

HAMPTON VA

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Fred Gaskins | fgaskins@hampton.gov | 757-727-6191
22 Lincoln Street | Hampton, VA 23669

City continues to buy Langley clear zone property

Jan. 24, 2014 – Hoping to minimize the risks associated with having citizens live or work too close to the end of a runway, the City of Hampton has recently spent almost \$3 million to buy private property located in the “clear zone” of Langley Air Force Base.

The clear zone - 3,000 feet wide and 3,000 feet long - includes property on both sides of Armistead Avenue from Nettles Lane to Commander Shepard Boulevard.

Bruce Sturk, director of federal facilities support for the city, said: “This is a very positive step forward in the process that started back in 2010 as a result of the Joint Land Use Study conducted by LAFB, Newport News, York County, Poquoson and Hampton.

“We are very pleased with the progress to date and the support we have received from the state, city council and LAFB. Our hope is to continue to work on acquiring all parcels that are inside the clear zone to prevent any future development, protect the safety of our citizens and keep the operational flying mission at LAFB here in Hampton.”

Using \$3 million from the state and another \$3 million in city money, Hampton began the most recent clear zone acquisitions last summer. Since then, the city has spent or designated \$2.7 million to acquire several clear zone parcels.

Sturk said 10 of the property owners contacted by the city last year are willing to sell and agreed to go ahead with appraisals of their 17 parcels. In addition:

- 16 of the 17 appraisals have been completed
- 2 properties have been purchased by the city
- 3 properties are in the final contract stage
- 4 property owners are deciding whether the city’s purchase offer is acceptable
- 5 properties are pending final staff review/appraisal updates and completion of environmental studies before the city makes an offer.

Five more parcels remain a priority for acquisition, Sturk said, and the city will continue talks with the owners.

In a recent letter supporting the city’s efforts, Col. David B. Chisenhall Jr., commander of the 633 Mission Support Group at Langley, said “the ongoing efforts by the state and local jurisdictions to

curb civilian encroachment in the areas crucial to our flying mission is critical and fully supported by Langley AFB.”

Chisenhall also praised “efforts aimed at minimizing all risks associated with the operation of a military base in close proximity to the concentrated civilian populations of the peninsula.”

The current acquisition program is scheduled to end on June 31, 2014 because of state guidelines. But the city is working with local lawmakers, including - Sen. Mamie Locke and Delegate Gordon Helsel – to get enough money from the General Assembly to finish buying all the necessary clear zone property.

The city’s has asked for \$2 million in fiscal year 2015 and \$2 million in fiscal year 2016. Any money received by the state would be matched by the city.

For more information about the city’s acquisition program, contact Sturk at 757-727-6102, or bsturk@hampton.gov.

###