies with similar missions. The academy program lacks the classroom space and equipment to conduct investigation and response training for DoD certifications. Leased spaces are also difficult and costly to reconfigure or modify to meet new mission parameters. Further, continued use of the current leased spaces would not meet the DC3's need to comply with the higher command's 2015 directive.

3.3 Alternatives Considered But Eliminated

The screening criteria for the Proposed Action alternatives require a site that is 1) located on FMMD; 2) on available land (not already built or entitled to another tenant/use); 3) an adequate acreage to support the facility, parking, and access control; 4) consistent with the FMMD Master Plan; and 5) on a site with adequate visual screening and offset from heavily trafficked roadways. Although numerous sites have been considered, as described below, no alternative site has been approved by FMMD's master planning for potential consideration in accordance with the Installation's future development plan. When considered against that criterion and the remaining screening criteria, these alternative sites were removed from further analysis.

3.3.1 Alternative 1

A site north of the current Proposed Action site would be large enough to support the facility but is not hidden from highway visibility. It is also heavily forested and currently supports a stream restoration project, and, thus, would be incompatible with Installation priorities for land use and natural resources management.

3.3.2 Alternative 2

Alternative 2 involves an approximately 15-acre site north of General Aviation Drive in the southwestern corner of FMMD. It includes land that is available and of adequate acreage to support construction of the facility, but it does not offer an adequate visual screen from the general public, as it is located directly south of access ramps to MD 32.

3.3.3 Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would involve a project area adjacent to the closed landfill cells in the southeastern corner of FMMD, in an area that currently does not support any structures and contains forest and wetlands. It is a large enough area to support the size of the facility; however, a portion of it is currently the subject of a pending real estate action in support of a proposed solar array field, thus is not compatible with current master planning goals. The site is also close to MD 32 and an active shooting range. The forested area is adjacent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Patuxent Research Refuge, which provides over 12,000 acres of nearly contiguous forest within the urbanized corridor of Baltimore-Washington, D.C.

3.3.4 Alternative 4

In light of increased teleworking in the aftermath of the Coronavirus Disease 2019, as well as escalating costs of building materials, DC3 considered construction of the headquarters complex on a parcel of land of a reduced size to accommodate the anticipated requirements of a two-phased design that removes the academy/classroom space. This option was subsequently dismissed in favor of the full design to adequately account for future needs as well as optimized mission operations.

3.3.5 Alternative 5

DC3 explored space availability within the National Capital Region, but no sites were more suitable than the FMMD "cyber corridor" to meet DC3 mission objectives. Additional sites were considered on Joint Base Andrews and the Naval District DC, but no open land was available for

new construction for a facility of this size. Therefore, this alternative was removed from further consideration.

3.3.6 Alternative 6

Alternative 6 involves the leasing of other off-site facilities. Because security measures and fiber optical connections to the existing leased facilities are currently very expensive, it is expected that these measures and connections would be cost prohibitive at other off-site, leased facilities. Finding a single facility to securely consolidate the DC3 Operations Facility and the DC3 Academy would be very difficult. This alternative was eliminated from further evaluation because it would be cost prohibitive and not meet building lifecycle requirements, not be adequately secure, nor be operationally efficient for the DC3.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

As described in Chapter 4 of this EA, the construction and operation of the Proposed Action would not generate any significant adverse impacts, while significant beneficial impacts would be achieved during operation of the Proposed Action.

Minor or negligible, direct adverse impacts caused by constructing the Proposed Action would be temporary, occurring during the approximately 24-month construction phase, and be limited in extent to the Proposed Action site. Due to the relatively isolated location of the Proposed Action site in the northeastern portion of FMMD, only a small number of Service members, staff, and personnel at FMMD may be aware of and impacted by the Proposed Action construction.

Beneficial impacts caused by operating the Proposed Action would be permanent. The Proposed Action would consolidate DC3 operations into one facility and increase collaboration with other agencies with similar missions on FMMD and optimize DC3 mission performance.

Table 1 summarizes the potential impacts of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The summary is based on information discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this EA and includes a concise definition of the issues addressed and the potential environmental impacts associated with each phase of the Proposed Action and its potential cumulative impacts.

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public participation opportunities with respect to this EA and decision making on the Proposed Action are guided by 32 CFR Part 651. Accordingly, the Draft EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) have been made available to the public for a 30-day review and comment period. These documents were made available online at https://home.army.mil/meade/index.php/my-fort/all-services/environmental and printed copies at the FMMD Medal of Honor Memorial Library and the Odenton Regional Library, Odenton, Maryland. A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EA and FONSI and the start of the 30-day review and comment period was published in the *Capital Gazette*. Additionally, the NOA was emailed to federal, state, and local agencies and stakeholder organizations with potential interested in the Proposed Action to solicit their comments during the 30-day review period.

Table 1. Summary of Environmental Consequences

Resource Area	Construction	Operation	Cumulative	No Action
Visual Resources	Short-term, minor, direct, adverse impacts on visual aesthetics due to the presence of construction vehicles and other associated disturbances from construction. Long-term, moderate, direct, adverse impacts on visual aesthetics due to site clearing.	Long-term, negligible, direct, adverse impacts on visual characteristics due to permanent conversion of wooded area into the DC3 complex.	No change in impact findings.	No impact to visual resources.
Earth Resources	Short-term, minor, direct, adverse impacts to earth resources due to soil site clearing, grading, earthmoving, and compaction.	Long-term, minor, direct, adverse impacts on soil quality due to permanent cover by impervious surfaces and compaction.	No change to impact findings.	No impact to earth resources.
Air Quality and Climate Change	Short-term, minor, direct, adverse impacts from clearing the construction site and operation of machinery.	Long-term, negligible, direct, adverse impacts from vehicles commuting to and from the DC3.	No change in impact findings.	No impact to air quality.
Noise	Short-term, minor, direct, adverse impacts from clearing the construction site and operation of machinery.	Long-term, negligible, direct, adverse impacts from vehicles commuting to and from the DC3.	No change in impact findings.	No impact to noise.
Water Resources	Long-term, direct, adverse impacts to water resources due to direct and indirect impacts to waters of the U.S. and wetlands.	Long-term, negligible, direct, adverse impacts to water resources due to increased run-off and sedimentation from impervious surfaces.	No change in impact findings.	No impact to water resources.

Resource Area	Construction	Operation	Cumulative	No Action
Coastal Zone Management	Long-term, direct, adverse impacts would occur to coastal zone resources due to direct and indirect impacts to WUS and wetlands.	Long-term, indirect, minor adverse impacts to coastal zone resources due to increased run-off and sedimentation from impervious surfaces.	No change in impact findings.	No impact to coastal zone management.
Biological Resources	Permanent, direct adverse, impacts to biological resources, including rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitats, from clearing 33 acres of mature forests and other construction activities.	Long-term, negligible, direct, adverse impacts to biological resources, including rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitats, due to permanent loss during construction, but minimized through off-site replantings during operation.	No change in impact findings.	Beneficial impact to biological resources.
Transportation, Energy, and Utilities	Short-term, negligible, direct, adverse impact on traffic and roadways from construction activities and road closures. No impact to energy and utilities. Lines and connections are adjacent to the Proposed Action site. Construction would not disrupt service to existing utility customers.	Long-term, negligible, direct, adverse impact from increased traffic on roadways adjacent to DC3 during rush hour. Long-term, negligible, direct, beneficial impact by reducing travel distance for personnel commuting from FMMD.	No change in impact findings.	Long-term, negligible, direct, adverse impact to individuals continuing to travel longer distances to work outside of FMMD.

Resource Area	Construction	Operation	Cumulative	No Action
Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Substances	Short-term, negligible, direct, adverse impact to one Installation Restoration Program site through the construction of a roadway connecting the Proposed Project site to existing roads. No impacts to toxic and radioactive substances.	No impact to hazardous, toxic, and radioactive substances through the operation of the proposed DC3 facility.	No change in impact findings.	No impact to hazardous, toxic, and radioactive substances.
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	Short-term, negligible, direct, indirect, beneficial impacts from spending on construction wages, equipment, and building materials.	Long-term, minor, direct, beneficial impacts to personnel by reducing commute time and transportation costs. Long-term, minor, direct, beneficial impacts to the Army by reducing costs through leasing property.	No change in impact findings.	Long-term, minor, direct adverse impact to FMMD by continuing to spend money to lease space outside of the Installation boundary.
Protection of Children	Short-term, negligible, direct, adverse impacts to children exposed to construction noise, traffic, particulate matter, and other construction-related activities.	No impacts to the welfare of children by the continued operation of the Proposed Action.	No change in impact findings.	No impacts to the welfare of children.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have considered the results of the analysis in the EA, incorporated herein in its entirety, the comments received during the 30-day review and comment period, and associated cumulative effects.

Based on these factors, I have decided to proceed with the Proposed Action to construct and operate the DC3 at FMMD, providing a long-term solution that would meet applicable federal,

state, local, and Installation regulations. The Proposed Action would meet the mission requirements at FMMD, and, along with specified permits, plans and measures, would have no significant impact of an adverse nature on the quality of the human environment.

This analysis fulfills the requirements of NEPA, as implemented by the CEQ regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), as well as the requirements of the Environmental Analysis of Army Actions (32 CFR Part 651). Therefore, issuance of a FONSI is warranted, and an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

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Date