

Comprehensive Regional Growth Plan for the Fort Bragg Region

Assessment and Recommendations



Chapter 6 Public Safety & Emergency Services

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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.

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Chapter 6: Public Safety and Emergency Services

The expansion of Fort Bragg's mission and of the number of high-ranking officers stationed there is likely to raise the base's value as a target for terrorism. Because the nature and magnitude of natural and human-caused disasters cannot be predicted, emergency management and disaster preparedness activities should concentrate on building a flexible and resilient response capability. Volunteer fire and rescue departments are having an increasingly difficult time meeting community needs; recruiting sufficient fire personnel for smaller, less densely populated jurisdictions will be a challenge. A rise in crime rates is expected as a result of population increases from military-related growth and from the return of large numbers of troops from extended and multiple tours in the Middle East. Both law enforcement and emergency services agencies should prepare by continuing to coordinate regional planning efforts, securing maximum levels of federal, state, and local funding, and providing local departments the tools and incentives needed to recruit talented public safety and emergency services personnel.

Public safety involves the prevention of and protection from events that could endanger the safety of the general public, such as crimes or disasters (natural or human-caused). Public safety responsibilities are spread among an array of federal, state, county, and municipal agencies.

Increased attention to homeland security issues in recent years has led to a raised awareness that public safety is and should be a regional as well as a local concern, and that cooperation among agencies is needed. Crises are not constrained by jurisdictional boundaries. Law enforcement, fire response, public health, and emergency management are closely linked, so that stresses to one can negatively impact the others. The individual counties and municipalities have planning mechanisms in place to address their own needs; in this report, we seek to provide a regional overview that can assist in regional planning and coordination.

This section describes the impact of the military-related growth on county and municipal public safety operations in the region and specifically looks at the implications for the fire service, law enforcement, emergency rescue, and emergency management functions.

I. Current Conditions

Crime rates vary widely across the region. Cumberland, Richmond, and Robeson Counties had Index Crime,¹ Violent Crime, and Property Crime

1. The Crime Index includes the total number of murders, rapes,

rates that were higher than the state average in 2006; Lee County's Property Crime rate was higher than the state average. Fayetteville has the most paid police and fire personnel in the region. Most municipalities and the county jurisdictions largely depend on volunteer fire personnel. Fort Bragg has fire stations, which have mutual aid agreements with contiguous counties. Moore County has more emergency management personnel than the other Tier I counties.

County and municipal public safety staffs work together to cover the needs of each county. **Table 1** (next page) presents the current public safety staffing levels for the Tier I Sheriff and Emergency Management offices in each county and for the largest municipal police and fire department in the Fort Bragg region.

A. Law Enforcement

Each county has a sheriff's office and one municipal police department staffed by fourteen or more sworn officers. Fayetteville has the largest municipal police department in the region with 364 sworn officers. In order to understand how crime rates in the Fort Bragg region compare to those in the rest of North Carolina, crime rates per 100,000 people in 2006 are shown in **Table 2** (previous page).² Crime rates in Cumberland, Richmond, and Robeson Counties were higher than the state average in 2006; Lee County's

robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries, larcenies, and motor vehicle thefts.

2. Source: N.C. State Bureau of Investigation (<http://sbi2.jus.state.nc.us/crp/public/Default.htm>)

Table 1. Public safety staffing levels for the Tier I counties and the largest municipal operations in each county.

	Sheriff (Sworn)	Emergency Management	Population of Largest Municipality*	Police (Sworn)	Fire (Full time)
Cumberland	297	32	174,000 Fayetteville	364 Fayetteville Ratio = 2.1	295 Fayetteville
Harnett	100	2	10,000 Dunn	28 Dunn Ratio = 2.8	5 Dunn
Hoke	32	4	4,000 Raeford	14 Raeford Ratio = 3.5	3 Raeford
Lee	50	2	27,000 Sanford	75 Sanford Ratio = 2.8	48 Sanford
Moore	66	62	12,000 Southern Pines	37 Southern Pines Ratio = 3.1	22 Southern Pines
Richmond	60	2	9,000 Rockingham	35 Rockingham Ratio = 3.9	15 Rockingham
Robeson	98	4	23,000 Lumberton	69 Lumberton Ratio = 3.0	52 Lumberton

* Totals rounded off to the nearest 1,000. Source: North Carolina State Demographers' Office – 2007 (<http://demog.state.nc.us/>).

** Ratios for municipal police departments are based on number of sworn officers per 1,000 residents.

Table 2. Crime rates per 100,000 people in 2006. Index Crime includes the total number of Violent Crimes (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault) and Property Crimes (burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft). Bold values are higher than the North Carolina average.

	Index Crime Rate	Violent Crime Rate	Property Crime Rate
Cumberland	7,379.9	674.8	6,705.1
Harnett	3,901.3	424.2	3,477.1
Hoke	4,002.9	351.4	3,651.5
Lee	4,552.1	286.4	4,265.7
Moore	3,041.2	272.0	2,769.2
Richmond	6,528.0	557.0	5,970.9
Robeson	6,572.1	714.6	5,857.5
North Carolina Average	4,654.4	483.5	4,170.9

(Source: NC State Bureau of Investigation 2007 Annual Summary Report)

Table 3. North Carolina Counties with the highest Violent Crime Rates in 2006.

Mecklenburg	988.3
Durham	855.4
Pitt	741.2
Robeson	714.6
Edgecombe	690.4
Guilford	679.3
Cumberland	674.8
Lenoir	653.7
Forsythe	651.7
Bladen	610.9

(Source: NC State Bureau of Investigation 2007 Annual Summary Report)

Property Crime rate was higher than the state average. Cumberland County had the second highest Index Crime rate in the state, exceeded only by Mecklenburg County, and the seventh highest Violent Crime rate in the state, as shown in **Table 3** (*previous page*).³ Bladen County had the tenth highest Violent Crime rate in the state. Richmond and Robeson Counties had the fifth and sixth highest Index Crime rates in the state, respectively.

B. Other Public Safety Services

At least one municipality in each county has full-time paid fire personnel. Fayetteville, with 295 full-time fire personnel, has the largest fire department in the region. Most municipalities and the county jurisdictions, however, largely depend on volunteer fire personnel to provide fire service. Fort Bragg has five fire stations, which have mutual aid agreements with Cumberland County and the other contiguous counties. The Deputy Director of Emergency Services estimates that Fort Bragg fire personnel provide mutual aid assistance to the surrounding counties about once a week, on average.

Every county in the region has a full-time director of Emergency Management and at least one other paid Emergency Management staff member. Most of the counties also have some full-time staffing in Emergency Rescue, although Cumberland County has contracted with Cape Fear Valley Hospital and Lee County with Central Carolina Hospital to staff those services. Moore County has a larger full-time staff in Emergency Rescue and is less dependent on volunteers in that service than are Harnett, Hoke, Richmond, and Robeson Counties.

It is difficult to say whether or not current staffing for each of these operations is adequate. The demographics and particular characteristics of each jurisdiction affect the requirements for services. For instance, the FBI reports that the average number of sworn law enforcement officers per 1,000 citizens in the southern United States is 2.6. That ratio, however, is typically lower in larger municipalities,

3. Source: N.C. State Bureau of Investigation (<http://sbi2.jus.state.nc.us/crp/public/Default.htm>)

such as Fayetteville (2.1). The FBI reports that smaller towns have an average ratio of about 4.5. Other characteristics may also come into play. For example, the proximity of the Towns of Hope Mills and Spring Lake to Fayetteville and Fort Bragg require them to have more sworn officers than similar-sized jurisdictions in more rural settings. As shown in Table 1, the ratios of the largest municipalities in each of the Tier I counties range from 2.1 (Fayetteville) to 3.75 (Elizabethtown).

II. Future Needs

Funding is needed to help communities establish new fire operations to meet the increased number of service calls. Volunteer fire departments are having an increasingly difficult time meeting community needs; recruiting sufficient fire personnel for smaller, less densely populated jurisdictions will be a challenge. A rise in crime rates is expected as a result of population increases from military-related growth and from the return of large numbers of troops from extended and multiple tours in the Middle East. Law enforcement agencies should prepare by expanding three current trends: the application of community policing methods, specialization, and collaboration. Demand for emergency rescue services will increase due to growth in population; the region needs to find funding for the necessary increases in response capacity.

The expansion of Fort Bragg's mission and of the number of high-ranking officers stationed there is likely to raise the base's value as a target for terrorism. Because the nature and magnitude of natural and human-caused disasters cannot be predicted, emergency management and disaster preparedness activities should concentrate on building a flexible and resilient response capability. A first step is to increase the robustness and interoperability of communications among agencies by fully implementing the VIPER communications system. Joint planning and training exercises will both enhance preparedness and assist in obtaining funding for needed improvements.

The findings presented in this section are largely

derived from thirty-seven telephone interviews conducted in September and October of 2007 with members of the following stakeholder groups:

- Municipal and County Managers
- Fire Chiefs and Fire Marshalls
- Sheriffs
- Police Chiefs
- Emergency Management and Rescue Directors
- The Deputy Director of Emergency Services at Fort Bragg

In addition, twenty public safety managers from throughout the region attended a work session held at the Fayetteville Police Department on October 12 to review the preliminary findings and to discuss their implications.

These discussions focused on the concerns and issues generated by the military-related expansion in the region as well as opportunities for public safety operations provided by the expansion.

Many of the public safety operations in this region would benefit from additional resources. The military-related growth in the Fort Bragg region should help in that regard by generating additional tax revenues that can be used to help fund critical public safety services.

A. Fire Service

Composition of Fire Service Operations. The rapid growth associated with the expansion at Fort Bragg is likely to generate changes in the composition of fire service operations throughout the region. Of particular concern is the increased challenge in recruiting sufficient personnel for smaller, less densely populated jurisdictions. These jurisdictions currently rely on volunteers to staff fire operations. Many of these jurisdictions are already experiencing difficulties responding to fire calls with adequate personnel because the pool of available volunteers is drying up.

Volunteer departments typically struggle to achieve adequate responses from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

during the workweek. As a result, many departments are transitioning to employing paid staff during the daylight hours and using volunteers at night. The rapid growth in some parts of the region will cause the call volumes to escalate, which will force many volunteer or partially-volunteer departments to rely increasingly on full-time staffing.

The City of Lillington is facing just such a dilemma. While Lillington is experiencing some growth, the military-related expansion could trigger more rapid growth. Chief Tapp oversees a department that responds to about 300 calls per year, relying on the services of twenty-five volunteers. That number of volunteers is barely sufficient to maintain operations given the current level of calls for service. As the anticipated growth induces a higher volume of calls, it will become more difficult for a volunteer department like Lillington to maintain response times at its currently acceptable rate of four to six minutes. If the Department is unable to maintain acceptable response times, higher ISO ratings⁴ might reflect the greater risk to residents and their property, thereby causing property insurance rates to rise.

The difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers is a statewide, and likely also a national, problem. Several respondents observed that potential volunteers are making different lifestyle choices. For instance, rather than committing to serving their local fire department, many potential volunteers are devoting more time to their families and professional responsibilities. Moreover, state and local training requirements are becoming more rigorous and time-consuming, making it more difficult for volunteers to remain certified and also cutting into their available free time to respond to calls.

New Facilities. Several communities will need to establish new fire operations to meet the increased number of service calls. In addition, departments may have to relocate stations in response to changing development patterns due to the anticipated rapid growth. For example, the Fayetteville fire department is planning to move Fire Station #4 to the Murchison Road area due to the impending closure of Bragg

4. The Public Protection Classification (PPCTM) program from Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) provides insurance companies with information about municipal fire-protection services throughout the country.

Boulevard. Staffing and outfitting a new station is not cheap. To run 24-hour shifts requires fifteen full-time positions and at least one vehicle. As an example, Chief Nichols, Fire Chief for the City of Fayetteville, stated that it recently cost the Fayetteville Fire Department almost \$3.8 million to put a new station into operation. Those costs included:

- Annual personnel cost for fifteen personnel to staff a fire station: \$700,000
- One time expenditure to equip fifteen new firefighters with equipment/gear, uniforms, physicals, SCBA mask, etc.: \$53,000
- New fire apparatus with equipment: \$415,000
- A 10,000 square foot fire station, including the purchase of land, architect and engineering fees, furnishings, fixtures, and equipment: \$2,600,000

While most departments would not expend as much as Fayetteville on a new station, their costs would still be formidable.

B. Law Enforcement

Increases in population and congestion invariably bring about a concomitant rise in crime. Moreover, the nature of crimes in the Fort Bragg Region may also change somewhat in response to stresses related to the nearly 5-year-old war in Iraq. Troops have been deployed longer and more frequently, and the number of casualties and injuries is substantially higher than the United States has experienced since the Viet Nam War. Stresses associated with deployment in this challenging conflict are taking a great emotional toll on the returning troops and their families, leading to an anticipated increase in mental health problems.

It is difficult to predict the impact on crime in the region when troops begin returning in large numbers. Law enforcement leaders in the region believe that increases will occur in property crimes, violent crimes, and domestic violence. They are particularly concerned, and in some cases even alarmed, about the potential impact of mental health problems among returning soldiers on law enforcement operations.

Even as troops begin to return to the region, the State of North Carolina is on course to reduce the

availability of mental health services. This means that services will not be available for soldiers and their families who are having to deal with war-related mental, emotional, and social strains. In such circumstances, law enforcement agencies disproportionately bear the burden of dealing with mental and emotional crises. Several of the participants in the October 12 work session emphasized that the process of committing someone to a mental health facility requires that an officer devote several hours, if not an entire shift, to transport and then to hold potential patients in the waiting areas of emergency rooms until they are admitted. Law enforcement agencies are also called upon by the Womack Army Medical Center at Fort Bragg and the Veterans' Hospitals to transport patients from the base or military personnel living off-base. Each time this occurs, the affected law enforcement agency has one fewer officer on the street to protect the public. Given the amount of time already spent in transporting and providing security to patients, law enforcement managers in the region fear being inundated with more patients with mental health problems that will place tremendous demands on their services and strain the morale of officers.

The nature of the anticipated crimes by returning soldiers, coupled with the rapid regional growth, indicates the need to continue with three current trends: application of community policing methods, specialization, and collaboration. First, the region will require more interaction with the community through more patrols, more frequent contacts with the public, and greater visibility. By definition, this requires more law enforcement officers. Much of the region outside Cumberland County relies more on traditional policing strategies that are more suitable for a rural environment. As growth hits those areas and as more upscale residential units are built, there will be a greater need and demand for community policing strategies.

Harnett County faces a particularly unique challenge with respect to policing methods. The county is already experiencing a high level of growth in its perimeter areas. The coming military expansion will add to that perimeter growth, especially in the southeastern portion of the county. Community policing strategies to deal with this growth are desired

by the residents and appropriate for the increasing density in these areas. The County is considering imposing a law enforcement district tax to pay for these law enforcement demands. Unless counties can generate adequate law enforcement staffing and patrolling in such areas, developers may follow the pattern established in the Northern Training Area in Harnett County of establishing private law enforcement and fire service for a 1600-unit residential development. While such arrangements may save public dollars, they may jeopardize the quality and consistency of law enforcement.

The second trend that should be continued is the reliance of law enforcement departments on specialized units, such as those focusing on domestic violence or career criminals.

The third trend is increased collaboration among the region's law enforcement departments. To be successful in combating crime, departments will need to follow the example of the Fayetteville Police Department and the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office in collaborating more in identifying and solving crimes. Those two departments have ongoing collaborative efforts in investigations, communications, and crime mapping. In addition, Fort Bragg investigators partner with surrounding agencies to investigate crimes that potentially involve personnel living off the base, which includes over half of the base's military personnel. Such collaborative efforts demonstrate that law enforcement leaders can improve their responses to crime by working together.

C. Emergency Rescue

Demand for emergency rescue services will increase due to growth in population. The biggest issue facing emergency rescue services in the Fort Bragg region is funding preparation for this spike in demand.

Staffing shortages are already a problem, with most emergency rescue operations in North Carolina facing staffing shortages. The state is currently graduating about 300 paramedics per year while emergency rescue services need about 450. Many paramedics are

also leaving the EMS jobs to go into nursing, which pays more and has more amenable work schedules. An additional factor impacting the Fort Bragg region is that many of the squads in the more rural counties depend almost entirely on volunteers for staffing. Similar to fire service operations, as discussed above, volunteers for emergency rescue services are becoming scarce due to personal and professional commitments and the increasing training obligations for rescue volunteers.

Demand for services will increase with population growth in the Fort Bragg region. That demand will grow even more than would naturally occur with population growth because of the extensive road development in the region. The connection of Highway 13 to I-95, the development of I-295 north of Fayetteville, the construction of an I-95 loop to the south of Fayetteville, and the four lane expansion of Highway 87 from Highway 421 to the coast will dramatically increase traffic flow, thereby generating more accidents and leading to a greater demand for rescue services in the region.

Two additional factors adding to service demands are increased distances to be traveled and an increase in the number of retirees in the region. Some rescue units will be required to transport larger numbers of patients greater distances due to hospital mergers. For example, there is a good possibility that Cape Fear Valley Hospital may take over Bladen County Hospital. If that is the case, more patients from Bladen County may be transported to Fayetteville for treatment of more severe and less common ailments. The number of retirees in the region will grow as the population increases, leading to the establishment of more retirement communities. These developments place a greater demand on emergency services, per capita, than do traditional housing. Some of the retirement units, such as Foxfire in Moore County and another development near Wagram in Scotland County, may force those counties to add units in order to continue providing services within acceptable response times.

D. Emergency Management and Homeland Security

As more than one respondent put it, “The question is not if a regional disaster will occur, but when? The chances for such an event only will increase as BRAC expands.” In addition to the natural disasters and human-caused accidents that all areas must prepare for, the region will have an enhanced risk for a terrorist attack as a result of the changes at Fort Bragg.

A key element of the military expansion at Fort Bragg is the transfer of two major army commands—the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), a four-star headquarters; and the U.S Army Reserve Command (USARC), a three-star headquarters—from Fort McPherson to North Carolina, where they will join the three-star US Army Special Operations Command. FORSCOM oversees training, mobilization and deployment of the bulk of the Army’s combat forces. USARC commands most of the Army Reserve units in the continental United States. FORSCOM is the Army’s largest command; FORSCOM and USARC together manage more than \$30 billion of the annual Department of Defense budget. Once the expansion is complete, there will be thirty-four generals stationed at Fort Bragg, more than any at other military installation in the United States other than the Pentagon.

The expansion of Fort Bragg’s mission and of the number of high-ranking officers stationed there will have the unfortunate effect of raising the base’s value as a target for terrorism. In addition, the base will have an increased need for rapid response to attacks and crises arising elsewhere. These changes have significant implications for the region’s public safety organizations.

Planning for disaster preparedness and response is extremely challenging because the nature and magnitude of disasters, whether natural or human-caused, cannot be predicted with any certainty. Although the likelihood of various scenarios can be estimated, it is not possible to identify in advance what will happen where, and how many people will be affected. Disaster and emergency response planning, therefore, must focus on developing the

capacity of both first responders (law enforcement, fire services, and emergency medical services) and citizens to cope flexibly with whatever happens. A critical requirement for flexible response is that emergency responders and public health agencies have robust and interoperable communications systems. As was tragically seen in New York during the September 11, 2001, attacks, lack of communications capabilities among first responders can hamper response efforts.

Emergency response organizations in the Fort Bragg region employ different communications systems, and this limits interoperability. Some agencies are installing interoperability patches that can improve interconnections, but many are not. There are radio channels that could be available for use in an emergency (see the discussion of the VIPER system in the Information and Communications section of this report), but there is no central control of communication that would connect all types of emergency services, such as fire, law enforcement and emergency rescue.

Several emergency management directors believe that a regional meeting and training exercises should be held to plan for a regional event. The 2007 National Preparedness Guidelines developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security state that regional collaboration is critical to improving preparedness; major events often have regional impact, and thus prevention, protection, response, and recovery missions require extensive regional collaboration.

Public health and emergency responder coordination in particular remains an area where additional efforts are needed nationwide.⁵ During a public health emergency or bioterrorist attack, law enforcement and other emergency response organizations might be called on to enforce quarantines, manage crowds, or participate in joint investigations with public health officials. A report by the Rand Report states that many have expressed concern about the lack of integration between the public health and medical communities and other local emergency responders, and there appears to be a disconnect between how

5. Lois M. Davis, Louis T. Mariano, Jennifer E. Pace, Sarah K. Cotton, Paul Steinberg, 2006. Combating Terrorism: How Prepared are State and Local Response Organizations? Rand Corp. (<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG309/>)

emergency responders and public health agencies view the degree to which they are integrating their preparedness activities⁶. The limited participation of volunteer fire departments in joint preparedness activities and training was also identified as an issue of concern by the Rand Report.

Enhancing coordination with the private sector has been identified as critical for ensuring the preparedness of states and localities and for protecting vital critical infrastructure such as utilities and transportation.⁷ Across the nation, the Rand report found that there is limited interaction with the private sector, either in sharing threat information or in participation in joint preparedness activities such as planning and training.

Both the increased local threat and the increased need for rapid response by Fort Bragg personnel are likely to have significant short-term impacts on the region's public safety personnel, particularly in Cumberland, Harnett, and Moore Counties. Increased traffic will necessitate assignment of law enforcement officers to traffic control duties, increase response times for emergency vehicles, and increase call volumes as civilians seek information about the situation. As noted in the transportation section of this report, access to the base is already impacted by traffic queues at the gates and traffic jams in Spring Lake during peak hours. Given that many key personnel will choose to live off-base, such delays could negatively impact the speed at which Fort Bragg can respond in the event of a crisis. The existing challenges would, of course, be exacerbated if the crisis situation were located within the Fort Bragg region. Likewise, already stressed medical facilities are likely to have difficulty handling a large number of casualties resulting from a terrorist attack or natural disaster, or providing medical services in the event of a flu epidemic or other unusual and severe disease outbreak.

While it is important to prepare for terrorism, such preparation should not come at the expense of emergency preparedness for natural disasters. The catastrophic impact of hurricanes Katrina and Rita has raised concern over whether state and local

organizations have overemphasized preparedness for terrorism at the expense of emergency preparedness for natural disasters.⁸ Efforts should be made to identify general improvements that can support overall emergency preparedness and response for any catastrophic events; such improvements might include increasing the interoperability and robustness of first-responder communications systems, updating mutual-aid agreements, and regular joint planning and training exercises that include emergency responders and health organizations from across the region.

County managers and emergency management directors have complimented Fort Bragg on the mutual aid it has rendered in the past. The base has established mutual aid agreements with Cumberland County and all of its counties contiguous to Fort Bragg. For example, immediately after Hurricane Fran hit the region in 1996, Fort Bragg loaned generators and equipment to the surrounding jurisdictions. Because of the potential for a major event with region-wide impacts, other nearby counties have expressed the need for mutual aid agreements.

III. Gaps

A. Planning Challenges

Two challenges are particularly relevant to planning for public safety functions in the Fort Bragg region. These are planned changes to traffic patterns between Fort Bragg and Fayetteville and changes to development patterns in response to growth.

B. Timing of the Closing of Bragg Boulevard and Widening of Murchison Road

Bragg Boulevard, a key north-south artery to Fort Bragg and to Fayetteville, is to be closed to the general public to enhance base security. Murchison Road, the primary alternative route, will expand to four lanes to handle the additional traffic. The timing of the two projects will affect all public safety

8. Ibid

6. Ibid

7. Ibid

services in the immediate area by increasing response times for law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical teams. It is assumed that the closing of Bragg Boulevard will not occur until after Murchison Road is widened, but the two projects are proceeding independently. Proper timing of those two projects is essential to maintain public safety in the region. If Bragg Boulevard closes prior to the widening of Murchison Road, public safety access through the area will be delayed substantially. Moreover, traffic problems due to congestion and resulting frustrations among drivers will multiply. Public safety response times will rise, and lives may be lost.

C. Predicting the Location and Types of Development

A second major challenge is the need to predict the location and type of development, which will affect the location and staffing of public safety services. While anticipating the location and type of growth is critical to all jurisdictions, it is more so to the smaller, less densely populated areas in the region.

Failure to accurately predict the location and nature of development can cause smaller and less densely populated jurisdictions to waste precious resources and services. For example, public safety stations may be improperly located, or there may be a failure in making timely conversions from volunteer to paid staff. The problem is generally less severe for larger, more densely populated jurisdictions, which tend to have more resources and more experience with change. These larger jurisdictions are more accustomed to substantial growth and can more readily deal with increased uncertainty about where and what future growth will occur. For example, Fayetteville's public safety services had to respond to the substantial annexation that was completed in 2005, providing them with experience to draw from as they respond to future growth surges.

The purpose and design of developments in the area will affect planning for fire services. Most importantly, departments must obtain appropriate equipment, such as ladder trucks, for taller structures such as multi-story apartment or commercial buildings. More specialized equipment often requires

specially trained personnel or teams to operate.

An additional factor adding to the challenge for smaller, less dense jurisdictions in the Fort Bragg region is that the plans for the largest projects having the most immediate impact are clearer today than are the potential spin-offs of other businesses and residences in the outlying areas.

D. Training Requirements for Law Enforcement Personnel with Military Police Training

The increase in personnel at Fort Bragg may assist public safety operations in recruitment of trained staff. Most public safety operations, especially in law enforcement and in emergency rescue, are struggling to find quality recruits. As military personnel complete their tours of duty, many may wish to remain in the area. Many former military personnel gravitate toward public service occupations, especially in law enforcement. The large number of military personnel looking for civilian jobs in the next few years in the region could provide a fertile recruiting base that could be the envy of many other jurisdictions in North Carolina. The actual effect of this influx of former military personnel will depend on a number of trends. At least three of those trends promise to reinforce the ability of local public safety agencies to recruit ex-military personnel.

- The population growth spurt in the region should enable local governments to generate more revenues to improve salaries, increasing their ability to attract and retain public safety personnel.
- Public safety agencies, especially law enforcement organizations, are increasingly finding that many of today's recruits fail their background investigations. Ex-military personnel pass these background investigations at a higher rate than do other recruits.
- Some jurisdictions in the area, such as the Southern Pines Police Department, have taken

advantage of an apprenticeship program offered by the North Carolina Department of Labor. This program helps attract ex-military personnel into law enforcement careers by bridging the gap between their military and law enforcement salaries. This program also enables participating organizations to attend recruiting seminars offered at Fort Bragg.

Two additional trends, on the other hand, will hinder the recruitment efforts of public safety agencies in the region.

- The military has two types of law enforcement officers: Military Police and Civilian Police. Both undergo extensive law enforcement training to become certified for their positions. The Civilian Police are trained at a federal academy; the State of North Carolina does not recognize this training. Federal officers are the only out-of-state transfers treated this way by the state, despite the fact that some of their training requirements exceed those of North Carolina. In comparison, other out-of-state transfers with two or more years experience are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and are required only to complete the legal unit of the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET). The North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Commission⁹ specifically states that:

“Persons who have completed training as a federal law enforcement officer and are appointed as a sworn law enforcement officer in North Carolina shall be required to complete a commission accredited basic training program in its entirety and shall successfully pass the State Comprehensive Examination.”

As a result, ex-Military and ex-Civilian Police from Fort Bragg who have an interest in beginning new careers in law enforcement in North Carolina would have to undertake the entire Basic Law Enforcement Training Program to become certified in North Carolina. Many experienced law enforcement officers are unwilling to retake such training.

Tom Younce, the Past-President of the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police, will be submitting a request to the North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Commission for a change in the Administrative Code to permit military and civilian police officers to be considered for lateral entry. He has been in contact with the MP School in Fort Leonard, Missouri, and is in the process of obtaining their training outline. He has also requested a copy of the course outline for federal civilian police officers from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia. If approved by the Commission, any change in the Administrative Code may require eighteen to twenty-four months before becoming effective.

- The U.S. Army appears to be creating more Civilian Police positions on its bases and relying less on Military Police in order to free up more personnel for field operations. There are about 150 Civilian Police currently stationed at Fort Bragg. The compensation for these positions is comparable to that of local government, but the Civilian Police positions in the military may be more attractive because they offer earlier retirement options. Military spokespersons were unwilling to comment on whether this number might be expected to grow with the expansion or stay the same.

E. Funding for Emergency Preparedness and Response

Funding limitations are a major barrier to improving emergency preparedness and response in the region. Local governments need state and federal assistance if organizations are to make the changes necessary to cope with the increased demands. Receipt of funding by local response organizations since 9/11 was found to be positively correlated with being proactive in improving an organization’s level of preparedness. That is, local response organizations (except volunteer fire departments) that received an increase in external funding or resources or agency-specific federal support following 9/11 were more likely than other organizations of their

9. NCAC0-9B.0403(a)12

same type to have, for example, increased spending or reallocated resources to focus on terrorism preparedness.¹⁰ This suggests that funding for disaster preparedness and response in the Fort Bragg area could be enhanced if the first responder organizations apply for funding after demonstrating that disaster preparedness is a priority for them through a few key actions. Given the importance of coordination across jurisdictional boundaries and across response sectors (law enforcement, fire services, and health services), expansion of mutual-aid agreements and joint training exercises would be appropriate actions, as would complete implementation of the VIPER communications network. This latter action would be consistent with the goals listed in the 2007-2008 North Carolina State Homeland Security Strategy; among these goals is “Ensure the ability to communicate during a crisis by developing a secure interoperable communications network available to all jurisdictions and disciplines.” One element of this goal is “Enhance VIPER strategic statewide infrastructure.”

10. Lois M. Davis, Louis T. Mariano, Jennifer E. Pace, Sarah K. Cotton, Paul Steinberg, 2006. *Combating Terrorism: How Prepared are State and Local Response Organizations?* Rand Corp. (<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG309/>)

IV. Recommended Actions

Critical Action 1: Implement the VIPER system to ensure communications interoperability in the event of emergency.

Description: The Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders (VIPER) System being implemented by the NC Highway Patrol will enable public safety officials at all levels to communicate directly with one another over a secure and reliable network without having to relay messages through a communications center. The value of this capability in times of emergency is becoming more important as the influx of military personnel into the Fort Bragg region significantly raises the threat profile of the region.

Responsible Parties: Local, state and federal government should partner to fully implement and equip the network.

Important Action 2: Coordinate closely with local transportation planners to ensure emergency response times are not negatively impacted during roadway construction.

Description: Emergency responders (law enforcement agencies, fire services, and emergency rescue services), particularly those in Cumberland and Harnett Counties and from Fort Bragg, should meet with transportation planners to discuss the detailed impacts of planned roadway construction and determine potential alternative routes that can be used if primary routes are temporarily blocked. Mechanisms for routine information exchange should be determined at this meeting, and future meetings, either face-to-face or by conference calls, should be scheduled. A couple of participants should be selected to take the lead on implementing group decisions and to keep track of follow-up activities.

Responsible Parties: The BRAC Regional Task Force should contact key agencies to identify appropriate participants and then arrange a time and place for the meeting. The BRAC Regional Task Force should facilitate this initial meeting.

Important Action 3: Coordinate closely with local community planners to anticipate future development so that public safety and emergency facilities can be appropriated located.

Description: Emergency responders (law enforcement agencies, fire services, and emergency rescue services) from all Tier I counties should meet with local community planners to discuss likely changes in population distribution and

development patterns. Mechanisms for routine information exchange should be determined at this meeting.

Responsible Parties: The BRAC Regional Task Force should contact key agencies to identify appropriate participants and then arrange a time and place for the meeting. The BRAC Regional Task Force should facilitate this initial meeting.

Important Action 4: Fully integrate with NC Department of Emergency Management’s Regionalization Process

Description: Meet with Woody Mashburn and Paula Brown, the Executive Directors of the relevant Domestic Preparedness and Readiness Regions (DPRR), in order to identify potential actions aimed at enhancing regional preparedness and cross-discipline interoperability. Participate in regional Training Exercise Planning Workshops initiated by the DPRR program. Work with the DPRR program to identify potential sources of funding for emergency preparedness efforts.

The DPRR program is a recent initiative by the NC Department of Emergency Management with the goal of assisting counties and regions in identifying gaps in personnel, training, equipment, and coordination and finding ways to fill these gaps.

Responsible Parties: The BRAC Regional Task Force should organize a meeting at which Woody Mashburn and Paula Brown can discuss priorities and potential cooperative activities with key public safety agencies and service providers in the region, including staff from Fort Bragg.

Important Action 5: Seek Federal and State Homeland Security Funding for Emergency Preparedness

Description: Funding is needed by most first responder, emergency management and public health agencies and service providers in the region to pay for personnel, training, and equipment. These agencies and service providers should work together to apply for funding in order to maximize the likelihood of receiving funding and to increase the effectiveness of funded activities. The State of North Carolina receives funds from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; relevant programs through which this funding is disbursed to county and local jurisdictions include the State Homeland Security Grant Program, the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, and the Citizen Corps Program. These state-level programs should be targeted by initial funding requests; additional sources of funding should be sought. This process should be repeated annually.

Responsible Parties: The BRAC Regional Task Force should initiate a cooperative process through which relevant agencies and service providers identify priorities and develop proposals. The NC Department of Emergency Management can assist in identifying potential funding sources and in applying for funds. Input should be sought from the planning efforts described in Actions PS-1 and PS-2.

Important Action 6: Establish Mutual Aid Agreements among the Tier I counties and with Fort Bragg.

Description: Identify those counties and local jurisdictions that do not have Mutual Aid Agreements and encourage establishment of such agreements.

Responsible Parties: The BRAC Regional Task Force should coordinate this effort.

Important Action 7: Work with the North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards Commission for a change in the Administrative Code to permit military and civilian police officers to be considered for lateral entry.

Description: Contact relevant state-level agency personnel and lawmakers in support of the proposed change in the Administrative Code, which will permit ex-Military and ex-Civilian Police from Fort Bragg to begin a civilian career in law enforcement without taking the state's Basic Law Enforcement Training Program. Provide additional information, as requested, to state agencies and lawmakers.

Responsible Parties: The BRAC Regional Task Force and the leaders of major law enforcement agencies in the region.