

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 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.

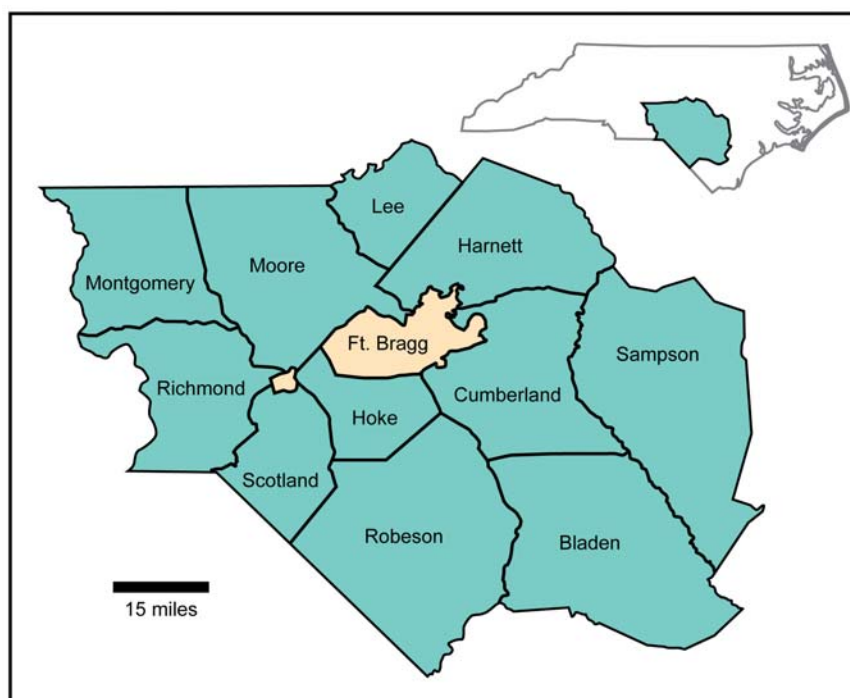


Figure 1. Map of the eleven-county Fort Bragg region

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, NC, 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 Comprehensive Regional Growth Plan.

This Plan 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.

The people who live and work in the region are best positioned to understand how the changes at Fort Bragg are likely to affect it. 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, over the past year, 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.

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. Sustainability is an approach to community development that integrates environmental stewardship, economic development, and social justice—enhancing the “triple bottom line,” if you will, of *environment, economy, and community*. 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 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, their solutions 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.

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—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.¹

Organization of the Plan

The Plan reports on how the changes at Fort Bragg will impact the following major aspects of the region's environment, economy, and community.

- Economic Impact
- Housing
- Education (K-12)
- Workforce and Higher Education
- Intra-regional Transportation (roadways and transit)
- Inter-regional Transportation (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 Plan consists of four major parts. First is the Summary for Policymakers, 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. Third, 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. Finally, appendices are provided as supporting documentation.

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