

PUBLIC NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED NATIONAL INFANTRY MUSEUM, FORT BENNING/COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

To Whom It May Concern:

The United States Army Infantry Center and the National Infantry Foundation hereby announce the completion and public availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) concerning the construction of a new National Infantry Museum, to be constructed on City of Columbus and Fort Benning lands. These documents were prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The purpose and need of the proposed action is to build a new museum and related facilities to replace the existing National Infantry Museum (NIM) and increase the space available for the museum's collection of artifacts and its supporting functions. The existing facility is inadequate for the museum's needs and is deteriorating. This new museum would considerably increase the space available for the NIM collection and its supporting functions and enhance the ability of the NIM to fulfill its mission to provide education and training to the soldiers, military dependents, and the general public for all facets of the history of the United States Infantry from its inception in 1775 to the present; to describe the origin and development of Fort Benning; and to present an overview of the United States Army. The goal of this action by the National Infantry Foundation (NIF) is to honor the service and sacrifice of all United States Infantrymen in protecting and serving the nation; to serve as a proponent of a sense of time, place, and belonging (*esprit de corps*) for the Infantry; and to instill knowledge of the Infantry, Fort Benning, and the U.S. Army.

The new NIM would be constructed on an approximately 200-acre site lying between Fort Benning Boulevard and South Lumpkin Road, north of Custer Road, and owned in part by the U.S. Government [Fort Benning Military Installation (Army)] and in part by the Consolidated Government of Columbus/Muscogee County, Georgia (City). The Army property, approximately 104.23 acres, comprises the southern end of the site and extends northward along Fort Benning Boulevard to the "stone gates" and the northern extent of, and traditional entrance to the Installation. This property contains outgrants to Georgia Power and Southern Bell for their overhead transmission lines, as well as a sanitary sewer presently operated by the Army. An extension of the scenic Riverwalk from downtown Columbus to Fort Benning passes through the property. There are no other improvements on this land other than an electrical lighting system that follows the Riverwalk and a few drainage structures remaining from the earlier presence of the Fort Benning Railroad, removed several decades ago.

The Army would lease the Fort Benning property to the NIF for the proposed new museum. The City property, consisting of approximately 90.63 acres, contains a small park with a vehicular parking area, a picnic shelter and restroom facility, and exterior

lighting. There are no other improvements on this land. Title to the City property would be transferred to the NIF for the new museum prior to the start of construction. The NIF would transfer the museum building to the Army within six months after Beneficial Occupancy and the Army will maintain the Museum. The NIF would lease certain portions of the Museum to collocate the management and operational staff of the NIF who are engaged in carrying out its responsibilities for raising funds, operation of revenue generating activities, and coordination of NIM activities such as volunteer coordination. All conditions of operations and maintenance of the NIM project would be defined in the lease between the Army and the NIF.


The EA evaluates the effects associated with the proposed action on soils, vegetation, water quality, wildlife, socioeconomics, land use, environmental justice, cultural resources, utilities, noise, air quality, hazardous materials containment/disposal, public health and safety, and the protection of children.

The EA and draft FNSI for the proposed action have been completed and made available to the public for a review period of 30 days starting from the first day of publication in "The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer," in accordance with part 1501.4 (e)(1) of Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations and Army Regulation 200-2. These documents are available at the following locations, in addition to the following website: www.benning.army.mil/EMD/Legal&PublicNotices.htm.

- W.C. Bradley Memorial Library, located at 1120 Bradley Drive, Columbus, Georgia. Open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- South Lumpkin Library, located at 2034 South Lumpkin Road, Columbus, Georgia. Open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Fort Benning Main Post Library, located in Building 93, Fort Benning, Georgia. Open Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 8:50 p.m., Saturday from 12:00 p.m. to 7:50 p.m., and Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposed action or request additional information must write to the U.S. Army Infantry Center, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Programs Management Branch (Attention: Mr. John E. Brown), Building 6 (Meloy Hall) Room 309, Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-5122, or call (706) 545-7549.

Sincerely



Craig Taylor
Acting Director of Public Works