

Washington Business Journal - June 28, 2010
washingtonbizjournal.com/stories/2010/06/28/daily10.html

WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

Monday, June 28, 2010, 4:50pm EDT | Modified: Monday, June 28, 2010, 5:35pm

State Department nixes foreign affairs facility on Eastern Shore

Washington Business Journal - by [Sarah Krouse](#)

The State Department has abandoned plans for a Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at the Hunt Ray/Crismer Farm site on Maryland's Eastern Shore, reopening its site selection process in the wake of fierce opposition from nearby residents.

The 1,250-acre center would have turned a rural stretch of Centreville in Queen Anne's County into a hands-on training facility including a mock urban simulation area, firing ranges, driving tracks and an explosives testing area as well as classroom and office space.

At a February meeting about the project, community members expressed major concerns over the noise, location and impact of the development. Ellyn Goldkind, project architect for the project, **said in May** the department had faced more opposition than anticipated, but was moving forward with an environmental survey.

"After further analysis, the **Department of State** and **General Services Administration** have determined that the Hunt Ray/Crismer Farm in Queen Anne's County will no longer be considered for the proposed Department of State Foreign Affairs Security Training Center. Department of State and GSA remain committed to a robust and transparent public engagement process and value the input from the citizens of Queen Anne's County and the leadership of both Federal and local representatives on behalf of the community throughout this process," the State Department and General Services Administration said, in a statement Monday.

The facility is intended to consolidate diplomatic training currently conducted at 19 facilities nationwide. The Queen Anne's site was selected in part for its proximity to the District and the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington — about 150 miles away — where classroom training in language studies, management and information technology takes place.

"Department of State and GSA are actively engaged in a site selection process and look forward to opening this essential national security facility and being good neighbors," the statement said.

The two government agencies would have spent \$70 million in stimulus funds to buy the Queen Anne's County site and were working with D.C.-based architects **Karn Charuhas Chapman & Twohey PC** on the master planning.

The massive site would have hosted about 10,00 students per year and would have taken three to five years to build.

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