

PUBLIC NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE
AT FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

To Whom It May Concern:

The United States Army Infantry Center, Fort Benning, Georgia, hereby announces the completion and public availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) concerning the implementation of the Residential Communities Initiative at Fort Benning and Porter Village, Georgia. These documents were prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The Army operates and maintains approximately 90,000 family housing units at its installations throughout the United States. More than 75 percent of the units do not meet current Army housing standards. Despite this, at most installations demand for adequate housing on-post exceeds supply. The lack of adequate on-post housing forces many Soldiers and their families to live in housing in need of repair or renovation or to live off-post where the cost and quality of housing vary considerably. Often, the costs to Soldiers and their families to live off-post are 15 to 20 percent greater than the costs to live on-post. The Army estimates that as much as \$6 billion would be needed to bring it's housing up to current standards and to address the deficit of housing. In recognition of these problems, Congress enacted Section 2801 of the 1996 Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 104-106, codified at Title 10 of the United States Code [U.S.C.] Sections 2871-85). Also known as the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI), this provision of law creates alternative authorities for improvement and construction of military family housing. The legislative intent of Congress in enacting these additional authorities is to enable the military to obtain private sector funding to satisfy family housing requirements. By leveraging scarce public funding, the Army can obtain private sector funds for construction, maintenance, management, renovation, replacement, rehabilitation, and development of Army family housing and ancillary supporting facilities. The Army's implementation of the MHPI authorities is known as the Army Residential Communities Initiative (RCI).

Consistent with the MHPI authorities, Fort Benning proposes to transfer responsibility for providing housing and ancillary supporting facilities to Fort Benning Family Communities LLC, a limited liability company (LLC) composed of the Army and Fort Benning Family Communities LLC. Fort Benning would convey all military housing units and selected ancillary supporting facilities and grant a 50-year ground lease for the land on which the housing and facilities are located to Fort Benning Family Communities LLC. Fort Benning would also lease additional areas for Fort Benning Family Communities LLC use to construct new housing and to operate ancillary supporting facilities. The purpose of the proposed action is to improve Army family housing and ancillary supporting facilities at Fort Benning and Porter Village. The proposed action is needed to provide affordable, quality housing and ancillary supporting facilities to Soldiers and their families through a combination of replacement of and improvement to existing family housing units to ensure that they meet current Army standards.

The EA evaluates potential effects on land use, aesthetics and visual resources, air quality, noise, geology and soils, water resources, biological resources, cultural resources,

socioeconomics (including environmental justice and protection of children), transportation, utilities, and hazardous and toxic substances.

The EA and Draft FNSI for the proposed action will be available to the public for a review period of 30 days starting from the first day of publication (13 June through 13 July 2005) in “The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer” and the Fort Benning publication “The Bayonet,” 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.

- Columbus Public Library, located on Macon Road, Columbus, Georgia.
- South Lumpkin Library, located at 2034 South Lumpkin Road, Columbus, Georgia.
- Fort Benning Main Post Library, located in Building 93, Fort Benning, Georgia.
- Porter Village Housing Office, Camp Merrill, Georgia.

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: Ms. Melissa Kendrick), Building 6 (Meloy Hall) Room 309, Fort Benning, Georgia 31905-5122, or call (706) 545-9878.

Sincerely

Craig Taylor
Acting Director of Public Works