

# ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

c/o Department of Environmental Services 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 705 Arlington, VA 22201

May 22, 2017

The Honorable Jay Fisetto, Chair  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201

Subject: Comment on National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC)

Dear Chair Fisetto:

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) recently completed its final Environmental Assessment (EA) for their proposed update to the Master Plan for the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). While the EA was prepared as part of the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, not a local county planning process, we felt it was appropriate for E2C2 to provide feedback to the Board since the NFATC plans may affect future County plans in the neighborhood. At our April meeting, an Alcova Heights resident expressed concern that the proposed expansion plans will close a popular east-west footpath in order to enhance security. The footpath is popular among community members who use it to travel near the southern NFATC boundary between George Mason Drive to South Quincy Street. The final EA acknowledges, "Closure of the jogging/bike trail would be an inconvenience to those currently using the trail for commuting and recreation; as a short-cut to neighborhoods, community facilities, and community services; and as a safe route to schools."<sup>1</sup>

While closure of the existing trail appears to be inevitable given the NFATC expansion plans, there is interest among community residents to explore alternative east-west connections, including a potential land swap with the County where GSA would provide a 20-foot easement for pedestrian and bicycle access along the fenced southern NFATC boundary, which would connect two areas of Alcova Heights which are currently completely disconnected. We encourage the Board to work with the GSA to explore options for paths in this neighborhood and provide the public with information about the associated environmental impacts, costs, timelines, and other considerations. We support the need for improved pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in this neighborhood, especially in light of the future elementary school at the Thomas Jefferson Middle School site. Enhancing connectivity while accommodating the NFATC expansion will benefit the surrounding residents as well as those who are commuting through this area.

Thank you for this opportunity to share E2C2's concerns.

Respectfully,



Christine Ng  
E2C2 Chair

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/getMediaData?mediaId=158266>