

INSTALLATION MISSION GROWTH

Community Profile

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Fort Benning, Georgia

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Community at a Glance

Growth Management Organization (GMO):

The Valley Partnership Joint Development Authority

Geographic area affected by military installation growth:

The counties most impacted are: Chattahoochee (GA), Harris (GA), Muscogee (GA), Lee (AL), and Russell (AL); Other affected counties are: Marion, Stewart, Talbot and Taylor Counties (GA) and Barbour County (AL).

Regional Population of affected area:

10 county total (2006 U.S. Census Estimate): 462,950
Projected 2011 population: 497,653

Top growth challenges:

- Education
- Health Care and Social Services
- Transportation
- Public Safety and Emergency Services
- Water and Sewer

Outstanding requirements in support of mission growth:

Project category	# of Projects	Sum of Project Cost	Sum of Funding gap
Transportation	10	\$174,020,000	\$172,020,000
Education	11	\$216,400,000	\$187,400,000
Total:	21	\$390,420,000	\$359,420,000

Mission Growth at a Glance

Growth Action: Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), Grow the Army (GTA), Army Modular Force (AMF)

Personnel Baseline and Growth Projection*:

	Baseline (January 2005)	Build-out Projection (2011)
Military Personnel	32,772	45,484
Dependents	21,851	38,536
Civilian Personnel	8,690	10,579
Contractors**	3,891	8,099

Source: Ft. Benning BRAC Coordinator

*Installation-adjusted estimates; does not include retired military or their dependents

**Includes 1,500 construction-related contractors that are classified as non-permanent

Growth Factors affecting community planning: Military and Civilian Permanent Change of Station and Defense Contractor personnel dependence on off-post economy and services.

Background

As the U.S. military begins one of the largest troop shifts in history, the convergence of several Department of Defense (DoD) initiatives at Fort Benning has accelerated the region’s historical rate of growth. These five DoD initiatives: BRAC 2005, AMF, Overseas Contingency Operation Support, Global Defense Posture Realignment and GTA/Grow The Force are rapidly transforming the military missions of installations around the country, increasing the end strength of the U.S. Army, and building more nimble units of action in the form of brigade combat teams. As a result of these activities, Fort Benning will gain approximately 4,700 active military personnel, an average daily student population of 8,000, nearly 1,900 new full-time civilian employees, and 4,800 defense contractors by September 2011 (Figure 1). As a result of Fort Benning’s transformation, approximately 28,000 people (including families) will move to the area.

Growth Categories	Number Jobs	Number Spouses	Number Children	Number School Age Children	Number Total
Military Service Members: Permanent Change Of Station	4,712	2,733	4,386	2,771	11,831
Government Civilians: Permanent Change Of Station	1,889	1,511	1,451	1,096	4,851
Contractors	4,802	2,641	3,963	2,972	11,406
	Population +	Spouses +	Children	=	Total Growth
Total	11,403	6,885	9,800	6,839	28,088

Figure 1: Fort Benning Growth Estimates

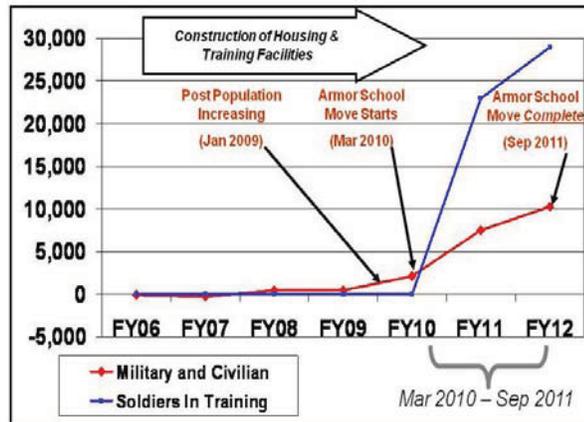


Figure 2: Fort Benning Growth Timeline

In 2008, Fort Benning trained over 115,000 soldiers. When the Armor Center and School relocates from Fort Knox to Fort Benning to create the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCOE), the post will train an additional 30,000 soldiers every year. The Fort Benning Growth Timeline (Figure 2) shows that the bulk of the population influx is expected to occur during a narrow window of time between March 2010 and September 2011, pending the completion of the construction of infrastructure and facilities on Fort Benning. Approximately \$4 billion in construction is well underway, including new housing, dining, training facilities, utility and transportation infrastructure, as well as the replacement facility for Martin Army Community Hospital.

Other economic development is bringing even more growth to the region, including construction of a Kia automotive plant, a new National Cash Register (NCR) manufacturing facility, and the expansion of American Family Life Insurance Company (AFLAC).

Community Response

Thanks to a long history of visionary community leaders, the region began to prepare itself for growth at least two years prior to the first indications of the 2005 BRAC Commission recommendations for Fort Benning. In 2003, community and business leaders established the Fort Benning Futures Partnership (FBFP) as a regional Community Action Group (CAG) to help installation-affected communities collectively address anticipated growth. After the BRAC decision, FBFP identified the Valley Partnership Joint Development Authority (VPJDA) as the organization with the history and credibility to facilitate a coordinated inter-governmental approach to growth management planning for the multi-county, Bi-State region. Partnering with regional businesses and with the DoD Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), VPJDA secured grant funding to support the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) and Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP) to prepare the region for growth.

Growth Management Organization

VPJDA is a regional, Bi-State multi-governmental entity with more than a decade of collaborative and innovative experience in promoting economic development for the improved general welfare of the region. VPJDA represents the interests of affected communities in both Georgia and Alabama. It assures direct community involvement from across the region through the structure of a Council of Governments, which is comprised of two or more leaders from each county or municipal government, as illustrated by Figure 3. VPJDA also includes Task Forces focused on specific issues.

Valley Partnership Joint Development Authority Regional Growth Organization and Relationships



Figure 3: Growth Management Organization

The VPJDA Executive Vice President of Military Affairs is the senior staff person responsible for managing the VPJDA staff and contractual personnel focused on economic development, community development, military affairs, finance, communications, and all other areas affected by BRAC growth.

The following is a list of key stakeholders engaged in the growth adjustment strategy (not including State and Federal agencies identified below).

- VPJDA
- Fort Benning Futures Partnership
- Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce (regional focus)
- Fort Benning's Installation and Garrison Command Groups
- City and County Managers in the Bi-State Region

VPJDA is working most closely with OEA, the Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee, Department of Labor, Department of Education, as well as with the State and Federal agencies listed below:

- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
- Alabama Department of Education
- Alabama Department of Transportation
- Alabama Development Office
- Alabama Industrial Development Training
- Fort Benning, Alabama and Georgia
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs

- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Department of Education
- Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Georgia Military Affairs Coordinating Committee
- Georgia Quick Start
- Lee-Russell Alabama Council of Governments
- River Valley Regional Commission
- Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

Growth Management Planning Activities

The Fort Benning JLUS was the first major Bi-State regional planning effort completed by VPJDA with grant funding from OEA. JLUS is a cooperative land use planning effort between Fort Benning and the surrounding communities promoting community and economic growth that supports military training and other operational missions. The purpose of JLUS is to ensure that military missions can continue without degrading the public health, safety and welfare of surrounding communities, and that local economic development can prosper without reducing National Defense readiness. JLUS prevents land use conflicts between base operations and civilian development through a participatory community planning process and study recommendations that result in better land use decision-making.

The second major regional planning effort completed by the VPJDA with financial support from OEA is the Fort Benning RGMP. The purpose of the RGMP is to develop a plan for each separate county and for the overall region that will enable local communities and service providers to prepare for the expected population and economic growth by assessing impacts and preparing plans that address a comprehensive spectrum of issues for each of the affected counties and for the region, including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Growth Forecasting and Modeling | • Environmental Impacts |
| • Economic Impact and Analysis | • Health Care |
| • Transportation | • Social Services |
| • Public and Private Utilities and Infrastructure | • Public Safety and Emergency Services |
| • Housing Market Analysis | • Quality of Life |
| • Education | • Fiscal Analysis and Sustainability |
| • Sustainable Land Use Planning | • Implementation and Follow-up |

The RGMP addresses the questions:

- What growth is expected to occur?
- Where is the future growth going?
- What are the potential impacts to community facilities and services?
- What physical improvements or organizational activities are necessary to maintain desired levels of service?

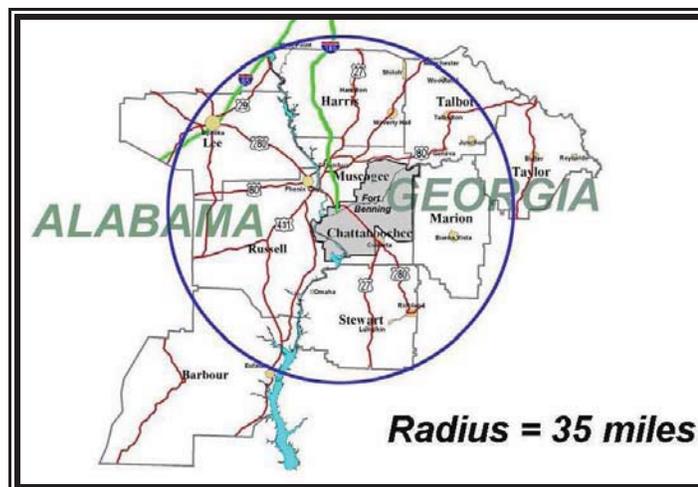


Figure 4: Fort Benning RGMP Study Area

The RGMP assesses the growth impacts in the 10 counties located within commuting distance (a 35 mile radius) of the front gate of Fort Benning that includes: Barbour, Lee and Russell Counties in Alabama; and Columbus-Muscogee, Cusseta-Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Stewart, Talbot and Taylor Counties in Georgia (Figure 4).

Implementation and Partnering Strategies

Now that the RGMP has been published, VPJDA continues in its role as sponsor and regional coordinator of BRAC growth sustainability, working in cooperation with Fort Benning and Fort Knox, as well as with government officials of the affected jurisdictions in Alabama and Georgia to ensure that impacted communities participate in and take ownership of planning decisions and actions. The VPJDA's implementation and growth sustainability team will assist the affected counties to implement the RGMP recommendations and plans, working in partnership with the River Valley Regional Commission in Georgia and the Lee-Russell Council of Governments in Alabama.

Primary Growth-Related Challenges

The top five key issues are:

- Education
- Transportation
- Water and Sewer
- Health Care and Social Services
- Public Safety and Emergency Services.

These challenges and others have been identified in the RGMP through the collaborative regional planning process coordinated by VPJDA's Regional Growth Management Organization, in partnership with multiple stakeholders at the local, regional, state (both Alabama and Georgia) and Federal levels.

VPJDA has also participated in the OEA Project Needs Assessment (PNA) process to further identify and define the growth project funding gaps and potential Federal funding assistance opportunities. As of June 2009, VPJDA had submitted 24 community-identified projects determined to be related to future mission growth. The projects listed in the PNA are in two categories, Education (11 projects) and Transportation (13 projects). Additional projects will be added to the PNA as they are identified and cost estimates become available.

Education:

Description: Population growth on the scale that is expected at Fort Benning outstrips the capability of any local school district to self-fund the capital improvements needed. The cost of educating the increased student population will come due long before taxes are collected to cover the expense. New schools and classroom additions must be built

Strategy and actions to date: Along with several other school districts throughout the nation, the Muscogee County School District has taken the lead in forming the Seven Rivers National Coalition for Military Growth in Pre K – 12 Schools, which is focused on sourcing federal monies to assist with pressures of an expanding student population.

Outcomes and achievements to date: A coalition of educators involving the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the RGMP region (Chattahoochee River Valley Schools Project) is working together to speak with a unified voice for addressing the expanding student population and pursuing additional aid for local school districts.

Outstanding Requirements:

	Priority Projects	Estimated Cost	Funds Committed	Funding Gap
1	Russell Co (AL) Schools	\$20,200,000	\$0	\$20,200,000
2	Harris Co (GA) High School	\$30,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$28,000,000
3	Muscogee Co (GA) Elementary School #1	\$14,000,000	\$0	\$14,000,000
4	Muscogee Co (GA) Elementary School #2	\$14,000,000	\$0	\$14,000,000
5	Muscogee Co (GA) High School Expansion	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$10,000,000
6	Muscogee Co (GA) Middle School	\$20,000,000	\$0	\$20,000,000
7	Phenix City (AL) Elementary School	\$15,000,000	\$0	\$15,000,000
8	Chattahoochee Co (GA) High School	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$2,000,000
9	Chattahoochee Co (GA) Schools	\$31,000,000	\$0	\$31,000,000
10	Harris Co (GA) Schools	\$41,000,000	\$31,000,000	\$10,000,000
11	Lee Co (AL) Schools	\$21,200,000	\$0	\$21,200,000
	TOTAL	\$216,400,000		\$187,400,000

Transportation:

Description: The growth will bring with it a record number of vehicles on the roads, degrading road surfaces, and weakening bridges. The factors of current conditions, expected wear and tear, commuting patterns, current capacity versus required capacity of the region's roadways require capital improvements to support traffic flow, safety and access to Fort Benning.

Strategy and actions to date: The impact area is a Bi-State region, so transportation issues are being coordinated between two states, and a 10-county area, with solutions being developed on a regional basis through the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Outcomes and achievements to date: Transportation projects with varying degrees of specificity as to their linkage to military growth have been identified for inclusion in the OEA PNA database. Several projects are related to induced growth. Transportation priorities are for those projects that relate to gate access or Fort Benning ingress/egress to those areas of the installation where new missions will occur.

Outstanding Requirements: The following projects have been identified through the PNA process as having the highest priority and clearest linkage to Fort Benning's growth. If funds were made available, design and construction on these projects could begin immediately.

	Priority Projects	Estimated Cost	Funds Committed	Funding Gap
1	Fort Mitchell (AL) Gate Access	\$19,100,000	\$0	\$19,100,000
2	St. Mary's Rd Bypass	\$16,500,000	\$0	\$16,500,000
3	Buena Vista Rd Interchange	\$50,000,000	\$0	\$50,000,000
4	SR26 @ US280 Intersection	\$1,505,000	\$0	\$ 1,505,000
	TOTAL	\$86,105,000		\$86,105,000

Other transportation projects that have been identified in the PNA are as follows:

	Transportation Projects	Estimated Cost	Funds Committed	Funding Gap
5	Connector Rd from Steam Mill Rd to Old Cusseta Rd	\$10,900,000	\$0	\$10,900,000
6	Eastern Connector (southern portion)	\$33,315,000	\$2,000,000	\$31,315,000
7	Ft Benning Rd Widening from 3 lane to 5 lane (1.5 miles)	\$7,500,000	\$0	\$7,500,000
8	Old Cusseta Rd Widening (Ft. Benning Rd to Farr Rd)	\$16,500,000	\$0	\$16,500,000
9	South Lumpkin Rd Widening (Walker St to Ft Benning)	\$11,000,000	\$0	\$11,000,000
10	SR26 between US280 & High School (2.5 miles)	\$7,700,000	\$0	\$7,700,000
	TOTAL	\$86,915,000		\$84,915,000

Water and Sewer:

The expected population growth will require substantial improvements and additions to the existing public and private utilities infrastructure. Potable water and sewer services throughout the region need to be expanded and coordinated. Regional utilities must be developed as an alternative to the inefficiencies of city or county utilities.

Health Care and Social Services:

Timely access to quality health care will be a challenge for the incoming population that is covered by TRICARE, as there is a projected shortage in the number of health care providers (both physicians and hospitals) that accept TRICARE, due to low reimbursement rates relative to commercial payers. The increase in the number of people in the RGMP area with TRICARE coverage can be expected to contribute to more limitations of access to health services for these patients.

A larger military presence in the community produces a corresponding increase in demand for child care, after school programs, general family support services, domestic violence intervention, and substance abuse and mental health counseling. Social service providers will need to expand programs and facilities that are already under strain due to reductions in state funding resulting from the downturn in the general economy.

Public Safety and Emergency Services:

The 10 RGMP counties have varying levels of public safety and emergency services capacity. Generally, the larger, more populous counties have more resources available to address public safety issues, and have engaged in planning to prepare for future growth pressures. The smaller, more rural RGMP counties are strained to meet current public safety and emergency services needs, let alone meet the increased demand for services caused by the anticipated population surge. By increasing coordination of services on a regional level, resources can be more effectively leveraged to meet the increased demand. For example, efforts must be continued to unify regional communications systems around the 800 megahertz standard. Law enforcement agencies as well as Fire/Rescue departments need to

establish mutual-aid agreements to partner on major incidents with a regional scope. Street and building information needs to be updated in county databases to keep up with the growth, with the potential of a developing a regional database for incident response.

Successes/Lessons Learned

Prior to initiating the bulk of the growth management planning activities, VPJDA decided that ensuring the sustainability of the mission through the completion of a JLUS should be the first step. With the benefit of some time (and growth), the wisdom of the order of the planning activities is confirmed daily. The RGMP had a solid foundation from its start on which to study (and propose) sustainable growth management planning principles that ensure the vitality of the VPJDA region's relationship with the Fort Benning installation well into the future.

Key lessons learned:

- Effective communication with and between all stakeholders (including the installation command structure), engaging them in the growth management planning process, is essential to developing local ownership and to gaining support for implementing planning recommendations.
- Planning for growth must be coordinated regionally to leverage existing resources and to prevent communities within the region from competing against one another.
- Growth Forecasting and Modeling that projects where populations will live off-post assists planners on the installation—as well as those in the community—with strategic planning for future capital project investments (e.g., roads, infrastructure, schools).
- Fiscally-sustainable growth planning must involve planning staff and the public administration functions that can assess the best use of land, transportation systems, water and sewer infrastructure, and public services to support the growth.
- Educational capital facility planning is a significant challenge. In particular, VPJDA has discovered that funding for investments that increase the capacity of educational facilities has lagged the actual growth. Effective strategies to mitigate immediate capital facility and operational shortfalls are essential pending the realization of future public revenue to offset those increased costs.