



East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan

Public Scoping Report



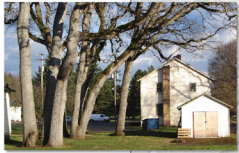
East Barracks, Veterans Memorial



West Barracks, Artillery Barracks



East Barracks, Auditorium
(Building 721)



East Barracks, Garry Oak grove



South Barracks (Building 405)



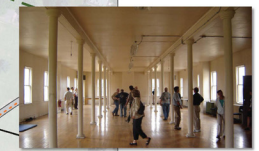
East Barracks, Across Parade
Ground (Building 987)



East Barracks,
Douglas-fir plantings



East Barracks, Back of Building 993
(from south)



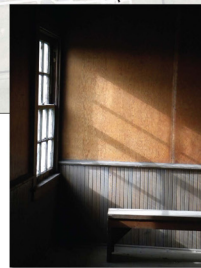
East Barracks, Interior
(Building 993)



East Barracks, Army Post
Exchange (Building 725)



East Barracks, Interior of Quartermaster
Storehouse, Built 1906 (Building 752)



East Barracks, Interior
(Building 780)



Connection between East Barracks
and Fort



Public Scoping Report

Introduction

Public involvement is essential to planning for the East and South Vancouver Barracks at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. With that in mind, the National Park Service (NPS) recently completed its public scoping period for the *East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan*, which extended from March 20 to May 1, 2010. Public scoping is an early phase of planning devoted to engaging the public in determining the future for the project area. During this period, the National Park Service gathered input from the public through various means to help identify the issues that this master plan should address. This document describes these public involvement efforts and summarizes the input received.

Project Background



In 1961 Congress passed an act that enlarged the boundaries of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site “for the purpose of preserving certain historic properties” associated with this area (75 Stat. 196). With the 1961 legislation, the park grew to include a portion of the historic Vancouver Barracks, the first U.S. Army site in the Pacific Northwest. Only the eastern and southern portions of the historic army post are within the legal boundary of the park. Currently, this area is owned by the U.S. Department of Defense for use by the U.S. Army; however, over the years, the Army has scaled back its operations in the Vancouver Barracks. Now, following the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations from the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Army plans to cease its operations at Vancouver Barracks altogether. In 2011 the Army will relinquish the East and South barracks to the National Park Service — including the lands, buildings, and other improvements.

As a result, the National Park Service must plan for the future public use and rehabilitation of these barracks by developing the *East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan / Environmental Assessment*. The purpose of the plan is to collaborate with partners, other agencies and the community-to

- establish a comprehensive vision for the rehabilitation and public use of the East and South barracks;
- determine a clear direction for site design and development; and
- recommend new uses and activities for the site that are compatible with the NPS mission, the purpose of the national historic site, the historic setting of the East and South barracks, and the character of the Vancouver National Historic Reserve and surrounding community.

Scoping Overview

The East and South Vancouver Barracks are treasured by the general public and the 26 federally recognized tribes affiliated with the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Therefore, during the public scoping phase for the *East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan*, NPS staff made every effort to engage interested or affected agencies, organizations, members of the public and recognized tribes.

Notifying the Public

To ensure a high degree of transparency and involvement with the public, the National Park Service announced opportunities to participate in the planning process in many different ways. In cooperation with the city of Vancouver and the Fort Vancouver National Trust, a scoping newsletter and a postcard were sent in March 2010 via direct mail and email to park visitors, park neighbors, and other interested parties. In addition, the National Park Service sent formal consultation letters to tribes and regulatory agencies. These mailings were meant to introduce the project, and announce opportunities for involvement, and initiate the formal public scoping period. A press release was also issued, and public meetings were advertised via local media outlets and social media tools such as Twitter. Comments were also solicited online, and comment cards were made available at public meetings and at the national historic site's visitor center.

Scoping Meetings

The National Park Service conducted several scoping meetings in April 2010 to gather the public's ideas on what the plan should address. On April 6, 2010, an agency scoping meeting was held to collect input from the state historic preservation office, as well as from the affiliated tribes. Attendees at this meeting included NPS staff, representatives from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and other participants with tribal or Hawaiian ancestry. At a later date, NPS staff also attended a meeting with the Associated Tribes of Northwest Indians to discuss the plan and gather additional input.



On April 7th, the National Park Service hosted two public scoping meetings at the Vancouver National Historic Reserve, that were designed to promote a high level of interaction between the public and planning team personnel. NPS staff set up listening stations at the meetings where the background, issues, and vision and goals for this project could be discussed in depth. Maps, posters, and handouts presented this material in a visual format and supported discussions. These materials are available online at a website specifically established for this project (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/fova>). NPS staff also led walking tours of the project site to familiarize attendees with the East and South barracks.

Attendance at these public meetings consisted mostly of members of the local Vancouver community, as well as some from outlying areas in the region. About 70 people attended the afternoon meeting, and 60 people attended the evening meeting. In addition, local journalists covered the meetings, resulting in several articles in Vancouver's local newspaper, *The Columbian*. Members of the public also responded informally to these articles online, and NPS staff monitored these responses.

Public Comments

To help solicit comments from the public, the planning team developed four questions about the East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan:

1. What do you like best about the East and South barracks?
2. What opportunities do you see for these areas?
3. What issues do you think the plan should address?
4. What challenges should be kept in mind?

These questions were presented on comment cards, in the public scoping newsletter, online at the project website, and at public scoping meetings. In response, 60 individuals or organizations submitted comments online or in writing. Among these respondents were nine organizations, including the



Vancouver Bridge Club, Vancouver Police, Lewis and Clark Young Marines, Southwest Washington Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, Ft. Vancouver Pipe Band, Vancouver USA Scottish Dancers, Veterans of Foreign Wars Vancouver Post 7824, National Parks Conservation Association, and Metis Consulting, LLC. Attendees at tribal and public scoping meetings also offered a number of valuable comments, which NPS staff recorded on flip charts during the meetings

and later incorporated into this scoping summary. Although representatives from agencies and other organizations were present at scoping meetings, only the Environmental Protection Agency submitted written comments, which are summarized in the following section.

What We Heard

During the public scoping period, the National Park Service received many valuable comments that will help guide development of the master plan. The summary below synthesizes comments submitted online, in hard copy, and the small number received via email. Comments recorded at the tribal and public scoping meetings held in April 2010 are also reflected in this summary. Agency comments are summarized separately.

All comments are tabulated by topic on subsequent pages of this report, in no particular order. Although most comments responded to the four questions mentioned above, some responses were more general in nature. However, every effort has been made to incorporate those sentiments into the most appropriate category below.

1. What do you like best about the East and South barracks?

Generally speaking, respondents described the historic character of the buildings and grounds as a favorite aspect of the barracks. Many also mentioned the barracks' proximity to the Columbia River and downtown Vancouver as qualities they like best about the barracks. Although not a part of the East and South Vancouver Barracks, the open green spaces of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site are also cherished. One respondent noted greatly appreciating the periodic archeological digs carried out in the area.

2. What opportunities do you see for these areas?

Almost all comments included suggestions for future use of the barracks buildings. Many spoke about museums and collections space, including popular support for the idea of an on-site military museum. Many comments also expressed a clear desire for expanded interpretation in general and included specific recommendations for increased interpretation of Native American history and culture. These suggestions included the creation of educational opportunities in the barracks buildings and hands-on training in native arts and cultural resources, such as canoe-building, basket weaving, jewelry making, archeological work, and historic architectural preservation. One comment strongly suggested involving the Metis people in this process, as well as in other work around the national historic site.



Other popular suggestions for reuse of buildings included art galleries and studios, performance venues, restaurants, community spaces, educational facilities, offices and facilities for nonprofits, and a hotel or hostel. Some expressed concern that too much commercial development might overpower the quiet, historic site. Other comments suggested that all barracks structures should be removed altogether or that buildings and infrastructure within a cemetery dating to the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) period be removed to restore a parklike setting. At the same time, there was also strong support for the area to become a conference retreat center similar to Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend, Washington.

Ideas on how to address the building grounds were also submitted, such as restoring and maintaining the cultural landscape, adding an off-leash dog park, and designing more walking paths. Suggestions also addressed access and circulation issues, such as adding parking at the M.A.S.H. unit site; reinstating historic circulation patterns and materials; and improving public transportation to, from, and around the site.

3. What issues do you think this plan should address?

There were many opinions on what the plan should explore. Most commonly, these included the preservation of historic and cultural resources, funding for implementation, the proposed management framework for the transfer and ongoing administration of the barracks, public use of the barracks, and the development character or the designed appearance of the East and South barracks as it relates to the rest of the Vancouver National Historic Reserve. Although not a unit of the national park system, the reserve is a 366-acre area that includes the national historic site, as well as the reconstructed fort, the West Barracks, Officer's Row, Pearson Airfield and other areas. Several comments also addressed management and interpretation of the cemetery. Others suggested that the plan should address interpretation, parking, wayfinding, stormwater management, and the sustainability of aging buildings. One respondent reiterated the need for careful research and analysis of cultural, natural, and economic conditions as alternatives are developed and evaluated.

4. What challenges should be kept in mind?

The comments revealed several concerns held by respondents. The most common concern involved costs and funding for implementation, especially with respect to the aging condition of historic structures and the advantages and disadvantages of rehabilitation. At times, these concerns were coupled with questions about the long-term viability of proposed uses, as well as current and future market conditions of the surrounding neighborhoods and downtown Vancouver. The second most common concern involved the desire to see the historic character of the barracks upheld and enhanced through the rehabilitation of the project area. Many also felt that the proposed developments along Interstate 5 should be closely monitored and considered in the development of this master plan. Others brought up challenges related to the disorganized layout of the site, the need for additional parking, and the need to balance new uses with the desires and needs of Native American groups affiliated with the national historic site.



Agency Comments

In accordance with requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the Region 10 office for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) submitted written comments on April 29, 2010. With respect to environmental issues, the EPA letter reiterated various federal legislation, executive orders, and other guidelines that are applicable as the National Park Service develops this *Master Plan*. Based on this guidance, the Environmental Protection Agency suggests that certain environmental issues should be addressed by this plan, including water conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy production and use, waste diversion, stormwater management, and green building certification for the renovation and maintenance of existing buildings.

List of Public Comments*

What do you like best about the East and South barracks?

- Proximity to Columbia River and downtown Vancouver (12)
- Open park spaces (5)
- Historic character (18)
- Archeological digs (1)

Representative Quotes:

- “The barracks at Fort Vancouver are historic buildings with tremendous character and quality.”
- “What a wonderful little village full of history!”
- “One of the biggest strengths that the area has to offer is park and gathering space in an inspiring context.”

What opportunities do you see for these areas?

- Facilities and Services
 - Restaurants and cafes (10)
 - Farmers market (2)
 - Retail (6)
 - Limit retail activity (4)
 - Limit new construction (4)
 - Residential, general (1)
 - Hotel/hostel (15)
 - Homeless shelter (2)
 - Senior housing/assisted living (1)
 - Youth housing and programs (2)
 - Education (classrooms, programs, camps, collaboration with Clark College) (10)
 - Conference/retreat center (11)
 - Community center/meeting spaces (11)
 - Office/meeting spaces for nonprofits (7)
 - General office spaces (2)
 - Expanded NPS operations (5)
 - Facility for Young Marines (8)
 - Rent structures back to Army (1)
 - Equestrian facility (1)

Opportunities, continued

- Museums, Interpretation and Collections
 - Military history (12)
 - Collections storage (8)
 - Archeology, technology, and historic architecture (1)
 - Storage for historic vehicles (1)
 - Early development of Hudson Bay Company and barracks (2)
 - Natural history (2)
 - Native American history and culture (6)
 - Traditional tribal work, such as canoe building and basket/jewelry making (1)
 - Oregon Trail (1)
 - Civil Air Patrol (1)
 - St. James Catholic Mission (2)
 - Lost arts of early settlers (1)
 - Story of 1st Oregon Volunteer Infantry (1)
 - Story of the 104th Division (1)
 - Northwest history (3)
 - Peaceful transfer from Hudson Bay Company to U.S. Army (1)
 - Engage Metis people in interpretation (1)
- Grounds/Landscape
 - Restore and maintain cultural landscape (3)
 - Community garden at site of historic HBC garden (1)
 - Off-leash dog park (2)
 - More walking paths (2)
 - Sport fields (1)
 - A for-profit park for recreational vehicles (1)
 - Goats or sheep to maintain grasses, prevent erosion, and fertilize the soil (1)
- Access and Circulation
 - Public transit (2)
 - Additional parking (3)
 - Minimize amount and impact of parking (1)
 - Reinstate/maintain historic street patterns/materials (2)

Opportunities, continued

- Events
 - Coordinate interpretation with the periodic arrival of historic ships in the area (1)
 - An annual weekend-/week-long reenactment to commemorate historic events (1)
 - Promote site as a movie set (1)
 - Host weddings (2)
 - July 4th events (1)
 - Ghost stories and events (1)
- Art Activities
 - Galleries and studios (14)
 - Performance venue (9)

Representative Quotes:

- “The transfer of these additional facilities to the Park Service will allow the Park Service to weave together these areas and interpret the history of the area more completely.”
- “There are a lot of artifacts, particularly of pre-contact Native life that need to be displayed. A tremendous need exists for this function in the Pacific Northwest.”
- “Working with this community’s culture such as art, music, and cuisine, will make the Fort Vancouver Barracks irresistible!”
- “I would love to see the Vancouver Barracks become a facility similar to that at Fort Worden — a peaceful retreat, with accommodations for large groups, places for them to meet and hold classes, with nearby restaurants, parklands and great views.”

What issues do you think the plan should address?

- Adaptive reuse (1)
- Management structure (3)
- Funding (3)
- Volunteer coordination (1)
- Preservation (4)

Issues, continued

- Sustainability (1)
- Environmental cleanup as part of Army transfer (2)
- Connectivity to neighborhoods and downtown (1)
- Community involvement (4)
- Interpretation (3)
- Marketing (1)
- Training staff (1)
- Parking (2)
- Wayfinding/signage (2)
- Management and interpretation of HBC cemetery (3)
- Integration of barracks with rest of site (3)
- Landscaping (1)
- Development character (2)
- Stormwater management (1)
- Water quality (1)
- Utilities (2)

Representative Quotes:

- “Maintaining the integrity of cultural items and respecting the sacredness of the cemetery should be a priority.”
- “We would hope the environmental review would address how the park anticipates funding the maintenance and repair of these new facilities, including any opportunities for either generating funds from these buildings or determining how others can use these buildings in return for maintenance and repair work.”

What challenges should be kept in mind?

- Need to balance commercial with quiet, historic character (8)
- Need to balance needs/desires of tribes, other uses and the natural environment (3)
- Diversity of visitors — age, interest, background (3)
- Market conditions of surrounding community and downtown (4)

Challenges, continued

- Long-term viability of proposed activities (2)
- Impacts to surrounding neighborhoods (2)
- Management of facilities and use (2)
- Disorganized layout and uses (1)
- Poor condition of structures (3)
- Conditions of property ownership and transfer (1)
- Management and interpretation of HBC cemetery (2)
- Funding (10)
- Need for additional parking (2)
- The new Interstate 5 bridge (6)
- Security (2)

**Please note that these comments are listed in no particular order.*

Challenges, continued

Representative Quotes:

- “Many of these buildings will require major rehabilitation from simple issues of painting to more major challenges in infrastructure and possible hazardous materials.”
- “Changes in the cultural landscape at Fort Vancouver have erased specific cultural and natural resources that were culturally important to resident populations in the past.”

Next Steps

Completing the *East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan* will require ongoing consultation and coordination with the many entities involved in planning and implementation. Therefore, this planning process has and will continue to emphasize open and inclusive communication to engage the public and understand their desires and concerns. See the graphic below for an overall timeline for this process.

Following the conclusion of the public scoping period, NPS staff will use the input gathered to carefully develop and analyze alternative courses of action to satisfy requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. As planning continues, the planning website will continue to be updated. To see these updates and to find more information on the project, please see <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/fova> or www.nps.gov/fova. The public will also be notified through a number of different means when the *Master Plan* is available for public review. The National Park Service expects this public review process to begin in summer 2011. Please stay tuned!

