



TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: M. DAVID BUGHER, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER FOR DEVELOPMENT

THROUGH: ANDREW NEIDITZ, CITY MANAGER

DATE: AUGUST 24, 2010

SUBJECT: CAMP MURRAY GATE

There has been significant dialogue regarding a proposal by the Washington State Military Department (WSMD) to relocate Camp Murray's primary access gate to the Portland Avenue and Berkeley Street intersection, near Boundary Lane. The gate relocation is proposed as a means to offset the congestion at the Berkeley/I-5 interchange and the Berkeley/Union intersection brought about by the growth of Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) and, more generally, increased traffic on I-5.

Much like the Tillicum neighborhood itself, Camp Murray is landlocked between Lakewood's corporate limits, American Lake, JBLM, and I-5. Camp Murray is located in unincorporated Pierce County, is owned by the state, and is operated by WSMD. Army and Air National Guard units are located at Camp Murray. The WSMD proposes to reduce current maintenance operations; this would lessen existing truck traffic. In the future, Camp Murray is expected to be used for National Guard administrative functions. Camp Murray also houses the state's Emergency Operations Center and serves as the focal point for state responses to emergencies and disasters.

Lakewood staff became aware of the gate relocation proposal in May 2009. Staff was invited to meet with WSMD personnel and consultants to review a draft of the Camp Murray Site Development Plan. This plan is intended to function as a master plan in guiding (and seeking funding for) future development of Camp Murray on a 25-year horizon. The plan contains many proposed capital improvements including the gate relocation. The City received a draft of the master plan in October 2009. Between May and October, meetings and discussions continued to occur with WSMD staff to explore a variety of issues. These included conversations on relationships with the draft Tillicum Neighborhood Plan, the proposed Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) Point Defiance Bypass project, funding, project scheduling, the formal release dates of environmental documents and public notification. Relative to the latter, the City offered to provide mailing lists and suggested that WSMD use the Tillicum/American Lake Gardens Community Service Center as a meeting place.

A good portion of staff time was devoted to discussing traffic and circulation issues. The City's Public Works staff had numerous concerns about such things as:

- Traffic calming measures
- Truck traffic
- Street width issue at the end of Portland Avenue SW
- Impacts of transferring traffic from Berkeley Avenue to North Thorne Lane SW

Most recently, the City requested that Camp Murray perform additional traffic modeling.

At no time has the City officially endorsed the Camp Murray Site Development Plan or the relocated gate. City staff has been awaiting the release of two environmental assessments (EAs), one for the overall master plan and the other for the gate relocation project. Once these documents have been released, the City will provide written comments. At this point, staff has merely offered informal comments on a “working draft” version of the EA, while recognizing that it is still in progress and subject to change. It remains our understanding that the document has been revised significantly, and we look forward to reviewing and providing feedback upon the final version once it is available.

The City chronicled its involvement with the project in the latest version (June 2010) of the draft Tillicum Neighborhood Plan, which is currently before the Lakewood City Council (http://www.cityoflakewood.us/documents/news_and_events/tillicum_plan_pab_rec_draft.pdf). There are two references to the gate, on pages 31 and 64. In the context of existing plans and influences upon Tillicum, page 31 states:

The Washington State Military Department retained a consultant to carry out a master plan for Camp Murray, including such things as identifying the placement of new buildings on the site and realigning some functions within different facilities. For the most part, these improvements would take place inside the gates and bear little or no relationship to the Tillicum neighborhood. However, one proposal – the relocation of the main access gate to Berkeley and Portland Avenue – is extremely likely to change where traffic associated with Camp Murray travels within Tillicum. Because this would likely result in a transfer of trips from the Berkeley to the Thorne Lane I-5 interchange, it could help lessen (but not fully alleviate) peak traffic congestion at the Berkeley interchange. At the same time, it would serve to increase traffic on Thorne Lane and Portland Avenue. The plan was released for public comment in February 2010 and has not been yet finalized, and Military Department staff continues to work with the City to identify and address impacts.

Page 63 shows two conceptual options for gate realignment provided by the consulting firm BCRA which, as the Council will recall, prepared the 2007 *Progress!* plan for Tillicum. The City's draft neighborhood plan is silent in terms of providing any recommendations about such a gate relocation because, as noted, discussion is continuing on impacts.

In addition to its August 10 meeting with the overall Tillicum neighborhood, we are aware that WSMD staff also met with the Eagle Point Homeowners' Association. The City Council recently heard significant public comment on the subject of the gate relocation proposal. Legitimate concerns have been brought forward, and again, City staff continues to work with the WSMD to evaluate the full impacts of the proposal. To that end, a joint

meeting between staff from the WSMD, WSDOT, and the City is to take place this week. Under law, a formal comment period is to follow the EA's issuance. Another necessary component of any gate relocation would be the City's approval and issuance of a street right-of-way permit. At this time, no application has been made for such a permit; therefore, the City has not authorized or acted upon the tie-in to city streets. All of this would need to occur before any final decision is made on the proposed gate relocation.