

**SSMCP Steering
Committee:**

- City of DuPont
- City of Lacey
- City of Lakewood
- Town of Steilacoom
- City of Tacoma
- City of University Place
- City of Yelm
- Pierce County
- Thurston County
- Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Nisqually Tribe
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
- Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce
- United Way-Pierce County
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Military Department

September 21, 2015

Mr. Don Tison, Designated Federal Officer
National Commission on the Future of the Army
700 Army Pentagon, Room 3E406
Washington, DC 20310-0700

Dear Sir:

On behalf of the South Sound Military & Communities Partnership (SSMCP), thank you for your attention to these comments regarding the development of a report for the President and Congress by the National Commission of the Future of the Army (NCFA.)

Community and South Sound Government Support for JBLM

Unfortunately, there seems to be a perception by some Army and federal leaders that Washington State’s elected representatives and residents do not support military presence in the state. **This is untrue.** The very existence of the South Sound Military and Communities Partnership (SSMCP) itself demonstrates the fact that the region around JBLM – including governments, businesses, service organizations, and individuals – supports and cares about the Army, the base, and its service members and civilian employees, its veterans, and military families.

With a quickly expanding membership, current members of the SSMCP include:

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|--------------------------|---|
| City of Lakewood | Thurston Regional Planning Council |
| City of Lacey | Joint Base Lewis-McChord |
| City of DuPont | Washington Military Department |
| City of Olympia | Washington Department of Veterans Affairs |
| City of Puyallup | Give an Hour |
| Town of Steilacoom | Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce |
| City of Tacoma | Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department |
| City of Tumwater | United Way of Pierce County |
| City of University Place | Clover Park School District |
| City of Yelm | Franklin Pierce School District |
| Pierce County | Puget Sound Energy |
| Thurston County | Tacoma Pierce County Association of Realtors® |
| Nisqually Indian Tribe | WorkForce Central |

The mission of the SSMCP is to foster effective communication, understanding, and mutual benefit by establishing the most effective point of coordination for resolution of those issues which transcend the specific interest of the military and civilian communities of the South Sound Region. Its sole purpose is to better integrate the military presence in the South Puget Sound area into the larger populations, with six core objectives:

- Formalize New Methods of Regional Collaboration
- Improve Access to Information
- Improve Access to Existing Services
- Promote JBLM as a Center of Regional Economic Significance
- Improve Support for Military Families
- Improve Regional Mobility

Current SSMCP priorities include:

- Continuing federal defense budget cuts and their effects on JBLM's ability to complete its missions
- Ending Sequestration under the Budget Control Act
- Supporting a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round
- Expanding missions at JBLM and thus spurring regional economic development
- Implementing strategies identified in the 2015 JLM Joint Land Use Study, the development of which SSMCP coordinated
- Availability of workforce transition assistance for separating service members and their families
- Increasing awareness of active duty, military family and veterans about regional availability of health care and social services
- Increasing state level support of military presence in Washington

Since its completion, the SSMCP has been implementing strategies from the 2010 JBLM Growth Coordination Plan that address economics, housing, education, land use, public safety, utilities, health care, social services, and quality of life issues in the South Puget Sound related to the presence of JBLM. You can view full the Growth Coordination Plan at <http://www.ssmcp.org/our-work>. Workforce transition and social service needs for separating service members and their families have become top priorities for the SSMCP in this period of military downsizing, and its near term efforts focus on addressing these priorities in cooperation with JBLM.

As part of implementing its mission, the SSMCP has been instrumental in securing over \$275 million in funding for infrastructure improvements and coordinated planning efforts for JBLM and surrounding area, including:

- Funding to Replace Clover Park School District's On-base Elementary Schools: \$150 million
- Funding for Workforce Development: \$9+ million
- Funding for a Regional Land Use Study: \$424,000
- Funding for Needs & Preferences Survey of JBLM Personnel (2011 and 2013): \$70,000
- Funding for Local Transportation Projects
 - o TIGER III: \$15 million
 - o Interchange Justification Reports: \$6.9 million
 - o Madigan Access Transportation Improvements: \$5.7 million
 - o I-5 Transportation Alternatives Analysis: \$500,000
 - o Funding to replace JBLM's Wastewater Treatment Plant: \$91 million

SSMCP has also issued two Needs and Preferences Surveys of JBLM active duty and civilian personnel to raise awareness in local communities of the impact JBLM has in the area, strengthen local communities' ties with JBLM, and bolster the level of service to what is desired by service members off base. It is the intent that these surveys will be issued every two years to keep information accurate and timely for best

use by South Sound cities, counties, and service organizations to answer the needs of the base, service members and their families. Jurisdiction-specific survey results can be viewed at www.ssmcp.org/ourwork.

In 2015, SSMCP conducted its first Business and Community Survey within the geographic area around JBLM. These results will be available in October 2015. The survey has been designed to gather data highlighting the nature of the ties and perceptions between JBLM and its surrounding communities; identify any potential conflicts or increased need in the areas of transportation, housing, land use, and employment; and evaluate the impact a draw-down in force or BRAC process would have upon the local economy and community.

Washington State Support of Army Presence

In addition to the numerous local and regional efforts that support military presence in our area since the establishment of Fort Lewis almost 100 years ago, Washington State has demonstrated (particularly under Governor Gregoire and now Governor Inslee) its willingness to raise awareness and action to support continued Army presence here. Governor Inslee appointed a Military and Defense Sector lead within the Department of Commerce upon taking office in 2013; he convened the Washington Military Alliance in 2014; and he convened the Subcabinet on Military Downsizing in summer 2015.

Several recent studies and reports also demonstrate the state's intent and plans:

- *Retaining and Expanding Military Missions: Increasing Defense Spending and Investment*, www.ofm.wa.gov/reports/mil_report.pdf
- *Prosperity Partnership—Regional Economic Strategy: Military Cluster*, www.psrc.org/assets/5613/MilitaryStrategy.pdf

Joint Base Lewis-McChord's Role in the future of the US Army

As explained by the Army about its process to determine where downsizing would ultimately occur as part of the current force structure realignment process, the following factors were considered in addition to socio-economic facts:

- *Operational.*
- *Cost.*
- *Strategy and Geographic Distribution.* The Army must align force structure with planning guidance and the DOD priority to focus on the Pacific Region along with other national defense priorities.
- *Investment and Regeneration.*
- *Soldier and Family Quality of Life.*

JBLM is a unique installation that stands up well under all of the factors listed above, as the following demonstrates:

- JBLM is the model for joint basing across the country, having succeeded in coordinating and aligning Army and Air Force operations and training while preserving each branch's history
- The strategic importance of JBLM/US security in the Pacific is unmatched
 - o The 3-star Joint Task Force headquarters to conduct unified land operations
 - o Strategic airlift with 2 Air Force Wings, plus SeaTac and Boeing nearby
 - o Major rail network to move equipment to ports

- Seaports nearby in Olympia, Tacoma and Seattle
- Western Air Defense Sector on JBLM
- The quality of life at JBLM is also unmatched
 - JBLM is the #1 most-requested DoD installation in CONUS
 - Significant investment in new barracks, housing, HQs, MWR facilities at the base have made it one of the most modern installation in the Army
 - The location of JBLM within a larger urban area provides service members and their families access to high quality employment, education, housing, and more.
- JBLM is one of the most modern installations in the Department of Defense
 - Millions of dollars of Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (\$959 million since 2005) and MILCON (\$2.74 billion since 1999) funds have been invested
- All four Services are located at this Joint Base
- JBLM is invested in more than 17 communities around the base, including engaging in the drafting of the 2015 JBLM Joint Land Use Study (release scheduled for October 2015 with implementation to begin in early2016)
- Related to investment and regeneration, as of early 2015, JBLM and the surrounding area contain
 - 42,115 service members
 - 16,739 civilians & onsite contractors
 - 32,064 retirees within 40 miles
 - 155,259 additional retirees in WA, OR, MT & ID

Power Projection to the Pacific

As stated in the July 2008 SPEIS, *Army Growth and Force Structure Realignment to Support Operations in the Pacific Theater*:

Power Projection and Strategic Deployment in the Pacific Rim:

The United States is a nation with key national security interests in the Pacific. The policies put forth in the NSS, NDS, QDR, and ACP provide directives and explicit guidance for the Army to improve its capacity to project power rapidly to prevent, deter, or defeat the actions of those who would do the nation harm while maintaining stability across the Pacific Rim. Effective deterrence requires that U.S. defense forces can credibly act to halt those activities that threaten U.S. national security. **Rapid power projection** to respond to the wide range of potential contingencies present in an increasingly complex global security environment is a **foundational capacity needed to support national security**. **The Army remains committed to its strategic goals of having the capability to deploy its forces anywhere in the Pacific theater within a few days of notification**. This requires advance planning to respond to contingencies and detailed planning based on deployment facilities availability, logistics, and available transportation. PACOM force requirements are driven by its requirements to support the NSS and NDS. **These requirements guide the Army in selecting stationing locations that can support PACOM operations**.

This is perhaps the most fundamental issue that should be considered when looking at JBLM as part of the overall future of the US Army. It makes no sense to further downsize at Joint Base Lewis-McChord; it *does* make sense to maximize the use of JBLM in the future as a strategic asset.

Thank you once again for your consideration of these comments. Please feel to contact me at 253.983.7772 or tspeir@cityoflakewood.us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Tiffany Speir
Program Manager

CC:

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