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Aberdeen, Howard County apply for BRAC Zone status

Baltimore Business Journal - by [Daniel J. Sernovitz](#) Staff

The City of Aberdeen and Howard County have applied to be named at BRAC Zone, a state-backed designation that could put the community in position to raise millions of dollars to improve its roads, rails and water systems.

The Harford County municipality stands to be one of the most significantly impacted by the federal Base Realignment and Closure plan, slated to bring an estimated 25,000 new jobs to Greater Baltimore by fall 2011. Aberdeen Proving Ground in Harford County and Fort George G. Meade in Anne Arundel County are the regions two largest recipients of those jobs.

An estimated 8,200 military jobs will be moving to Aberdeen Proving Ground under the BRAC plan, bringing with them a network of about 150 defense contracting firms that do business with the incoming government agencies.

To help communities prepare for the influx, Gov. Martin O'Malley signed legislation in May 2008 creating BRAC Revitalization and Community Enhancement Zones. Among other things, the BRAC zones allow local governments to seek state funding for improvement projects in specific geographic areas.

In addition to Aberdeen, Howard County is also seeking inclusion into the program. Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown toured the Aberdeen BRAC zone Monday and plans to visit Howard County May 28. The state plans to announce the new BRAC zone awards June 15. Details of what parts of Howard officials seek to become a BRAC Zone are not certain.

The City of Aberdeen nominated a 1,000-acre site by the proving ground which it expects will see more than 1.1 million square feet on new construction as September 2011 approaches. The municipality wants money to support some of those developments, including an 800,000-square-foot business park being developed at the North Gate to Aberdeen Proving Ground by Columbia-based **Corporate Office Properties Trust** (NYSE: OFC).

To get ready for the new jobs, the city is planning to spend \$33 million to fund water and wastewater improvements and \$66 million for transportation upgrades. The city also hopes to upgrade the area's mass transit system, school capacity and other public upgrades.

In the first round of applications last year, the state awarded BRAC zone designations to Baltimore City, Laurel, Odenton, Frederick and parts of Prince George's County near the Andrews Air Force Base.

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