

# Comprehensive Regional Growth Plan for the Fort Bragg Region

## Assessment and Recommendations



## Introduction

September 2008

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*Submitted to the:*

# **FORT BRAGG AND POPE AFB BRAC REGIONAL TASK FORCE**

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*Developed by:*



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*In Partnership with:*

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (Workforce)  
Developmental Associates, LLP (Public Safety)  
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Hobbs, Upchurch & Associates (Water and Wastewater)  
Kathi Beratan, PhD & James Helgeson, PhD (Editors)  
Kenan Institute for Private Enterprise, UNC-Chapel Hill (Air Travel)  
ICF International (Economic Modeling & Transportation)  
Martin/Alexiou/Bryson, PLLC (Transportation)  
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PKF Consulting (Hospitality and Cultural Resources)  
Richardson Smith Gardner & Associates (Solid Waste)

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## **DISCLAIMER**

This report is intended as an aid to planners, managers, elected officials, and other decision makers in the Fort Bragg region. Our aim is not to dictate what should be done, but to assist in ongoing efforts to achieve goals and objectives identified and valued by the residents of the region. The recommendations presented in this report are suggestions for how the region could work towards those goals and objectives, based on best available information and current understandings.

The information, projections and estimates in this report are based upon publicly available data and have been prepared using generally accepted methodologies and formulas. The projections and needs presented in this report are based upon best estimates using the available data. It is important to note that currently available information and understandings are incomplete and cannot account for the inevitable, but unpredictable, impacts of unexpected global, national, state, and/or local events. Actual results and needs may differ significantly from the projections of this report due to such unforeseen factors and conditions, as well as inaccuracy of available data, and/or factors and conditions not within the scope of this project. Persons using this information to make business and financial decisions are cautioned to examine the available data for themselves and not to rely solely on this report.

Neither the BRAC Regional Task Force, Training and Development Associates, Inc. nor its subcontractors guarantee or warrant that the projections set forth in this report will, in fact, occur. The BRAC Regional Task Force, Training and Development Associates, Inc. and its subcontractors disclaim any liability for any errors or inaccuracies in the information, projections and needs analysis, regardless of how the data is used, or any decisions made or actions taken by any person in reliance upon any information and/or data furnished herein.

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# Contents

A. Sustainable Development – A Framework for Moving Forward .....	6
B. The Need for Coordinated Regional Planning.....	6
C. Organization of the Assessment .....	7
D. Terminology Used Throughout the Assessment.....	7

# Introduction

Fort Bragg is growing. The addition of U.S. Army Forces Command and the U.S. Army Reserve Command, the transformation of units in the Army to Modular Forces, and the implementation of “Grow the Army” activities is expected to bring tens of thousands of new residents to the region by 2013. This rapid growth will create both challenges and opportunities.

Eleven counties were identified by the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Regional Task Force and the Department of Defense as likely to be impacted by the growth at Fort Bragg (**Figure 1**). Seven of these—Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore, Lee, Richmond, and Robeson Counties—are expected to receive the most significant growth impacts, and so have been identified as “Tier I” counties. Scotland, Bladen, Sampson, and Montgomery Counties have been identified as “Tier II” counties because they are expected to experience mostly secondary, expansion-related effects.

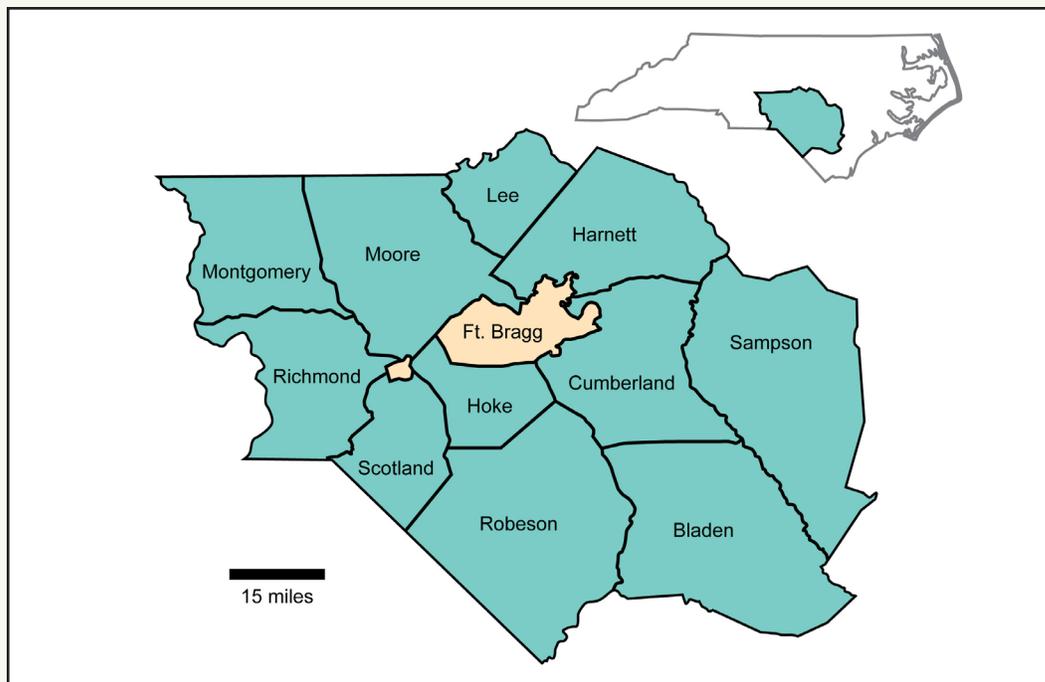
With the assistance of the BRAC Regional Task Force, these eleven counties have chosen to

work together to mitigate the challenges and take advantages of the opportunities.

In June, 2007, the BRAC Regional Task Force hired Training & Development Associates, Inc. (TDA) of Laurinburg, North Carolina, to assess the effects the expansion at Fort Bragg is likely to have on the region and to suggest actions the region can take to reduce the negative impacts and enhance the positive ones. The results of this assessment are presented in this Fort Bragg Regional Growth Assessment.

This Assessment is designed to support efforts by the region’s communities to develop innovative and effective responses to both existing and potential problems. Included in the report are descriptions of current conditions, projections of future needs, explanations of the major gaps in capacity, and suggestions for actions to fill these gaps. The report points out the connections among identified problems and gaps, and emphasizes responses that can build on the region’s strengths and assets to produce positive benefits while minimizing negative consequences.

Figure 1. Map of the eleven-county Fort Bragg region



The people who live and work in the region are best positioned to understand how the changes at Fort Bragg are likely to affect the region. The assessment process was designed so as to tap into this vast store of local knowledge. The consultant team was guided and informed by the contributions of hundreds of people from the region who participated in working groups and interviews and provided feedback following meetings and presentations. This diverse group, which included elected leaders, government staff, business people, farmers, non-profit service providers, academic researchers, and concerned citizens, provided insight and local expertise that covered the spectrum of economic, community, social, and cultural activity. Their input formed the backbone of this plan. The BRAC Regional Task Force intends to continue seeking information and ideas from the region's residents.

It is important to acknowledge that this report represents a milestone along the way rather than a job completed. Much work is needed to turn this vision of a prosperous, sustainable future into a reality.

### A. Sustainable Development – A Framework for Moving Forward

A central objective of the BRAC Regional Task Force and of this comprehensive regional planning effort is to advance *sustainable* development in the Fort Bragg region—that is, development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To achieve sustainability we must first determine *what* it is that we, as a region made up of unique communities, want to sustain. What do we value? What makes this region a good place to live? Sustainability is an approach to community development that integrates environmental stewardship, economic development, and social justice—enhancing the so-called “triple bottom line” of *environment, economy, and community*.

Sustainability is fundamentally about considering the connections among people and things, thinking about how actions aimed at addressing a particular concern of a particular population might impact other conditions and other people. When problems

are viewed as separate and unrelated, actions taken to solve them tend to be piecemeal or short term. Because the region's farms, downtowns, and natural resources, as well as Fort Bragg, are inextricably linked, dealing with the challenges facing each will require integrative approaches. A focus on sustainability also entails working proactively to avoid potential problems rather than waiting until these become crises. In short, sustainability is an exercise in *proactive, integrated, regional planning*. This type of forward-looking, cooperative planning can lead to more resilient and prosperous communities with a high quality of life for all.

### B. The Need for Coordinated Regional Planning

Numerous individuals, organizations, and agencies are involved in the day-to-day work that will shape the region's future. Each has its own particular mission and goals; each plays a slightly different role in planning or management. It is important to remember, however, that the actions—and the destinies—of all these parties are intertwined. Individual, independent actions can complement or they can interfere with the actions and interests of others. Without some degree of collaboration and coordination among stakeholder organizations, there is a genuine danger that the efforts of one could compromise the efforts of the other, and that improperly addressed challenges can escalate into critical problems.

Coordination takes time and effort; working together places unfamiliar demands on those accustomed to focusing solely on their own individual missions. Successful collaboration often requires changes in behavior and attitude on the part of those in the habit of assuming that collaboration must entail unacceptable sacrifice—the expenditure of effort and funds that could be strengthening their own bottom line. A major challenge facing the Fort Bragg region, then, is that of finding ways to enhance the ability—and increase the willingness—of individuals, organizations, and agencies to work together successfully.<sup>1</sup>

1. BRAC Regional Task Force Tabletop Exercise – After Action Report developed by Booz Allen Hamilton

## C. Organization of the Assessment

This Assessment reports on how the changes at Fort Bragg will affect the following major aspects of the region's environment, economy, and community:

- Economic Impact
- Housing
- Education (K-12)
- Workforce and Higher Education
- Transportation (roadways, transit, air, and rail)
- Water, Wastewater, and Solid Waste
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Public Safety
- Social Services and Child Care
- Health Care
- Hospitality and Cultural Resources

The Assessment consists of three major parts. First is the Executive Summary, a concise document that highlights the assessments, impacts, and recommended actions in each of the twelve planning areas. Second are the regional chapters, which include a more detailed analysis of each of the planning areas. Finally, chapters specific to each Tier I county present the unique challenges facing the given county and recommend detailed actions that will prepare it for pending changes.

## D. Terminology Used Throughout the Assessment

The anticipated changes at Fort Bragg include more than just growth related to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) activities. Two other major Army initiatives are also contributing to the anticipated population and mission growth at Fort Bragg: the transformation of units in the Army to Modular Forces (AMF) and "Grow the Army" (GTA). Therefore, the changes will be referred to throughout this report as *mission growth*, *military-related growth*, or the *expansion at Fort Bragg*.

Two scenarios were developed for this assessment in order to identify the potential impacts of the military-related growth independent of other factors. The *normal growth scenario* provides an estimate of what

would happen in the region if no military expansion occurred at Fort Bragg. This provides a "status quo" baseline for comparison. The *expected growth scenario* projects the likely impacts of the expansion at Fort Bragg by including the best available estimates of the active-duty soldiers, civilian jobs with the Army, embedded contractors, and jobs with private defense contractors that are being added to the communities surrounding Fort Bragg between the years 2006 and 2013. In addition, the expected growth scenario includes expected construction expenditures for military projects managed by the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as privatized military housing projects managed by Picerne Housing.

The "Recommended Actions" section located in each chapter lists specific actions suggested as responses to the challenges identified in the chapter. All of the recommended actions are important for the region as a whole; each recommended action is classified as being either "critical" or "important" based on the relevance of the action to the mission of Fort Bragg. *Critical* actions are urgent actions; failure to implement them could jeopardize the base's mission. *Important* actions represent a less urgent "best practice" of more general value to the region, in that failure to implement an important action could adversely affect community planning but would not jeopardize Fort Bragg's mission.