

INSTALLATION MISSION GROWTH

Community Profile

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Fort Lee, Virginia

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Community at a Glance

Growth Management Organization (GMO):

Crater Planning District Commission

Geographic area affected by military installation growth:

South central Virginia

Regional Population of affected area:

439,549 (estimated), 2008

Top growth challenges:

- Transportation
- Wastewater Infrastructure
- Education (Kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12))
- Transit
- Social Services Support

Outstanding requirements in support of mission growth:

Project Category	# of Projects	Sum of Project Cost	Sum of Funding Gap
Transportation	17	\$33 million	\$9 million

Mission Growth at a Glance

Growth Action: Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

Personnel Baseline and Growth Projection:

	Baseline (January 2005)	Build-out Projection 2011
Military Personnel	6,723	17,052
Dependents	10,711	22,811
Civilian Personnel	3,395	4,993
Contractors	1,201	1,884

Source: Fort Lee, 2009

Growth Factors affecting community planning: The downturn in the national and local economy adversely impacts state and local budgets and capacities to implement mission-growth related projects.

Background

The 2005 BRAC decisions will forever change the landscape of Fort Lee. The installation will double in size in terms of personnel and physical plant once BRAC actions are completed. It is estimated that Fort Lee will have an average daily supported population of over 46,000.

Once the 2005 BRAC initiatives are completed, Fort Lee will be the Army's central location for logistics training and doctrine. The new Sustainment Center of Excellence (SCOE) will consist of the Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM), the Quartermaster Center and School, the Ordnance Center and School, the Transportation Center and School and the Army Logistics University.

In addition, the Defense Commissary Agency will be consolidated to Fort Lee and the Defense Contract Management Agency Headquarters will move to Fort Lee.

Currently, more than \$1.5 billion in construction activity is taking place on Fort Lee to make way for personnel arrivals which began in the fall of 2009.

After all BRAC actions are implemented at Fort Lee, the projected annual economic impact upon the region will be approximately \$1.7 billion. In addition, approximately \$95 million in annual state/local tax revenues will be generated as a result of Fort Lee's increased activities.

The Tri-Cities/Fort Lee Area BRAC Advisory Committee was formed in January 2002 in response to the FY 2002 National Defense Authorization Act. This committee was composed of business and community leaders. Day-to-day coordination responsibilities were given to the Crater Planning District Commission (PDC). The committee's purpose was to support Fort Lee and develop a BRAC strategy focused on retaining and growing Fort Lee and the Defense Supply Center Richmond (DSCR). The Committee retained a consultant to assist in strategic planning/data development and worked with the Virginia Employment Commission on an economic impact study of Fort Lee and the Supply Center.

Once the BRAC recommendations were known and subsequently enacted into law, the BRAC Advisory Committee was expanded to include the chief administrative officers of the six counties and cities surrounding Fort Lee, as well as representation from the Office of the Garrison Commander. The Crater PDC has continued to be the lead administrative agency responsible for coordinating the local efforts and serving as the primary communication link with Fort Lee.

In January 2007, with support from the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), the Crater PDC contracted with a multi-disciplinary planning firm for the development of a regional growth management plan. The expanded BRAC Advisory Committee serves as the Steering Committee overseeing this two-phase effort. A public input session was held in March 2007, to solicit citizens' comments regarding the anticipated growth at Fort Lee. Additionally, four task forces were established that were focused on the major functional areas of the Phase I study, including: transportation, housing, K-12 education, and childcare/trailing spouse employment. The task forces enabled a broader involvement of key stakeholders in the study. The task forces and the represented organizations are:

1. Transportation Task Force: Local government transportation planning staff, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Petersburg Area Transit (PAT), Fort Lee.
2. Housing Task Force: Local government planning staff, Southside Virginia Association of Realtors, Home Builders Association of Southside Virginia, Columbia Gas of Virginia, Dominion Virginia Power, area chambers of commerce, Fort Lee Housing Office.
3. K-12 Education: Six local school superintendents, Juvenile Court Services, area chambers of commerce, Fort Lee School Liaison Office.
4. Child Care/Trailing Spouse Employment: John Tyler Community College, area chambers of commerce, Virginia Employment Commission, Fort Lee.

A final public session was held on December 3, 2007, to share the Phase I Fort Lee Growth Management Plan (GMP) findings and recommendations.

Phase II of the Fort Lee GMP commenced in the spring of 2008. Again, three task forces were established that are focused on the major functional areas of additional or expanded study; these areas include health care, child care and community/social services. The task forces have enabled a broader involvement of key stakeholders in the study. The Phase II effort is scheduled for completion by the end of the 2009 calendar year.

Implementation and Partnering Strategies

Transportation

Transportation was identified by Fort Lee as its number one concern – moving the significantly increased number of people on and off the post. A Fort Lee Expansion Traffic Study was undertaken in 2007, with VDOT and the Tri-Cities Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Tri-Cities MPO is comprised of several local governments, including the cities of Petersburg, Hopewell, Colonial Heights and the counties of Chesterfield, Dinwiddie and Prince George. Fort Lee has a seat on the MPO as well. The study identified 17 projects around Fort Lee to provide better access to the post. The projects were prioritized with agreement from Fort Lee, the MPO, and VDOT.

The total cost of the 17 priority projects is currently estimated to be over \$33 million. To date, over \$24 million in funding from various sources has been committed to move this major transportation initiative forward, resulting in an approximate funding gap of \$9 million.

Education (K-12)

The Fort Lee GMP Phase I provided an analysis of the impact of the expansion of Fort Lee on local school districts. The Fort Lee study area includes Chesterfield County, Dinwiddie County, Prince George County, the City of Colonial Heights, the City of Hopewell, and the City of Petersburg. With Fort Lee projected growth, over 2,500 new K-12 students will enter the region's school systems. Many of the schools in this region are projected to increase in enrollment with or without the expansion of Fort Lee. While the GMP primarily assesses impacts on the education system resulting from the Fort Lee expansion, a projection of the natural growth in school enrollment (excluding Fort Lee) was incorporated into the report to more accurately assess future capacity issues. Additionally, the GMP included:

- An inventory of all the elementary, middle, and high schools in the study area
- Current and future school enrollment trends
- School capacity and construction/expansion plans
- Projected changes in the special needs population
- Projected demand for new instructors

Six school superintendents and their planning staffs representing the school divisions that surround Fort Lee served on the Education Task Force. Therefore, the findings of the Fort Lee GMP regarding education impacts were based upon valuable school division input.

Due to the existing and future growth in the region, local jurisdictions have funded \$260 million in school construction projects to build new facilities and expand existing facilities. In addition, the City of Hopewell and the City of Petersburg are proposing significant future school facility expansions/renovations.

The level of interest by developers has significantly increased over the past four years. In order for the City of Petersburg, as well as the other communities within the region, to take full advantage of the increased developer interest, major improvements are required. As an example, the City of Petersburg has identified \$19 million in necessary wastewater infrastructure improvements that need immediate attention in order to support the BRAC growth that is coming to the City.

The region is still in a quandary as to determining the best strategy to address this significant challenge.

Social Services Support

Currently, the consultant is conducting a community services needs assessment as part of the Fort Lee GMP Phase II. An analysis is underway to determine the cost impacts of increased community service demands resulting from an expanded Fort Lee population. Increased demand for these services could place financial stress on local governments and non-profit service providers within the region over the next five to ten years. A focus of this analysis is the increased demand for community services covered by Virginia's Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) for at-risk children and families.

This program requires a local government cash match to access the state CSA funds. The agencies contributing to the funding pool include:

- Department of Social Services
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Department of Education
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Other agencies

Currently, several local jurisdictions in the region are challenged by the variable and rising costs associated with meeting the community service needs of these high-risk populations. Prince George County and the Cities of Hopewell and Petersburg are three communities with increasing demand for services and limited financial resources to pay for these services. Currently, only Prince George County has instituted internal methods for tracking the annual service demand and costs associated with the Fort Lee population. It is recommended that additional measures be taken to adequately monitor the community service needs of all at-risk households, as well as Fort Lee households, in other impacted communities.

The 2006 demographic voluntary survey of then current Fort Lee permanent party military and Department of Defense (DoD) civilians determined that 14 percent of the military permanent party families had exceptional family members and four percent of DoD civilian families had special needs family members.

The 2009 survey, currently underway at Fort Lee, will provide a more current look at this issue.

Due to the work of the Community/Social Services Task Force, Fort Lee has begun to hold quarterly meetings with the appropriate involved agencies. This increased military/community partnering can only lead to fostering positive relationships among public, non-profit organizations, and the military to provide meaningful support for military families and other residents in need.

Stakeholders need to encourage DoD and Fort Lee to partner with existing community organizations to reduce the duplication, if it exists, between community-based and on-post services. Examples of such partnering could include:

- Hosting a joint community/social service military day at Fort Lee to increase awareness of available community resources
- Scheduling training sessions with county mental health, social services and substance abuse providers to strengthen understanding of veteran eligibility and available

Successes/Lesson Learned

One of the most valuable partnering initiatives was a survey of every employee (military, civilian, and contractor) at Fort Lee. The survey was developed by the installation with input from the community. It was distributed by the installation in August 2006, and benefitted from a greater than 40 percent return rate. Employees were asked for the jurisdiction in which they live, the number of children, their ages, the name of the school that each school-age child attends, and whether or not they had any special needs family members residing with them. This survey was very helpful, as the school divisions, other than Prince George County, did not have information about the degree to which they are currently impacted by Fort Lee. The consultants used the data as a base to predict where new residents will settle. The survey established a credible foundation of important information, with which the region could have informed discussions about the impacts of Fort Lee's pending growth.

At the request of the communities, Fort Lee is completing an updated survey of its workforce. The updated information, which will be available this fall, will allow the region to “re-benchmark” earlier findings in regard to educational demand projections, household multipliers, regional allocation of BRAC households, etc.

Efforts have been underway to help more local contractors benefit from the increase in major construction projects at Fort Lee. The Crater Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) is undertaking a substantial effort to communicate with the business community in the Richmond and Crater regions about its services, as well as to “spread the word” about the contracts that will be awarded and the types of workers that will be needed. Classes, seminars, and one-on-one counseling are available, and PTAC staff is working directly with the Corps of Engineers and the prime contractors encouraging local participation.

To date, \$974 million of construction contracts have been awarded. The total construction budget for Fort Lee is more than \$1.5 billion.

The Richmond-Petersburg area has seen 45 to 55 percent of all subcontracting contracts awarded to local firms as a result of the PTAC’s efforts.

In addition to coordination with OEA through the development of the plan, the region has worked with the Virginia National Defense Industrial Authority, appointed by the Governor to oversee BRAC actions in Virginia and to support the BRAC-impacted localities. Commission staff has also participated in the activities under the Army Community Heritage Partnership, which has focused upon better connections and relationships between the City of Petersburg and Fort Lee utilizing the expertise and resources of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Crater Region, anchored by the multi-year expansion of Fort Lee and positioned to expand as the mid-Atlantic hub for logistics excellence, is poised for dramatic economic growth in the decade ahead.

The Crater Region proposes to establish, by 2011, a high-technology research and development center (Virginia Logistics Research Center) with modeling and simulation as a core technological capability that will be designed, staffed, and equipped to support Fort Lee, the DSCR, and other government, industry, and academic entities within the region for the purposes of research and development, economic growth, business development, workforce development, and technical services as needed by the region for the foreseeable future into the mid 21st century. This initiative is a direct result of Fort Lee becoming the SCOE for logistics.

Finally, this region and Fort Lee have a long history of working together and sharing information so the process of “gearing up” for Fort Lee’s growth has been easier because of the natural inclination to share information. The Civilian Military Council goes back more than 40 years and the BRAC Advisory Committee has worked together through three BRAC rounds. The Crater PTAC is an integral communication tool and is constantly communicating with the public, so that the business community feels “informed and included”.