


INTRODUCTION

A. INTRODUCTION

Without question the redevelopment of 19,335 acres at Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant (LSAAP) and Red River Army Depot West Excess Property (RRAD-WEP) will be the single largest and most ambitious economic development initiative that the people of Bowie County, TX have ever undertaken in their history. In fact, such a challenge would be daunting for even the largest and most entrepreneurial of communities. However, the people of Bowie County strongly believe that they are on the verge of a “once in a lifetime” opportunity. And if planned properly, this project could become the centerpiece for regional economic development for decades to come.

The Lone Star/Red River Reuse Master Plan sets forth a series of finding, conclusions, and recommendations that are designed to guide the Red River Redevelopment Authority (RRRA) in its leadership role as the primary redeveloper of these two facilities. The report is organized in a logical series of chapters, which first describe the Lone Star and Red River facilities relative to their condition and physical attributes. The reuse plan then creates a development vision for these properties based on prevailing market indicators and economic trends, as well as the desire and goals of the community.

The major elements of the plan include:

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Property Evaluation
Chapter 3	Major Utilities & Infrastructure Systems
Chapter 4	Natural, Historic & Cultural Features
Chapter 5	Hazardous Waste
Chapter 6	Transportation
Chapter 7	Property Transfer Methods
Chapter 8	Regional Demographic and Economic Conditions
Chapter 9	Real Estate Market Conditions
Chapter 10	Target Industry Analysis
Chapter 11	Workforce & Job Training Capacity
Chapter 12	Site Redevelopment Plan
Chapter 13	Financial Analysis

B. PUBLIC PROCESS

The public outreach process for LSAAP and RRAD-WEP property transfer was designed to provide ample information without raising undue concern about job loss and worker displacement. Many small-scale meetings were held to provide maximum opportunity for questions and interaction. As a result of all of the meetings held throughout the area, many changes were made to the initial redevelopment plans to accommodate the community vision for the future of the area.

1. Homeless Housing Initiative

As with many depots and ammunition plants throughout the country, homeless housing is not available at either LSAAP or RRAD-WEP. A significant amount of housing was never built at either facility and the area does not lend itself to the construction of housing projects for the foreseeable future.

The 90-day period for interest in facilities at LSAAP and RRAD-WEP by homeless and non-profit providers began on June 7, 2006 and concluded on September 7, 2006. Two public meetings were held for the providers on July 17, 2006 at the Red River Redevelopment Authority, with over three dozen people attending the meetings. Many questions of a general nature were asked about the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process and specifically about the preservation of wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas. Little interest was shown in obtaining any property by any of the groups who were present at the meetings. At the end of the 90-day period, no formal requests had been made to obtain property at LSAAP or RRAD-WEP.

2. Restoration Advisory Board

On September 6, 2006 a notice was placed in the Texarkana Gazette advertising a public information meeting to determine interest in forming a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) at LSAAP and RRAD-WEP. The meeting was held on September 13, 2006 at the Red River Commerce Park at 6:00 p.m. No members of the public attended the meeting and it was determined that a RAB would not be formed at LSAAP or RRAD-WEP due to a lack of public interest.

3. Community Leadership Meetings

During September of 2006, the consultant team met with hired and elected officials from each of the communities surrounding the Lone Star and Red River facilities. Representatives from New Boston, Maud, Redwater, Nash, Hooks, Leary and Wake Village participated in these meetings. Consultants provided an overview of the reuse planning process and solicited input from each community about what they would like to see occur at the Lone Star and Red River facilities in the future. While complete consensus on all issues was not achieved, there seemed to be universal support for a redevelopment strategy that emphasized new opportunities for economic development. Most people believed that the BRAC 2005 decision to close LSAAP and RRAD-WEP created an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Bowie County to attract new industry. In that regard, a number of people supported the creation of a regional warehouse/distribution center.

The City of Hooks, which is located directly across from the Lone Star facility, was interested in the road frontage along U.S. Highway 82, which runs the length of their community. They would like to annex this area and increase the size of their commercial tax base. The City of New Boston, located adjacent to the RRAD-WEP property, had an interest in seeing commercial development occur at the corner of Route 8 and U.S. Highway 82. They also expressed an interest in pursuing new industrial development opportunities in the future and wanted to reserve land at RRAD-WEP to meet that need.

Other individuals were concerned about the future of the two facilities, particularly the preservation of the forested areas and continued site access for hunters and outdoorsmen. Preserving the natural character of this site is viewed as an important goal for many people in Bowie County.

Of particular interest to all community leaders was accommodating the future operations of Day and Zimmerman, Inc., (DZI) the contractor at LSAAP. Officials at Day and Zimmerman have expressed interest in continuing operations at LSAAP and have existing government contracts that will extend the mission at LSAAP until the first quarter of 2009. Maintaining DZI at LSAAP would indeed reduce job loss in the area and many meetings were held between DZI and RRRRA to determine the best way to accommodate these operations without losing the future redevelopment potential at LSAAP for the RRRRA.

4. RRRRA Board of Directors Meeting

A meeting was held on October 24, 2006 with members of the redevelopment team and the RRRRA to review the preliminary redevelopment plans with the RRRRA Board of Directors. The meeting was open to the public and some members of the public did attend. This was the first formal opportunity for RRRRA board members to comment on the preliminary land use concepts, ask questions, and make suggestions for changes. Subsequently, the RRRRA staff have had many opportunities to comment on the redevelopment plans and to suggest changes to improve the potential for redevelopment of these areas.

While meetings were held with the community about the redevelopment of LSAAP and RRAD-WEP, additional meetings were held by the Texas Workforce Commission and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services about the needs of potential employees in the Texarkana area who would lose their jobs as a result of the base closure decisions. The exact number of individuals who would require these services is unknown, but these agencies wanted to be prepared for any needs of the workforce at LSAAP and RRAD-WEP.

5. Civic and Business Interviews

In October 2006, the consultants met with the economic development committee of the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce organized by the Chamber's Director of Economic Development. The committee represented a broad cross-section of civic leaders, educators, and business owners committed to bringing economic development to the region. The committee members were uniformly behind the reuse of LSAAP and RRAD-WEP and saw it as a major economic engine for the Bowie and Miller Counties region. The group also expressed concerns about the region's labor force, primarily its size and ability to meet high skill needs of companies, including those that may be interested in moving to the Lone Star and Red River facilities. In response to this concern, the Chamber and the local community college system had begun instituting new workforce training programs and curriculum to position students to move into emerging employment opportunities.

C. REDEVELOPMENT GOALS

Based on comments made by the general public and discussions among members of the Red River Redevelopment Authority, primary and secondary goals for the redevelopment of the Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant and west excess property of the Red River Army Depot were identified. While some of these goals may be difficult to achieve, their articulation in the reuse master plan establishes priorities for redevelopment, as well as a basis for determining the merit and success of future redevelopment activities.

1. Primary Goals

- Goal 1: The primary purpose for the redevelopment of the LSAAP/RRAD-WEP is the creation of new employment opportunities that will enhance the quality and diversification of Bowie County's employment base.
- Goal 2: The redevelopment of LSAAP and RRAD-WEP should be accomplished in a fiscally prudent manner that includes the active financial involvement of the Red River Redevelopment Authority, Bowie County, the State of Texas, and the Federal government.
- Goal 3: The retention of existing jobs at LSAAP is a top priority and every effort will be made to incorporate these companies into future redevelopment plans.
- Goal 4: Implement a reuse strategy that utilizes public resources to leverage private sector investment in the redevelopment of LSAAP and RRAD-WEP.
- Goal 5: The redevelopment of LSAAP and RRAD-WEP should not involve residential or related types of land development in prime economic development areas.
- Goal 6: Initiate an early transfer of the two facilities to expedite environmental clean-up activities and job creation.
- Goal 7: Where possible, the redevelopment of LSAAP and RRAD-WEP will support the existing military mission at Red River Army Depot.

2. Secondary Goals

- Goal 1: Encourage coordination between the Red River Redevelopment Authority and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the state agency responsible for authorizing the early transfer process.
- Goal 2: Preserve and protect important natural and manmade amenities, such as the existing cemeteries, hunting areas, and natural habits on the Lone Star and Red River properties.
- Goal 3: Establish and maintain development standards at Lone Star and Red River that embody quality land development practices that also are sensitive to the site redevelopment needs of a variety of end-users.