### INSTALLATION MISSION GROWTH

# Community Profile

November 2009

## Fort Stewart, Georgia

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#### Community at a Glance

**Growth Management Organization (GMO):** 

Fort Stewart Growth Management Partnership

#### Geographic area affected by military installation growth:

The Fort Stewart Growth Management Partnership is comprised of four counties: Bryan, Liberty, Long, and Tattnall.

#### Regional Population of affected area:

The projected population of the region in 2010 is 136,280 (State of Georgia population projections).

#### Top growth challenges:

- Transportation
- Provisions for health care, social services, and law enforcement
- Utility service capacity

#### Mission Growth at a Glance

Growth Action: Grow the Army (GTA)

#### Personnel Baseline and Growth Projection:

	Baseline	<b>Build-out Projection</b>
	(January 2005)	(2013)
Military Personnel	20,951	25,128
Dependents	31,427	37,692
Civilian Personnel	2,067	2,431
Contractors	3,248	3,060

Source: Fort Stewart Garrison Commander Executive Officer

**Growth Factors affecting community planning:** The Army's decision to reduce the number of Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) from 48 to 45 caused a decrease in the total number of troops to be stationed at Fort Stewart, contributing to the uncertain environment for community planning.

## **Background**

Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield are the home of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, and combine to be the Army's Premier Power Projection Platform on the Atlantic Coast. The combined 284,923 acres make it the largest base east of the Mississippi River. The four-county area (Figure 1), in cooperation with its 12 municipalities, the Fort Stewart Deputy Garrison Commander and a representative of the Georgia Military Affairs Commission, has formed the Fort Stewart Growth Management Partnership to foster economic growth and to promote the general welfare of the region. Through the Partnership, the region has a process to find collaborative solutions to issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries. The four-county region is expected to face impacts as a result of the projected growth of the military, the Army, and Fort Stewart.

The region has experienced consistent historical growth and projects a population of more than 136,000 people in 2010 (Figure 2). Increases in troop strength and training levels will generate additional development impacts in the surrounding communities, most of which are rural and facing financial struggles.

The size and affluence of the southeast Georgia region is unlike other defense



The counties/installation in regional setting

Figure 1: Fort Stewart

communities. While most installations are located in areas of modest populations and services, the Hinesville-Fort Stewart metropolitan statistical area ranks among the smallest areas in the country. Three of the four counties in the regional partnership rank in the lower half for per capita income statewide, with two of those ranking in the bottom quarter. Given the relatively small size and comparative lack of affluence of the region, this defense community is more sensitive to population fluctuations than larger regions.

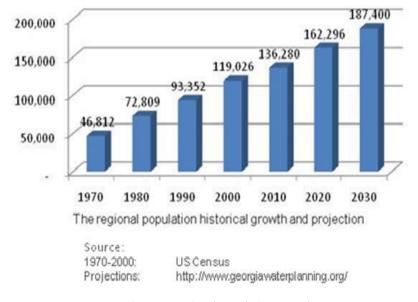


Figure 2: Regional Population Growth

## **Implementation and Partnering Strategies**

The December 2007 announcement of GTA efforts, which included the decision to locate a new brigade combat team (BCT) at Fort Stewart, prompted a local effort to support the anticipated arrival of 6,649 additional soldiers. In June 2009, the Army decided to reduce the number of new BCTs from 48 to 45, which substantially reduced the total number of new personnel to be stationed at Fort Stewart.

Even with loss of a combat team, the overall growth of the Army is expected to increase the installation's, and the region's, military and dependant population by at least 2,400 people. The initial planning for a Regional Growth Management Plan (RGMP) has begun. The intent of the RGMP is to assess the challenges and opportunities facing the communities impacted by Fort Stewart and GTA increases, and to find solutions that address the issues that have been identified. The study will also address the impacts of the rescinded decision and measure the public and private expenditures made in anticipation of the new brigade.

The organization of the Fort Stewart Growth Management Partnership is shown in Figure 3. The Fort Stewart Growth Management Partnership directs the activities and work products through management of the project staff. The staff of the Partnership consists of a project director and an assistant director. The Technical Task Force is comprised of the chief administrative official in each of the local governments. The Technical Task Force will review the work products and make recommendations to the Partnership. The Advisory Committee consists of the volunteers working in a subcommittee format to provide guidance and feedback for the consultant and staff. The Advisory Committee members are key stakeholders in the region including government staffs, school boards, developers and realtors, social services providers, representatives of environmental interests, planning and zoning directors, transportation planners, local commissioners, and interested citizens. The project consultants are overseen by the Director.

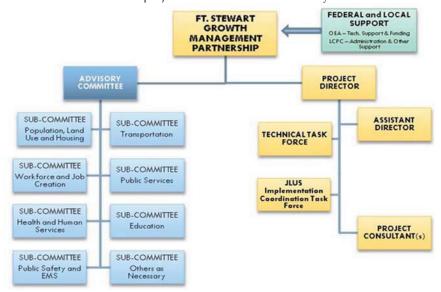


Figure 3: Organization - Fort Stewart Growth Management Partnership

In order to meet the requirements of the incoming personnel, the Partnership coordinates regular meetings with the Deputy Garrison Commander and is working to establish relationships with other Garrison support offices. The Partnership coordinates with the local planning office and the State Department of Transportation planning and program managers. The Office of Economic Adjustment approved a request for support in December 2008 and recently amended that request to reflect the current staffing level and revised scope of work.

A project needs assessment is under development. The available planning documents, completed for individual communities and local conditions, serve as the basis for identifying the challenges and as the baseline for the regional plan.

One challenge the region faces is transportation. Traffic congestion around the installation creates long queues on major roadways during peak commute time periods. Further growth will exacerbate this condition by placing increased stress on these major corridors and adjacent arterials as well as the installation ingress/egress points.

A second challenge is the provision of health care, social services, and law enforcement. Service providers are strained to meet the demands of the current population with already declining revenues (a national issue) and the local

economy. Independent studies have cited a shortage of medical and service providers in the area. Interviews with several law enforcement agencies have noted staffing levels are at or stretched beneath service standards. Implementing solutions to manage additional growth will require innovative solutions and assistance from regional, state and federal agencies to overcome.

Additional growth requires additional capacity in the utility systems to manage that growth. Many of the region's communities possess aging systems and undersized components that lack the ability to deliver increased service levels to meet projected demands and service standards without completing major improvements. While the utility system as a whole may have adequate capacity, the providers do not have adequate conveyance to deliver the service to and/or from the customer.

### Successes/Lessons Learned

The Partnership has completed the Request for Proposal process and selected a consultant for the Regional Growth Plan. Work on the economic impact element began in August 2009.

The first series of public meetings in the community are scheduled for the weeks of October 12 and October 19. In addition, the Partnership has organized more than 110 community volunteers engaged in sub-committees for each element of the plan and will begin the topic-specific work with those sub-committees in October 2009.

The regional plan effort is in the formative stages. The Partnership looks forward to completing the process and producing a useful tool for directing regional growth.