

## Chapter 4

### Implementation and Reuse

When implementing decisions during the past four BRAC rounds, the Department worked diligently to assist its military and civilian personnel in transition, to transfer property for reuse, and to assist communities in converting surplus military installations to civilian reuse. The Department attempted to minimize involuntary separations of Defense civilians at closing or realigning installations through a variety of placement, retirement, and federal retraining programs.

As a result of prior BRAC efforts, the Department has transferred over 450,000 acres of land and related facilities by deed or long-term lease to other entities for reuse. These transfers have permitted the creation of more than 110,000 new jobs, and redevelopment is continuing at those former installations. New job creation has continued to increase at an average annual rate of nearly ten percent over the past four years. In implementing BRAC 2005 decisions, the Department plans to assist community redevelopment, capitalizing on its previous experience and adapting to changing economic and market conditions. While some installations will close and others will experience job losses through realignment, other installations will expand to accommodate missions and relocated personnel. Relocations of missions and associated personnel were a significant aspect of BRAC 2005.

#### Guiding Principles

Out of its experience assisting communities during the implementation of previous BRAC rounds, the Department believes that the following principles will be particularly useful in the transition in communities supporting the Department's mission:

- **Act expeditiously whether closing or realigning.** Relocating activities from installations designated for closure will, when feasible, be accelerated to facilitate the transfer of real property for community reuse. In the case of realignments, the Department will pursue aggressive planning and scheduling of related facility improvements at the receiving location.
- **Fully utilize all appropriate means to transfer property.** Federal law provides the Department with an array of legal authorities, including public benefit transfers, economic development conveyances at cost and no cost, negotiated sale to state or local government, conservation conveyances, and public sale, by which to transfer on closed or realigned installations. Recognizing that the variety of types of facilities available for civilian reuse and the unique circumstances of the surrounding communities does not lend itself to a "one-size-fits-all-solution," the Department will use this array of authorities in a way that considers individual circumstances.

- **Rely on and leverage market forces.** After four rounds of BRAC, both the public and private sectors are aware of the range of opportunities available for property reuse. A broad spectrum of practitioners has gained experience in all phases of base closure and redevelopment. This expertise should allow market forces to work effectively. Community redevelopment plans and military conveyance plans should be integrated to the extent practical and should take account of any anticipated demand for surplus military land and facilities. If installation growth is substantial, the Department will work with the surrounding community so that the public and private sectors can provide the services and facilities needed to accommodate new personnel and their families.
- **Collaborate effectively.** Experience suggests that collaboration is the linchpin to successful installation redevelopment. Only by collaborating with the local community can the Department close and transfer property in a timely manner and provide a foundation for solid economic redevelopment. While BRAC sometimes challenges the existing supportive partnership between the installation and the community, both parties can benefit from the change if they continue to recognize themselves as partners whose individual interests in carrying out BRAC decisions are interrelated. Existing partnerships may need to expand to include state officials because of their environmental, historic preservation, and economic development responsibilities. Military-community partnerships need to be flexible enough to adapt to the specific market forces and other circumstances at each location.
- **Speak with one voice.** The Department, executing disposal and reuse activities through the Military Departments and Defense Agencies, will provide clear and timely information through single focal points and will encourage affected communities to do the same. Timely information regarding facility and environmental conditions and closure and realignment schedules are critically important. In the past, when communities spoke with one voice about their reuse goals and activities, the Department was better positioned to consider local redevelopment plans. This was also true when installations and communities experienced substantial personnel increases. The Department recognizes that installation base commanders and local officials need to integrate elements of their growth planning so that appropriate off-base facilities and services are available for arriving personnel and their families.

## Information About BRAC

The Department recognizes that BRAC decisions and their implementation are of high public interest. To keep information as current as possible, the Department maintains a BRAC 2005 website ([www.defenselink.mil/BRAC](http://www.defenselink.mil/BRAC)). The Department's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) also maintains a website ([www.oea.gov](http://www.oea.gov)). Information on the OEA site could prove useful to local communities during their initial planning phases.

Concerns about the implementation of BRAC decisions are numerous and based on very installation-specific circumstances. For many of these concerns, sufficient information may be available only after BRAC decisions are finalized and installation-specific implementation plans

are developed. The Department, however, has highlighted three particular areas for attention: assistance for personnel, environmental responsibilities, and assistance for affected communities.

## **Assistance for Personnel**

One of the Department's challenges at installations subject to BRAC decisions is the fair and effective management of human resources. The closure of installations with the potential for separating a large number of civilian employees presents major challenges to commanders and human resource personnel. While these installations will still have missions to accomplish, the employees will be stressed about their careers and employment security. In this atmosphere, productivity will suffer and the employees' overall quality of life may diminish. The Department has a number of mitigating placement, transition, and worker assistance programs to draw from, including the following:

- The Priority Placement Program provides for the referral and mandatory placement of displaced employees who are qualified for other vacancies within the Department. Other programs provide various types of referral and priority considerations for Defense and other Federal agencies' job vacancies.
- The Department's permanent Voluntary Early Retirement Authority allows eligible employees to retire early and receive a reduced annuity.
- The Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (with a cash payment) authorizes the Department to encourage displaced employees to separate voluntarily by resignation or retirement to avoid an involuntary separation of another employee.
- The Department's Homeowners Assistance Program provides financial assistance to relocating military and DoD civilians when they must sell their homes in a market that has been adversely impacted by a BRAC action.
- The U.S. Department of Labor provides funding for assistance to displaced Federal employees. Under the Workforce Investment Act, assistance may include counseling, testing, placement assistance, retraining, and other related services. This assistance is available through the appropriate state employment security agencies.

Military commanders and human resource personnel have learned from previous BRAC rounds the importance of stressing job placement and training to employees. When dislocations are likely to be large, establishing transition assistance offices at the installation encourages a strong partnership for providing the range of programs available from the Department of Labor and the Military Departments.

## **Realigning and Closing Bases: Environmental Responsibilities**

The Department intends to transfer BRAC property expeditiously for reuse. However, the Department will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires all Federal agencies to identify and consider possible environmental impacts of proposed reuse activities before transferring any real property. This analysis will also include the potential impacts on historical and cultural resources. While NEPA does not apply to the BRAC decisions themselves, the Act does require an environmental analysis for each installation receiving additional functions. Any mitigation that may be required will be identified and considered for implementation.

The Military Departments are responsible for environmental remediation of closing installations. Early in the implementation process, the Military Departments will assess and document the environmental condition of all transferable property in terms of the extent of contamination and the current phase of any remedial or corrective action.

If no remedial action on the installation is required, surplus real estate may be transferred. If remediation is required, the Military Department may complete the work before the transfer, or alternatively, with agreement from the affected community, the remediation to current use standards may be completed after transfer. Some property transfer negotiations have the new owner managing cleanup as a part of the redevelopment process. With regulatory concurrence, remediation and redevelopment activities may be integrated, potentially saving time and money. An ideal candidate for this type of transfer is property that has manageable environmental contamination, is readily marketable, and has community and regulator support.

### **Assistance for Communities**

From a community's perspective, BRAC actions take several forms -- complete closure, partial closure, realignment with a loss, and realignment with gains. Complete closure means the end of the military use of the property. Realignment actions, from a community view, take two distinct forms--either gaining or losing jobs. During a gaining realignment, a community will experience growth as it receives an additional military presence. On the other hand, a losing realignment action may mean reducing a large military presence in a community but not closing the installation in its entirety. In those cases, real property may become available for civilian reuse.

From both the military and community perspectives, the challenges posed by losing scenarios, i.e., closures or realignments, differ from those posed by growth realignments. The Department's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) is prepared to help a community adjust to a significant BRAC action whether a loss or a gain. Such assistance from the Department and other Federal agencies is designed to facilitate the organization, planning, and execution of community-based adjustment strategies.

State and local officials may request OEA assistance. OEA maintains information on all aspects of local economic adjustment through a series of written documents, available on the OEA website--[www.oea.gov](http://www.oea.gov).

## **Realignments With Growth at Receiving Installations**

Significant personnel increases at a military installation may substantially increase demands on community services and facilities. These demands could affect current residents. For example, off-base housing scarcity and over-crowded schools have been major areas of concern shared by both the military and the community.

In a number of cases, the community will clearly be able to accommodate growth because the number and timing of arriving personnel is less than the community's excess capacity and near-term capability for expansion. This situation is not always the case, however. If questions arise regarding support capacity, OEA is prepared to assist communities in formulating growth management plans.

An essential first step for the community is forming a partnership with the military installation so that information and expectations can be shared. The preparation of a growth management plan involves study and analysis as well as participation by community leaders so that growth strategies get the support necessary for implementation. The overall goal is to formulate and implement a community adjustment strategy so that the off-base impacts of significant military expansions can be accommodated in a timely manner.

## **Closures and Losing Realignments**

BRAC actions can affect local communities in terms of reduced economic activity and job cutbacks. In the previous four rounds, many BRAC actions had a negligible effect on the surrounding community's economy. However, over 100 BRAC actions significantly affected the local community, triggering a coordinated program of federal assistance from the Department of Defense and other Federal agencies.

Jobs gained through the economic redevelopment of former installations can be critically important to mitigate the impact of BRAC actions. Civilian redevelopment is often the single most important opportunity for an affected community to overcome adverse impacts while building upon a community's strengths and opportunities.

To ease the economic effects on communities, the Department seeks to close installations as expeditiously as possible. This strategy makes property available for community redevelopment objectives and also saves DoD resources. For some communities, surplus military installations represent advantageously located real estate in the midst of rapidly growing and prosperous local economies. For other communities, opportunity may be difficult to recognize initially. No matter the situation, the redevelopment of a former military installation is often a complex effort.

Because the needs of affected communities vary so greatly, the Department is prepared to assist communities in a variety of ways:

- In terms of planning, the Department provides detailed information on the condition of an installation so that community redevelopment plans and potential users can identify baseline conditions and any required environmental cleanup needs.

- While job creation, new business development, and tax-base expansion are common redevelopment goals adopted in communities, public use facilities may also be part of a base's redevelopment. Federal property laws provide a variety of property transfer mechanisms to satisfy and support diverse redevelopment scenarios.
- During the past four rounds of BRAC, OEA provided about \$280 million in economic planning and redevelopment assistance to local communities. Other Federal agencies provided approximately \$1.6 billion in coordinated grant assistance: Federal Aviation Administration (\$760 million); the Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration (\$611 million); and the Labor Department's Employment and Training Administration (\$223 million).

Redeveloping a military base becomes an opportunity for community leaders to reinvent the base's usefulness and prosper from a diverse range of new civilian activities. The Department provides important assistance for reuse planning and property transfer. Other Federal agencies can provide additional help in acquiring and redeveloping base property. States have assisted community efforts with technical and financial assistance and direct participation in redevelopment efforts. Most importantly, closed bases find new life through the commitment of community leaders to create and sustain a widely shared vision for base redevelopment.

The successful redevelopment of surplus military property does not occur without a genuine partnering between the Military Departments and the communities that will absorb the former installations. Likewise, it is important to recognize that this necessary Military-community partnership needs to be flexible to adapt to the specific market forces and private sector circumstances found at each location. Government agencies at all levels can bring critical knowledge and resources to this effort. The private sector's entrepreneurial perspective and capital ultimately turn reuse visions into viable economic redevelopment and job creation.