

# THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

## Background

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 was enacted to address concerns about environmental quality. NEPA establishes a national policy for attaining harmony between people and nature, for promoting efforts to eliminate damage to the environment, and for better understanding of ecological systems and natural resources. NEPA's main objectives are as follows:

- Ensure that Federal agencies evaluate the potential environmental impacts of proposed programs, projects, and actions before decisions are made to implement them.
- Inform the public of proposed Federal activities that have the potential to significantly affect environmental quality.
- Encourage and facilitate public involvement in the decisionmaking process.

## What is an EIS?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the most detailed analysis prescribed by the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing NEPA. An EIS is a detailed public document describing a proposed action, all alternative actions that were considered, and the environmental impacts of implementing a proposed action and reasonable alternatives.

### *Steps in the EIS Process*



## Public Involvement

Opportunities to participate in the NEPA process include submitting scoping comments, submitting comments on the Draft EIS and Final EIS, and attending public meetings.

## Agency Coordination

NEPA mandates that local, state, and Federal agencies within the affected project area be given the opportunity to comment on proposed actions. These agencies are asked to identify specific areas or issues that should be addressed in the EIS.

# PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

## Introduction

The Department of Defense (DoD) proposes to renovate and upgrade inspection and access facilities for the National Security Agency's (NSA) campus on Fort George G. Meade, Maryland (Fort Meade). The purpose of the Proposed Action is to increase efficiencies and capacity for required security processing of deliveries and traffic entering Fort Meade and the NSA campus. Additionally, major construction projects have generated change in Fort Meade traffic distribution, resulting in extensive delays for inspection and access. The action, collectively called O'Brien Road Access Modernization (ORAM), is needed to meet increased mission and security capacity, both at Fort Meade and within the Intelligence Community.

## Proposed Action

The existing Vehicle Control Inspection Facility (VCIF) and Vehicle Control Point 5 (VCP5) represent two significant entry points for access to the NSA campus. The main access from the southwest and Maryland Route 32 to Fort Meade and the NSA Campus occurs via the Fort Meade Mapes Road Access Control Facility (ACF). All these facilities require replacement due to process inefficiencies and insufficient capacity to meet current and future demand.

The Proposed Action would consist of: construction of a new VCIF with adjacent visitor control center; construction of a new Mail Screening Facility adjacent to the VCIF; construction of a new VCP5; reconfiguration of the Mapes Road ACF; roadway improvements to provide enhanced routing and separation of traffic between NSA and Fort Meade; and associated infrastructure including sidewalks, inspection canopies, dog kennels, surface parking areas, stormwater management facilities, and utilities.

**Alternatives.** Two alternatives are proposed to be analyzed, and are variations on the Proposed Action presenting slightly different routing and facility location options. Both alternatives would minimize impacts on sensitive environmental systems, such as wetlands, while maintaining mission efficiency for both the NSA and Fort Meade.

**No Action Alternative.** The EIS will also analyze a No Action Alternative to provide a baseline of the existing conditions against which potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the Proposed Action and alternative actions can be compared.

# ORAM PROJECT AREA MAP



# HOW TO MAKE COMMENTS

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations, the Department of Defense (DoD) invites public participation in the NEPA process. Anyone wishing to provide comments, suggestions, or relevant information on the Proposed Action and alternatives may do so using one of the following methods.

**By mail:**  
**"ORAM EIS"**  
**c/o HDR**  
**2650 Park Tower Drive, Suite 400**  
**Vienna, VA 22180**

**By email:**  
**mailto:ORAM@hdrinc.com**

Comments and related material on the Proposed Action and alternatives must be received by August 29, 2022, to be considered in the Draft EIS. If you submit a comment, include your name and address, and identify your comments as for the "ORAM EIS". Please be aware that written and oral statements could be published in the EIS. Private addresses will be compiled to develop a mailing list for those requesting copies of the Draft EIS or Final EIS. However, only the names of private citizens will appear in the EIS; personal addresses and phone numbers will not be published.

*Opportunities for Making Comments throughout EIS Development*

