

Guam residents near military buildup site react to announcement about Marine base

Jerick Sablan, jpsablan@guampdn.com Published 3:47 p.m. ChT Aug. 19, 2017 | Updated 5:49 p.m. ChT Aug. 19, 2017



(Photo: Rick Cruz/PDN)

Residents living near the proposed site of the Marine base in Dededo had mixed reactions to the news that it's another step closer to being built.

The [Navy announced Friday \(/story/news/2017/08/18/contract-awarded-marine-corps-guam-buildup/578376001/\)](#) that it awarded Granite-Obayashi a \$164.89 million contract for infrastructure construction at Marine Corps Base Guam. Located on the Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station in Finegeyan, Dededo, the base will house about a third of the 5,000 U.S. Marines who will be relocated from Okinawa and stationed on island in the coming years.

The contract is funded by the government of Japan as part of an international agreement between the United States and Japan. It signals a critical step in moving forward with the [relocation of Marines \(/story/news/2016/10/26/buildup-groundbreaking-after-january-2017/92760702/\)](#) to Guam, according to a press release from the Navy.

Members of the NCS Community Association were cleaning and clearing the side of a village road across from the base site Saturday.

The president of the association and a resident of the area, Chris Diego, 46, said being part of the community that is closest to the base meant there was excitement at the news.

Talks of the buildup have been ongoing for years, but it's been pushed back several times so it's something that people in the area had forgotten, he said.

He also shared that many people who live in the neighborhood have parents who worked at NCTAMS or at Andersen Air Force Base, so there is a connection to the military bases.

"We're thrilled to be a part of that patriotic move to welcome our service members. Not only to keep our island safer in light of this Korean stuff, but also to keep our military as vibrant as possible and we have to welcome them as an island community," Diego said.

The poll, [Rate your level of concern about the foreign labor shortage on Guam \(https://polldaddy.com/poll/9812198/\)](#), will close at 5 p.m., Aug. 20, 2017.



Rate your level of concern about the foreign labor shortage on Guam. (Poll Closed)

Very concerned **42.78%** (169 votes)

Concerned **14.68%** (58 votes)

Not concerned **42.53%** (168 votes)

Total Votes: **395**

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Traffic concerns

A big concern for residents is the traffic that will come from the buildup, but he's sure the government will address it by extending the current two-lane road. Residents in the area already deal with traffic, he said.

"All progress demands change and so we have to adapt to it."

Nida Quilenderino, vice president of the community association, said she also supports the buildup. She said having a base close to her home makes her feel safe from threats from North Korea.

"To hear that they're going to build there that's fine with me as long as there's a healthy relationship between the military and the local community," she said.

She already sees the military coming out and helping the community by cleaning up schools and doing other volunteer activities.

Quilenderino said the buildup has been pushed back several times, so she also is looking to see if it will actually happen.

"Just make sure that when it happens there's all these things we need to prepare for," she said.

For example, figuring out how to make traffic better in the area and how to absorb the extra traffic from the buildup.

Her other concern is how the military can work with people who are opposed to the buildup, to try to find a middle ground. She said some people might be more angry because of the news, and she hopes both sides can work together.

For her neighbors and her family they see the buildup as something that's going to happen so they need to make the best of the situation.

"Let's see how to make this beneficial for Guam," Quilenderino said.



Rubyjane Buhain-Redila, left, John B's Mart and Water Station co-owner, and store founder, Estrella Buhain, take a quick break from catering to customers at the retail business in Dededo on Saturday, Aug. 19, 2017. Buhain-Dila said her mom-and-pop sized business, mainly caters to customers living in the area near the store, especially ones looking for Filipino food items, which her regularly brings in from the Philippines. She didn't think the impending military build up, slated for the Naval Computer and Telecommunications Site facility nearby, will raise revenues for her store but may bring additional business ventures to the area. (Photo: Rick Cruz/PDN)

Bigger business

Rubyjane Buhain-Redila, co-owner of John B's Mart & Water Station, who along with her neighbors stand less than a quarter mile away from the gate entrance, said she has mixed emotions about the buildup.

As a business owner she knows the buildup will help the business community and expects growth in the area including restaurants who would cater to the base population, but also has some concerns.

"I'm also afraid that bigger businesses, bigger competition is now going to come because of the military buildup," she said.

She hopes the buildup will help her business and thinks it will benefit the store, but if large supermarkets do set up near the store it would hurt her small business.

Buhain-Redila said the mart also caters mostly to local people who live in the area so she's not sure how much benefit the buildup will bring to the store.

As a resident of the island she doesn't really support the buildup because of several concerns.

She said from her understanding the Marines are moving from Okinawa to Guam to shift the burden off Japan. She doesn't know if the island has enough infrastructure, people and resources to accommodate the buildup.

Buhain-Redila grew up in Guam so she also feels for the Chamorro people who are concerned about the land being used for the buildup.

And like the rest of her neighbors, traffic is a big concern because it's already bad, she said, and would only get worse.

READ MORE:

[Guam buildup project for Marine Corps base construction awarded](http://www.guampdn.com/story/news/2017/08/18/contract-awarded-marine-corps-guam-buildup/578376001/)

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[Buildup groundbreaking after January 2017](http://www.guampdn.com/story/news/2016/10/26/buildup-groundbreaking-after-january-2017/92760702/)

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[Guam governor withdraws support for military buildup](http://www.guampdn.com/story/news/2017/04/05/guam-governor-withdraws-support-military-buildup/100108684/)

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