

INSTALLATION MISSION GROWTH

Community Profile

November 2009

MCB Camp Lejeune, MCAS New River, MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina

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Community at a Glance:

Growth Management Organization (GMO):

Military Growth Task Force of North Carolina's Eastern Region

Geographic area affected by military installation growth:

Seven counties in Eastern North Carolina: Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Jones, Onslow, Pamlico, and Pender. Of these, the jurisdictions with the most substantial impacts are Onslow County and the City of Jacksonville, as hosts of MCB Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River; and Craven County and the City of Havelock, as hosts of MCAS Cherry Point.

Regional Population of affected area: 453,134 (January 1, 2007)

Top growth challenges:

- Traffic congestion
- Shortage of health care professionals
- Strain on emergency responders and courts

Preliminary requirements in support of mission growth:

Project Category	# of Projects	Sum of Project Cost	Sum of Funding Gap
Transportation	3	\$254.6M	\$117.2M
Water and Sewer	1	\$2.2M	\$1.4M
Communications	1	\$2.0M	\$2.0M
Totals	5	\$258.8M	\$120.6M

Source: Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) Project Needs Assessment (PNA) Visit September 2009

Mission Growth at a Glance

Growth Action: Grow the Force (GTF)

Personnel Baseline and Growth Projection:

	Baseline (January 2007)	Build-out Projection (2011)
Military Personnel	53,705	63,694
Dependents	38,910	52,410
Civilian Personnel	10,351	11,697
Contractors	(Not available)	(Not available)

Source: Regional Growth Management Plan

Growth Factors affecting community planning: Organizing a partnership growth management task force in a large, seven-county, generally rural part of the state with three major Marine Corps installations, was a major political challenge. Once planning began, the Marines informed the task force that the increased personnel would be coming two years earlier than originally planned and that the increases would largely be accomplished by the end of 2009. This factor forced acceleration of the planning process.

Background

Eastern North Carolina is host to Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) New River, and MCAS Cherry Point. The 75,000-plus jobs that support these installations represent the single largest regional industry. Aside from the military presence, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism represent other significant economic engines throughout the region.

Between the years 2006 and 2011, the Marine Corps will add 11,477 jobs at its eastern North Carolina installations, representing an increase of nearly 18 percent in regional military-connected employment. These service members will bring with them an estimated 13,500 dependents. The combined totals of these two population groups are referred to as the “direct impact” growth. Using commonly accepted population projection practices, the direct impact growth will induce the influx of an approximately 15,000 new residents to reinforce the regional service industry. This growth of approximately 40,000 new residents represents a 60 percent increase in the normal regional population growth of 25,157 in the same period, as forecast by the NC State Demographer before the announcement of GTF impacts.

Installation	Personnel	Baseline (FY 2006)	Projected Increase	Percent Increase
MCB Camp Lejeune	Active Duty	36,823	7,093	19.3
	Formal School Students	-	529	N/A
	Civilians	4,509	959	21.3
	<i>MCB Camp Lejeune Subtotal</i>	41,332	8,581	20.8
MCAS New River	Active Duty	6,487	1,267	19.5
	Civilians	474	144	30.4
	<i>MCAS New River Subtotal</i>	6,961	1,411	20.3
MCAS Cherry Point	Active Duty	8,420	1,242	14.8
	Civilians	5,368	243	4.5
	<i>MCAS Cherry Point Subtotal</i>	13,788	1,485	10.8
USMC North Carolina	Active Duty	51,730	9,602	18.6
	Formal School Students	-	529	N/A
	Civilians	10,351	1,346	13.0
USMC North Carolina Total		62,081	11,477	18.5

Table 1: Population Growth

The community began to organize a Military Growth Task Force (MGTF) months before the Marine Corps’ official announcement, in October 2007, of the proposed growth. MGTF exists to coalesce inputs and priorities from regional stakeholders, and to facilitate outreach to state and Federal agencies with regard to needs and impacts related to military growth in the region. The parent organization (fiscal agent) for MGTF is North Carolina’s Eastern Region (NCER). MGTF is governed by a Board of Directors and is managed by an Executive Director and staff.

MGTF represents six military growth-affected counties from the Eastern Region – Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Jones, Onslow, and Pamlico – and a seventh county, Pender, which lies with the Southeastern Region. MGTF is a committee of the NCER, with its 28 members representing the seven shareholder counties as well as Marine Corps Installations East. There are two ex-officio members from Wayne County, home of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, which is also experiencing growth. The Task Force was formed to work with local, state, and Federal officials, as well as OEA, to investigate, identify, and plan for the challenges which usually accompany significant military growth in a region.

With an initial grant from OEA matched by private and local government dollars, MGTF completed a Preliminary Impact Assessment (PIA) prior to beginning a seven-month study to produce the Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP). The RGMP identifies 108 specific growth-related needs and proposes 467 specific recommendations to

address those needs. This report was the result of many functional area working group meetings, involving the participation of myriad volunteer subject matter experts from throughout the region.

Upon completion of these two studies, MGTf realized that many “assumed” growth-related challenges are not as high on the priority list as other challenges which are not often viewed with the same sense of urgency. MGTf also realized that the overwhelming majority of the proposed new growth has already relocated to the eastern North Carolina region, some two years ahead of schedule. Thus, much of the work of MGTf has involved accommodating and assimilating the growth as opposed to long-range planning. During the implementation stage of the Task Force’s work, greater efforts will be directed in the area of long-range planning.

Implementation and Partnering Strategies

The 467 recommendations for addressing the impacts of military growth in the region are discussed throughout each module of the plan. Some are relatively easy to implement, can be accomplished quickly, and incur little or no costs. Others are long-term, complex, and very expensive. Many are still being developed, as accurate data is not yet available to establish timelines or costs. In the case of the latter category of these recommendations, it may be a year or more before reliable information exists that can support specific corrective action. For instance, the total population of dependents has not yet arrived and is therefore not fully assimilated in local schools, communities or workplace. Likewise, induced development throughout the service economy will lag behind the arrival of the service members. Civilian employees that are already in place cannot be accurately measured.

Although much work has been done to inform local, state and Federal leaders of the growth impacts over the past two years, beginning with the release of the RGMP report MGTf will formally embark on the Implementation Phase of its work. This phase will include increasing its staff and consultant support to effectively execute the vast array of tasks associated with the recommendations. Aside from the work that will be directly accomplished or facilitated by MGTf and its supporting consultants, many of the tasks require action by local governments, agencies, organizations, military installations, and service providers. MGTf will increase its communications and outreach efforts to ensure that positive results are achieved, contributing to the smooth integration of the growth population into the region, with minimal negative impacts on existing communities.

The regional Marine Corps commanders and their staffs have been instrumental partners throughout the process. Also, representatives from the Governor’s office and the region’s congressional delegation remain in contact with MGTf in order to stay abreast of findings and requirements for assistance. MGTf works closely with the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments, local government managers and planners, and school districts throughout the region. The Highway 17 Association has been particularly supportive of MGTf’s transportation projects, and MGTf’s parent organization, North Carolina’s Eastern Region, continues as a major contributor, especially in the area of long-range planning and economic development.

Project Needs Assessment (PNA)

MGTf worked with OEA to identify and prioritize those projects needed to support mission growth within the Eastern North Carolina Region. The Project Needs Assessment (PNA) team and members of the MGTf were taken on a helicopter tour of the entire MGTf region. The tour demonstrated that the area in question is expansive and contains a number of scattered military facilities (including installations, training areas, bombing targets and outlying landing fields). Many of the identified issues relate to fears of encroachment on military properties by increased development. These concerns require growth management efforts to consider the region as a whole. In addition, peak hour traffic patterns were observed, specifically demonstrating the scale of the congestion on ingress and egress routes to/from MCAS Camp Lejeune and MCAS Cherry Point gates.

Projects discussed during the course of the September 1-2, 2009 site visit spanned the following categories.

Transportation

The following projects emerged as those with the greatest priority:

Widening of U.S. Route 17 (US 17) from Two to Four Lanes Between New Bern and Jacksonville

This is the number one priority for all the Marine Corps installations. US 17 serves as a convoy and primary haul route. The community has determined that 10 percent of the project is directly attributable to the military growth.

US 17 is North Carolina Department of Transportation's highest interconnectivity priority concern and is designated as a Strategic Highway Corridor. Originally the highway was designed to withstand 700 cars daily. The daily volume is currently 12,000 cars. There is high percentage of fatalities resulting from accidents on this segment. US 17 links Camp Lejeune/MCAS New River and MCAS Cherry Point to the ports of Wilmington and Norfolk.

The project is in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and is shovel-ready; design is complete and a right of way (ROW) acquisition is being pursued. The Congressional delegation is attempting to secure \$26 million for ROW acquisition and wetlands mitigation with Federal transportation dollars. Total project costs are estimated to be \$215 million, of which \$132 million has been committed or spent to date, leaving a funding gap of \$95.9 million.

Intelligent Traffic System (ITS)

The ITS project (based in Jacksonville) would create a single traffic signal control center that would alleviate the congestion pending construction of the new Camp Lejeune gate. The RGMP has determined that 21 percent of the need for this project is attributable directly to military growth.

Currently the traffic light system is not synchronized, which causes traffic delays. The Camp Lejeune main gate at North Carolina Route 24 (NC 24) between Western Boulevard and Piney Green Road is the primary ingress and egress route for the installation, handling 35,000 vehicles per day. It is expected that this gate will have to accommodate as many as 14,000 more trips a day.

The Marines plan to build a new internal connector road with a 2,000-foot bridge over Northeast Creek, to connect NC 24 at a new gate closer to Jacksonville at Camp Johnson and an on-base family housing area. This would alleviate existing volume at the main gate by as much as 30 percent. However, this project will not be complete until 2014 at the earliest. The ITS will provide immediate relief and continue to alleviate congestion along NC 24 in the future. Total project costs are estimated to be \$7.2 million, with \$5.0 million previously committed. Estimates to complete this project are \$2.2 million. Local officials have met with the eastern North Carolina congressional delegation to seek the additional funding for this project.

Slocum Road / US 70 Flyover

Slocum Road is the main road leading to a major MCAS Cherry Point entrance. The Base portion of the interchange will undergo MILCON improvements in FY 2011. The existing main gate in Havelock, as well as the Base's Pass and ID Center, is in the clear zone of Runway 05's approach and is a major source of internal incompatibility. Currently traffic is seriously congested along this east-west route and the automobile accident rate is double that of similar area roads. The Slocum Road Flyover project aims to enhance base accessibility and improve safety. The project need is driven by operational, safety, and community relations considerations. It is expected that 100 percent of the use will be military-related. Of the total need, 11 percent was determined to be directly attributable to military growth. The Commanding Officer at MCAS Cherry Point has indicated that this project is the installation's highest priority and it is the highest unfunded priority of the City of Havelock.

Total project costs are estimated to be \$19.5 million, of which \$339,000 has been committed to date for initial feasibility/engineering studies. The funding gap for this project is estimated to be \$19.1 million. Community members have met with members and staff of the Congressional delegation to seek additional funding for this project.

Immediate Requirements: \$250,000 for required NEPA study

Infrastructure

There is an urgent need for water improvements in the Dixon region of Onslow County. The need for improvement stems from the military growth and construction related to the location of Marine Special Operation Command (MARSOC) at Stone Bay, which will negatively affect current water supply capacity throughout the Dixon Region. The project proposes the creation of two new wells and 9,900 linear feet of raw water lines. It has been estimated that 29 percent of the need for this project is generated by the military growth. Without improvements, the MARSOC mission could be jeopardized. Total project costs are estimated to be \$2.2 million, of which \$778,000 is funded through an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) loan, resulting in a funding gap of \$1.422 million.

Communications

The Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders (VIPER) system, which is managed by the North Carolina Highway Patrol, facilitates the coordination of a multi-jurisdictional response. The Department of Homeland Security imposed a requirement to implement VIPER by 2010 and provided funds for infrastructure costs but not the necessary equipment such as standard interoperable radios and integration measures. The urgency of this project is increased by the elimination of alternative systems by 2013. This project is determined to be 10 percent attributable to the military growth.

It is estimated that it will cost \$20 million to purchase and install compliant radios. The region is working through the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety for support and is seeking funds for the required radios through the eastern North Carolina Congressional delegation.

Medical, Health Care & Social Services

The North Carolina eastern region is suffering from a low supply of healthcare providers. This reality is compounded by the BRAC 2005 closure of the Cherry Point Naval Hospital, forcing military members and dependents to obtain civilian medical services from an already-stressed provider network. The military growth is anticipated to induce an even higher volume of TRICARE enrollees, exceeding the national average. TRICARE reimbursement rates are lower than Medicare, and in some cases they are lower than Medicaid. Consequently, providers will be reluctant to locate to the area. The project proposal is to increase the reimbursement rates for physician and non-physician providers through a TRICARE locality waiver from DoD. This proposal will require coordination and policy decisions at the Secretary of Defense level.

Education (Section 8002 Federal Impact Aid)

The Federal Impact Aid program has a number of provisions (Sections 8002, 8003, 8007) that allocate funding to school districts to compensate, in part, for the population of Federally-connected students enrolled in the schools. Those who live on-base do not pay local *ad valorem* taxes. NCER is most interested in the provisions under Section 8002, which offer financial assistance to local school districts that have lost a portion of their taxable base because of the Federal ownership of property. The program is intended to serve as a payment in lieu of taxes. To be eligible a school district must demonstrate that the Federal government has acquired real property since 1938 with an assessed value of at least 10% of all real property in the district at the time of acquisition. Onslow County school district applied for Section 8002 funds in 2007 and 2008. Despite the school district being deemed eligible, it has yet to receive any payments. Approximately 25 to 35 percent of Onslow County is untaxed, Federally-owned land. The assessed value of this Federal land is estimated to be \$3.2 to \$4.2 billion. Since the program is not fully funded, it is uncertain as to when new applicants will receive payment in-lieu-of taxes.

Although this effort represents a need, it is less of a project than a need for programmatic change and funding from the Department of Education.

Workforce Development

A \$900,000 grant from Federal stimulus money will be used to initiate a program to help veterans and military spouses train for high-demand jobs in the area. The Veterans Initiative Project is a result of strategic planning efforts through MGTf to attract and retain veterans and military spouses in Eastern North Carolina to fill many of the needed jobs requiring their unique attributes.

Successes/Lessons Learned

- We are faced with tremendous challenges because of the magnitude and swiftness of growth; it is happening while we plan so we are truly building the proverbial plane as we fly it.. We are struggling to cope and to accommodate growth at the same time as we are planning for the future. We have experienced great support and cooperation from all areas of the region in the development of our Regional Growth Management Plan. We are anxious to begin implementation. Probably our most significant success was the receipt of the \$900,000 Workforce Development Grant. We anticipate more “financial” success as we proceed to implementation.
- Start early and aggressively, and stay aggressive. Do not wait for the study to be complete to act on those things you know are immediately needed and for which funding is available. We missed the deadline on applications for the first round of stimulus funds. Regionalism is a tough challenge because jurisdictions can get into turf wars; those areas not hosting a base need to feel a part of the plan; it’s tough to “plan” for growth when it is already here; issues that we thought were going to be “huge” (education, housing, infrastructure) were found to be not critical; transportation may be a bigger issue than we imagined, if for no other reason than the staggering cost of numerous essential projects; issues that we didn’t think would be “big” are, in fact, “huge” (child care, medical (TRICARE), public safety, court space, recreational opportunities).