

U M A T I L L A

ARMY DEPOT

Comprehensive Plan

Executive Summary

Prepared for:

Umatilla Depot Task Force

&

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INTRODUCTION

The Umatilla Army Depot is located in northeast Oregon in the southern part of the Columbia Basin in a predominately agricultural setting. Centered between Umatilla and Morrow Counties, the Depot is within two miles of the Columbia River along its northern border, and about the same distance from the Umatilla River along its eastern border. The region is characterized by a sparse, but growing, population residing on large and small irrigated farms in the area.



The small towns surrounding the Depot include Hermiston to the east, Boardman to the west, Irrigon to the north, and Umatilla to the northeast. The closest towns of larger size are Pendleton, Oregon, and the Tri-cities of Washington State. Most of the land immediately surrounding the Depot is in large-scale, irrigated agricultural production.

A strong transportation system links the Depot and the region to major urban centers throughout the Northwest. The major commodities of the region are agricultural, the major imports into the region are petroleum products and fertilizer.

The Depot Site

The mission of the Umatilla Army Depot, in civilian terms, has largely been the storage, manufacture and minor maintenance of ordnance, along with the shipping and receiving these supplies entail. Security is provided for the supplies and some demolition of ordnance occurs. The tasks themselves must also be administered, the structures and machinery maintained, and the staff comfortably housed.

The Depot breaks down into easily defined land use areas which precisely reflect its mission. The largest acreage of land use, 7,568 acres, is given over to storage of ordnance by type. Buffer zones, which supply security and safety from the explosive nature of the ordnance, follow at 7,525 acres. Together these two land uses account for over three-quarters of the 17,055 acres which, excluding leased easements, constitute the Depot. One of the unique features of the Depot, located within the Ammunition Supply and Storage Area, is the 1,100 ammunition storage bunkers.

In order to transport the ordnance around the site and to ready the ordnance for shipment to other bases, an extensive road and rail system was installed. In addition to the rail system and the bunkers, there are large warehouse

structures that were used for storage. There is also a headquarters area with numerous buildings.

Economic Impact of Closure

The reduction in employment resulting from the Depot's closure will have a limited impact on retail sales, property values, and property taxes. The total loss in employment, which will occur in the years leading up to closure, is equal to approximately 106 jobs, 92 jobs on the Depot and 14 jobs in the local economy. The resulting net loss in total salaries is estimated to be \$2,569,448. It is estimated that on average 50 percent of household income is spent on retail sales and 60 percent of total retail sales are in the local economy; the Depot's closure will result in a loss of local retail sales equal to \$770,834. This amounts to about .2 percent of total retail sales in Morrow County and Umatilla County in 1991.

PROCESS

In 1990 Governor Goldschmidt appointed a task force to examine the impacts of demilitarization of the Umatilla Army Depot and the impacts closure of the base would have on the local economy.

The Umatilla Depot Task Force directed the preparation of a Comprehensive Long-term Development Plan for the Umatilla Army Depot in December 1992. At that time the Task Force outlined a program that would enable the residents of nearby communities, local governments and special districts to participate in the formulation of a depot reuse strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to assure that realignment and closure of the Depot by the United States Army is completed in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the Task Force and provides opportunities for reuse and redevelopment of the Depot for community purposes.

The Task Force determined that the plan for the Depot must be organized to achieve ten specific objectives:

1. Create as much employment as possible.
2. Maximize the long-term potential for reuse by carefully evaluating shorter term proposals for reuse.
3. Morrow and Umatilla counties should share in the benefit of reuse.

4. A clear understanding of the location and condition of the existing infrastructure must be identified.
5. A "Vision" for the future should be created.
6. To the extent possible, the plan should be economically viable.
7. The reuse strategy should be implementable.
8. Communicate the plan as a positive long-term opportunity for the region.
9. Encourage interim or phased reuse of the Depot properties.
10. Reuse proposals for the Depot should be responsive to the regional resource base.

In addition, the Task Force and the State of Oregon have taken specific measures to assure that formulation of the plan included many opportunities for public comment. These have included:

Public notification of all Task Force meetings.

Periodic public meetings specifically advertised in local newspapers.

Workshops with the surrounding cities, ports and counties.

Specific efforts to assure full disclosure of the process and progress of the Task Force in the press and radio.

Provision of information and draft reports to all interested parties.

Coordination with local jurisdictions, special districts, state and regional agencies.


The Oregon Economic Development Department, which has a vital interest in the economic redevelopment of the Depot and its role in the future economic base of the region, has provided coordination and management services for the Task Force. The consulting team, led by The Benkendorf Associates Corporation, was hired to further develop and follow this program, culminating in production of the Comprehensive Plan.

During the preparation of the Master Plan, coordination with the Commander and the staff of the Umatilla Depot was initiated. Tours of the Depot were conducted and information, to the extent available at the Depot, was supplied. A considerable amount of information was received from the Headquarters at Tooele Army Depot.

ISSUES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

The task of meeting the Task Force objectives with a plan for adaptive reuse balanced against the specific opportunities and constraints framed by the planning process has brought these issues of critical concern into sharp relief. Because these issues define major constraints to any adaptive reuse of the Depot, they deserve special review:

Process for Property Transfer and Reuse



The process for transferring military properties to civilian use has involved extensive levels of bureaucracy and cumbersome procedures. In July of this year the Clinton Administration announced a new Five Point Program to simplify the procedures and speed up the transfer of properties. The purposes of this program are to generate replacement jobs quicker and give the community's reuse plans priority over the military's. A Transition Coordinator has been assigned to the Depot and the lines of communication have improved. However, the legislation that will enable this program and the changes to administrative rules that may be necessary have not been forthcoming. These rule changes are particularly important as the Task Force seeks to attract private businesses on an interim basis. At this time, many parts of the Depot are available for civilian use but the procedures for interim leases remains uncertain. This is especially critical as it relates to continued Depot security. Procedures for simplifying interim leases and transfer of parts of the Depot to civilian use need to be amended in order to capture the opportunities that already exist for new business development on the Depot.

Environmental Issues

In 1987, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed the Depot on its National Priorities list (thereby making it a "Superfund" site) due to contamination at the former explosives washout lagoons. Following that action, the Army began a series of studies and investigations, including a Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study (RI/FS) of the Depot. Initially, ten operable units containing nearly 90 individual sites of potential contamination were identified. Through the course of investigations, the number of operable units was reduced to eight and some sites were found to not be contaminated.

Decisions on site clean-up are presented in a formal document, Declaration of the Record of Decision, (ROD) signed by the Army, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality. To date, three ROD's have been signed and the remainder are expected to be issued in 1993/94. With exception of the Ammunition Demolition area, the entire Depot property is expected to be available for future use.

Along the western side of the Depot is the former Ammunition Demolition area. This 1,750 acre area is known to contain unexploded ordnances at unknown locations and elevations beneath the surface. Although a ROD has not been issued on this site, it is likely the site will never be clean or safe enough to allow unrestricted use.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for disposal of chemical agents and munitions at the Depot was issued in October 1991. Preliminary plans for incinerator construction have been prepared and application has been made for a RCRA permit for construction and operation. If the incinerator is constructed at the Depot, bunker block K, and about 60 adjoining acres on the southeast, will be unavailable for any redevelopment until the disposal is complete, which may be the year 2002 or later. Opportunities to redevelop nearby lands will be affected by security controls to be in place at the disposal facility. "Marketability" of nearby redevelopment may be affected by perceptions of risk.

Water Issues

A critically limited water supply is the constraint inherent in utilizing a dry, shrub-steppe type site with limited potential for increased water access, located in a "Critical Ground Water Area." Most cultivated agricultural crops require more than the 8.1 inches of annual rainfall that falls on the Umatilla Depot.

There is almost no potential for developing a new source of groundwater in any of the basaltic aquifers surrounding the site, from the Ordnance alluvial aquifers, or from the Umatilla River. For the large volumes of water required for either agricultural or industrial users (especially food processors) the only source remaining is the Columbia River. In the near future, it will probably not be possible to acquire "new" agricultural water rights from the Columbia River, and there is a moratorium on new withdrawals from underground aquifers.

The Umatilla Army Depot has permits to withdraw about 4,500 gallons per minute from the Ordnance basaltic aquifer. However, the water quality, the

maximum sustainable yield, and the possibility of obtaining permits for a change in type of use for the existing Umatilla Army Depot wells is undetermined. Additional research will be required to determine the availability of water for the long term.

At best, if all potential well water on base were available and directed only to agricultural irrigation, a maximum of about 500 acres could be irrigated. In the master plan, the agricultural use potentials reach upwards of 2,070 acres. There is no obvious source of water for new large scale agricultural production, unless it is transferred from an existing water right at the expense of foregone agricultural production elsewhere in the area. If production on the base creates more economic value than the water use from displaced acreage, then such a transfer is likely to occur and create increased economic benefits. An alternative, in the long term will be to consider crops with low water requirements and expect that irrigation equipment will become more efficient over time.

THE LAND USE PLAN



The Comprehensive Plan Report and the Technical Report comprise the reuse strategy for the Umatilla Army Depot. The Technical Report documents in detail the existing condition and improvements of the Depot property, and outlines the market opportunities for redevelopment. The Comprehensive Plan Report summarizes those conditions and describes in detail the Master Plan for reuse, an implementation program and expected costs for implementing the plan.

The Master Plan is a mixed-use alternative, developed to allow for interim use while the Army continues its mission. The plan has been specifically crafted to achieve the initial objectives set down by the Task Force or set the framework for their fulfillment in the future. It represents the first step by the Task Force to transition this 17,055 acre site from the Army's defense related use to civilian use. As this transition occurs over the next decade, specific plans, policies, strategies and budgets will be prepared to completely fulfill these objectives. The plan provides for the following potential uses for the Umatilla Army Depot. (See the following exhibit.)

- **Agriculture** (2,600 acres)

The current buffer zones located along the north and east perimeter of the Depot would become an extension of neighboring farmland and be utilized for crop production.

- **Police and Fire Training Center**

The area designated for Police and Fire Training would be utilized for both indoor and outdoor facilities for the training of police and fire units in the region.

- **Oregon National Guard Training**

The Oregon National Guard requested use of the Test Firing Range in the northwest corner and the Chemical Storage Area (K Block bunkers) in the north-central section. The Guard would use the Test Firing Range for tank maneuvers.

- **Industrial Short-term (700 acres)**

Two areas are designated for short term industrial uses, and are described below. The short-term designation means that there are buildings and land readily available for that use now.

Standards warehouses section (southeastern area, north of the administration area). The existing standards warehouses and land adjacent to them could be used immediately for industrial uses such as high-tech industry, warehousing for regional distribution centers, and maintenance and repair for vehicles, including farm machinery of all types. There are approximately 160,000 sq.ft. of space in the standards warehouses.

Railroad yard and warehouse section (southwestern area). The existing mostly vacant warehouses in the southwest corner of the Depot could be used for light manufacturing, railcar refurbishing, agricultural processing, transportation testing and research, and other warehouse activities for a variety of users. There are approximately 1,000,000 sq.ft. of space in the warehouses available for reuse now.

- **Education, Training and Research (80 acres)**

The administration area located in the southeastern section contains many structures which can be used immediately or with minor improvements for education or administrative purposes.

The use of the existing administration area is well-suited for education and training purposes, due to the sense of community provided

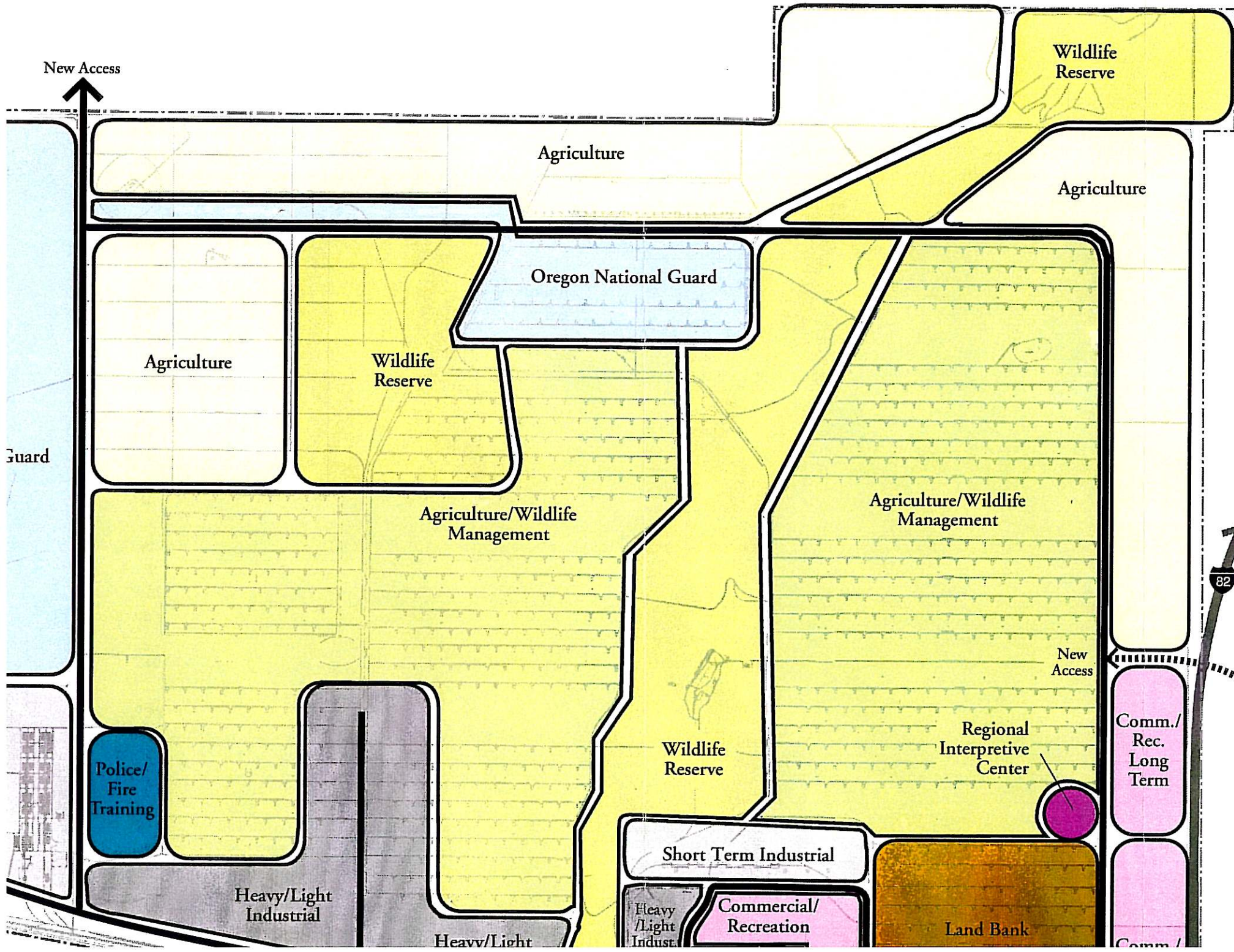
UMATILLA

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Legend:

-  Short Term Industrial
-  Heavy/Light Industrial
-  Industrial/Warehouse/Storage/Maintenance
-  Highway Related Commercial/Industrial
-  Highway Related Retail
-  Commercial/Recreational
-  Education/Training/Research
-  Visitors Bureau/Military Interpretive Center
-  Regional Interpretive Center
-  Oregon National Guard
-  Police/Fire Training
-  Agriculture
-  Agriculture/Wildlife Management
-  Wildlife Reserve
-  Land Bank



by the well-defined street pattern, landscape, and historic structures, all of which contribute to a campus like setting.

The administration area is also ideal for companies involved in research and development uses.

- **Heavy and Light Industrial Uses (960 acres)**

Located along the southern perimeter of the Depot, this area could be reserved for later development, with the possible exception of utilizing several of the bunkers.

- **Commercial/Recreation Uses - Short-term and Long-term (540 acres)**

Three areas in the southeastern corner could be used for commercial/recreation uses. Two of the areas are adjacent to I-82, and the other is adjacent to the education, training, and research area at the main entrance. The tourism industry has been growing, both nationally and internationally and especially in Oregon. The location of the Depot at the intersection of Interstates 82 and 84 with the increasing volumes of traffic make it an excellent site for an RV park and other freeway visible opportunities.

- **Highway-related Retail (90 acres)**

Located in the southeastern corner of the Depot at the intersection of the two interstate highways, this section provides the best location of retail opportunities, such as motels, service stations, and restaurants. These uses would be supportive of other businesses and compliment the rest of the Depot.

- **Highway-related Commercial and Industrial (210 acres)**

This area along the southern boundary is the best location for future commercial and industrial businesses which require easy highway access and visibility.

- **Wildlife Reserve (2,500 acres)**

Two large portions of land should be set aside as a Wildlife Reserve. This designation would create large tract areas which would be retained as habitat for native plants and animals. The two areas

designated as Wildlife Reserve include the 1,700 acre Coyote Coulee area and the 800 acre area to the west of K Block. Both of these areas offer valuable native plant species and wildlife habitat.

- **Agriculture/Wildlife Management (4,700 acres)**

A large portion of the land should be set aside for Agriculture/Wildlife Habitat uses. The earlier alternative plans devoted more land to commercial, industrial, agricultural and retail development. However, due to the large number of acres involved, it would be difficult to develop and maintain a successful concentration of businesses and other facilities if they were spread out over too large of an area.

- **Regional Interpretive Center (20 acres)**

An interpretive center would be established on the eastern edge of the Depot. The center would provide interpretive information to individuals and school groups in both the natural history and ecology of the region as well as the significance of the bunkers. Staging areas would be established for parking vehicles and organizing tours. This use is a good compliment to the tourist/retail uses and other attractions in the area.

- **Depot Visitor's Bureau and Military Interpretive Center (Building #2, north end)**

A visitor's bureau and interpretive center would also be established in the combined Commercial/Recreation and Education, Training and Research areas. The Military Interpretive Center would illustrate the Depot's historical role in the manufacture, storage, and distribution of ordnance to support the Department of Defense's weapon programs.

- **Land Bank (500 acres)**

A small part of the southeastern section, including Block A bunkers, would be reserved as a land bank. This would preserve future bunkers for possible commercial development and/or allow for expansion of commercial and recreation uses.

- **Roadways and Miscellaneous Areas (1,520 acres)**

Included within the overall acreage of the Depot are numerous roadways and rail spurs which will remain as part of future planning



improvements. In many cases, additional roadway areas will need to be widened and upgraded for any increased traffic and landscape improvements.

A smooth transition from military to civilian use of the Depot is of critical importance in order to maximize the economically efficient use of this valuable site and infrastructure. This transition may be facilitated by allowing, over time, an ever-increasing civilian presence, starting at the perimeters and working toward the core. This phased approach toward non-military use of the Depot has been referred to as "rolling back the fence".

A major factor in determining the final phasing approach will be the required Army presence during the demilitarization of the stockpiled chemical ordnance on site. Two approaches presently exist for the demilitarization process. One is the demilitarization on-site through incineration and the other is to transport the ordnance off-site for demilitarization elsewhere. Two phasing plans have been developed to meet either contingency. Phasing will also be dependent on how readily the property can be transferred to the Task Force.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the base reuse plan for the Umatilla Army Depot will be a significant challenge for the regional leadership. Current legislation and directives from the Clinton Administration have created a reuse environment that is changing, yet positive. The community will find that it faces a number of issues in dealing with the military bureaucracy. In addition, there are currently existing legislative requirements that are not easy to change. As a result, some reuse factors can be controlled by the local community; others are outside its jurisdiction. Because the reuse process has proceeded so slowly in many of the early Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) communities, there has been a tremendous amount of pressure to change existing rules, guidelines, and policies.

Key factors to consider for implementation include:

1. A consensus-based reuse plan must be in place, with stated goals and objectives as well as a definition of land uses before the Army will officially begin some parts of their decision process. It is especially important to establish goals, objectives and guidelines in as much detail as is feasible, yet building in some flexibility. Some of the remaining issues could be stumbling blocks, and it is important that

some compromise decisions be made to ensure that potential delays do not cost the community reuse opportunities.

2. Change in ownership of the land and conveyance of the property must follow the guidelines of the Federal Property Act and other regulations which describe the order of priority in which entities can lay claim or request discounted property conveyances;

3. The Military is committed to carry out a complete environmental cleanup of the property, guided by the types of uses which the community has identified.

4. An interim maintenance agreement (caretaker) and interim leases may provide tangible benefits for the community;

5. An appropriate management structure with certain legal capabilities will be necessary to carry out the reuse plan over a period of time;

6. Success of the reuse plan will only come about from an orchestrated and aggressive marketing program;

7. The federal government has made available, through a number of federal programs, grants and assistance to help facilitate the process; and

8. The transfer of ownership of any part of the Depot from the Army to a civilian entity will require that the parcel be assigned County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Designations. These designations will be necessary before either county issues an occupancy or building permit. It is critical that both counties adopt the reuse plan in its entirety, recognizing the integrated nature of the plan and the site.

Management Organization

The Umatilla Army Depot Task Force should be reappointed as an Interim Depot Reuse Authority by the Morrow County Court and Umatilla County Commission. The counties should establish a framework for the Task Force and its responsibilities through an intergovernmental agreement. The ports and the Hermiston Development Corporation are all working to achieve greater economic development in the region. They could contract with the authority to undertake specific pieces of the plan if they so desired. The Umatilla Tribe could also contract with the authority to undertake implementation of specific parts of the plan.

Further research will be needed to determine the type of management organization best suited for the long term. This research would include considering the options for ownership, acquisition, the transfer of ownership in phases, etc.

State of Oregon Agency Coordination

There are several State of Oregon departments that have been involved in the activities at the Depot in recent years. These include the Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Transportation, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon National Guard and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. All of these agencies have been invited to and have attended Task Force meetings, and participated in the development of the Reuse Plan. More recently, the Oregon Economic Development Department has taken a lead role in managing the preparation of a Master Plan for redeveloping the Depot for civilian uses. In order to implement the Master Plan, coordination with other state agencies will be necessary. These include the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Department of Land Conservation and Development, State Historic Preservation Office, and the Oregon Water Resources Department. In addition, the departments involved with current programs will require continued involvement with the Reuse Plan.

