

Stakeholder Interview Report: Housing, Economic Impact Education, Health and Social Services

Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan

June 5, 2007



Pikes Peak Area
Council of Governments
Communities Working Together

INTRODUCTION



In 2005, community leaders formed the Colorado Defense Mission Coalition (CDMC) in response to the announcement of troop increases at Fort Carson. The addition of approximately 11,400 soldiers and civilian personnel plus over 21,000 family members in the next four years will have a significant impact on the Pikes Peak region. To assist the CDMC, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) obtained a grant from the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) to develop the Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan (referred to as the Regional Growth Plan or the Plan). The purpose of the Plan is to assess the impacts of the expansion of Fort Carson on the region and to provide a coordinated action plan to address them.

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Make growth work for the region
- Develop an overarching approach to coordinate efforts
- Capitalize on regional diversity and choice
- Integrate local and regional problem-solving

PURPOSE OF THIS STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW REPORT

The Regional Growth Plan will evaluate the effects of growth for ten resource areas. This Stakeholder Interview Report focuses on the initial feedback received on four of the ten resource areas: housing, economic development, education, and health and social services, as described below:

Housing – Consultation with Fort Carson and area housing representatives to determine future off-base housing supply and demand and military housing needs.

Economic Impact – Feedback on economic opportunities and concerns to achieve increased investment benefiting Fort Carson and the three-county region.



Education – Overview of the preparation and capacity of local school districts to absorb an increase in students and initial strategies to meet the anticipated need.

Health and Social Services - Discussion of the availability of community, medical, behavioral health, and social services, specifically for the military and dependents, and creation of strategies for improved delivery of those services.

By interviewing the stakeholders, we are better able to identify on-the-ground issues, build a cohesive network of supporting relationships, and pool ideas and solutions. This Stakeholder Interview Report:

- Provides information about the stakeholder meetings conducted from February through March 2007.
- Summarizes all general comments provided by stakeholders relating to the four resource areas of housing, economic development, education, and health and social services.
- Reviews potential tools and solutions suggested by stakeholders.

The project team will continue to listen to stakeholders throughout the Regional Growth Plan effort through ongoing interviews and other outreach events. Future addenda to this report may be issued, both to supplement the four resource areas summarized below, as well as to present issues identified for the remaining resource areas.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS

Stakeholders are those companies, agencies, organizations, institutions, and individuals who represent the greater Pikes Peak region and who will be greatly influenced by troop increases at Fort Carson.

The stakeholder involvement process for the Regional Growth Plan began with the publication of the February newsletter that was distributed by project staff. The newsletter requested that anyone interested in one-on-one interviews should contact PPACG. A list of stakeholders was also requested from members of the CDMC and PPACG at several meetings. As a result, over 90 stakeholders were contacted to solicit one-on-one, focus group, phone, or email feedback.

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In-person stakeholder interviews were held on February 20 - 22 and the week of March 12, 2007 by PPACG staff and the consultant team of EDAW, RKG Associates, and Navigant Consulting. Additional phone and email interviews were held during February and March 2007. Interviewees from the Colorado Springs and Pueblo area included:

- PPACG staff
- Fort Carson
- Local school districts
- Colleges and universities, such as University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and Pikes Peak Community College
- Hospitals and medical providers, such as Evans Army Community Hospital and Memorial Hospital
- Local chambers of commerce
- County and municipal staff from the City of Fountain, City of Colorado Springs, City of Pueblo, El Paso County, and Pueblo County
- Developers and homebuilders, such as Oakwood Homes, KB Homes, Pulte Homes, Beazer Homes, and New Generation Homes
- Real estate agents and banks, such as Pikes Peak Association of Realtors, First Property Management, and CBT Mortgage
- Colorado Housing and Finance Authority
- Housing Authority of the City of Colorado Springs
- Non-profit groups, such as TESSA, CASA, and Pikes Peak United Way

Perceptions, concerns, and ideas from stakeholders are summarized in the following section. Although many of these comments have not been confirmed by hard data, they represent genuine concerns of community leaders. Their comments will be substantiated by further research and data collection. PPACG and EDAW will refer to the comments as they prepare comprehensive resource assessments and develop strategies.





HOUSING AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

RKG Associates, Inc. has conducted approximately 30 interviews related to housing and economic development in the Pikes Peak region.

- Who has been interviewed to-date?
 - Kim Headley, Director, Department of Planning and Development, Pueblo County
 - Mike Trujillo, Manager, Housing and Community Services, Pueblo County
 - Ted Ortiz, Director, Housing and Human Services, Pueblo County
 - Ada Rivera Clark, Director, Housing and Citizen Services, City of Pueblo
 - Jayne Mazur, Executive Director, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Pueblo
 - Jim Munch, Assistant City Manager for Community Development, City of Pueblo
 - Jerry Pacheco, Director, Land Use Administration, City of Pueblo
 - Don Vest, Senior Socioeconomic Planner, City of Pueblo
 - Lisa Cochrun, Director, Economic Development, City of Fountain
 - Sheila Booth, Planner, City of Fountain
 - Dave Smedsrud, Acting City Manager/Planning Director, City of Fountain
 - Gene Mills, President, CBT Mortgage
 - Curtis Martinell, Assistant Building Official, Pikes Peak Regional Building Department
 - Brendan Miller, Marketing Manager, Pulte Homes
 - Terry Storm, CEO Pikes Peak Association of Realtors
 - Robin Waller, Director of Services, Pikes Peak Association of Realtors
 - Venise Fuqua, Sales Director, Oakwood Homes
 - Brenda Trimble, Builder Representative, New Generation Homes/Widefield Realty
 - Carl Schueler, Long Range Planning Manager, Development Services Department, El Paso County
 - Bill Healy, Director of Planning and Community Development, City of Colorado Springs



- Denny Cripps, Retired Assistant County Administrator, El Paso County
- Dean Quaranta, Program Analyst, Directorate of Public Works, Fort Carson
- Doug Lobdell, Project Director, GMH Military Housing
- Fred Crowley, Ph.D., Crowley's Consulting, Inc.
- Roy Alexander, CEO, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority
- Cris White, COO, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority
- Tony Koren, Founding Partner, Northstone Group
- Tom Warren, Director, DECAM Fort Carson
- Brian Binn, President, Military Affairs, Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce
- Peggy Herbertson, Director, Pikes Peak Workforce Center
- Mike Kazmierski, President, Colorado Springs Economic Development Corporation

Issue #1: Requests for Demographic Data

All parties consistently requested information related to the number of relocating troops and the timing of their arrival. In several cases, stakeholders felt uninformed about the timing and magnitude of the pending impact, and did not know whom to contact for information.

Lack of access to, and inconsistency over, troop projections were the most frequent stakeholder comment.

Most stakeholders understood the complexity of projecting troop relocations. However, the lack of consistent short term or long term projections seemed troubling. This has led many businesses to make conservative reassessments of their short term business plans. For example, due to the slow down in the local housing market, many homebuilders are planning on selling their current housing stock, and no longer building spec homes.

There is a general level of confusion related to troop deployment and redeployment, versus relocation. As the US Army is currently engaged in combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, troops and families are moving on a monthly basis because of overseas deployment. This may be confused with the arrival and departure of troops related to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy (IGPBS), and Army Modular Force (AMF) directives.



Issues #2: General Health of the Building Community

Interviews with the building community suggest that builders are cautiously optimistic about the expansion of Fort Carson. No shortfalls in subcontractor labor or building materials have been cited. The recent building boom for the Colorado Springs area has generally slowed. While spec homes are fewer and inventories are shrinking, the ability to build future homes is strong.

Issue #3: Direction of Growth

Land availability does not appear to be an issue, and the majority of near-term development appears to be planned for Fountain and unincorporated El Paso County.

Fountain: Fountain has a range of building activity including recently completed homes, lots ready for construction, parcels platted, plans under review, and annexations in progress. Several significant annexations have occurred in Fountain, including Kane Ranch, which may eventually yield over 7,000 lots. Preliminary information regarding the pricing of single family and townhomes in Fountain suggests that the target market will be Fort Carson personnel.

Unincorporated El Paso County: Similar to Fountain, a range of building activity is currently underway in unincorporated El Paso County. Several large projects such as Lorson Ranch may include several thousand lots and could be built during the Fort Carson expansion. Other projects, such as Rolling Hills Ranch, Colorado Centre, and Glen at Widefield may also include over two thousand lots each, but are expected to be completed over the next two decades.

Colorado Springs: As new master planned developments are not likely to occur until later (e.g., Banning Lewis Ranch), most housing demand will be met by current homes, infill development, and smaller subdivisions.

Pueblo County/Pueblo West and the City of Pueblo: Several developments are occurring in Pueblo County, and one major annexation may be considered over the next few months.





Issue #4: On-Post Housing Supply

Fort Carson has authorized the construction of 1,000 new on-post housing units, with approximately 400 units to be built over the next few years. They will include primarily 3- and 4-bedroom homes. These 400 homes will add to the existing supply of 2,664 on-post units, and are expected to be occupied as there is a current waiting list for on-post housing regardless of the planned troop expansion. Unless additional on-post housing is identified, the majority of military personnel and families will likely live off-post as additional personnel are relocated to Fort Carson.

Issue #5: High Multi-Family Vacancy Rates

Area multi-family rentals are experiencing higher than average vacancy rates. However, these rates will likely decline as new troops are located to Fort Carson. Rents appear to be reasonable for military personnel, and a large number of incentives are currently being offered to military personnel. During our interviews we heard of no new multi-family building projects; however, this area is still being researched.

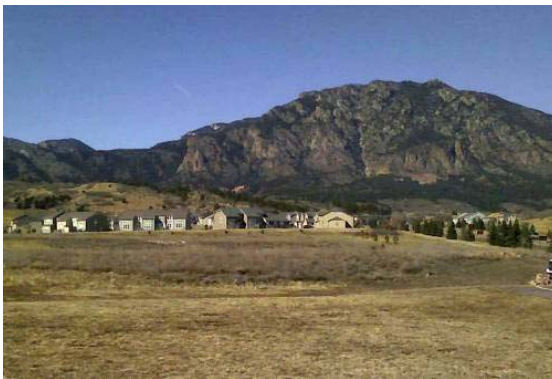
Issue #6: Housing Affordability

Stakeholders interviewed indicated that apartment rents and home prices are affordable to military families because of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), salary, and spousal income. Because of the BAH and military salary, few military personnel living off-post are considered to earn below the median wage. Thus, subsidized projects that are oriented to below-median-wage earners will likely continue, but will not be driven by base expansion. However, these projects may play a role in providing affordable housing for civilians/contractors working on post.

Potential Tools and Solutions

Easy, open communication was identified as a critical need that would allow for timely and accurate demographic data and troop projections. Stakeholders agreed that communication relating to troop movement has been unclear. Most stakeholders requested a central point of contact - either directly or through PPACG - that could provide consistent, timely communication to regional stakeholders. Audiences seeking demographic data include developers,

Open communication regarding troop projections, either from Fort Carson or PPACG, will be a key factor in regional preparedness.



homebuilders, local Chambers of Commerce, School Districts, universities, and local jurisdictions. Good information will allow the housing community to respond to the forecast housing demand. Consistent communication on a monthly basis may be required.

Housing demand and economic impact assessments prepared by PPACG and the consultant team will include data for sales turnover, sales prices, rents, building permits, on-post housing, housing affordability, and vacancy rates.

EDUCATION

EDAW and RKG Associates, Inc. have interviewed 15 local School Districts and university officials.

- Who has been interviewed to-date?
 - Henry Reitwiesner; Planning Director, D49 Falcon District
 - Mark Hatchell; Superintendent, D3 Widefield District
 - Don Schiverdecker; Executive Director of Support Services; D3 Widefield District
 - Dave Roudebush; Facilities, D8 Fountain-Fort Carson School District
 - Cheryl Walker; CFO, D8 Fountain-Fort Carson School District, on CDMC
 - Glenn Gustafson; CFO, D11 Colorado Springs School District, on CDMC
 - Greg Finn; Director of Communication, D60 Pueblo City District
 - Walt Cooper; Superintendent, D12 Cheyenne Mountain District
 - Tom Gregory; Capital Facility Planner, D20 Academy District
 - Daniel Lere; Superintendent, D70 Pueblo County Rural District
 - James Malm; Military Affairs Liaison, CSU Pueblo
 - Martin Wood; Chief Operating Officer, UCCS
 - Dana Rocha; Military Affairs and Campus-Wide Extended Studies, UCCS



- Wes Clark; Vice President for Operations, SAIC, Military Liaison, Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce

Issue #1: Distribution of New Students

17 school districts serve the Pikes Peak region and capacity varies widely among them, with central city and “first-ring” developed areas showing capacity and “third-ring”, newly developing areas quickly outpacing supply. The phenomenon is most pronounced at the developing fringe where once-rural districts experience the greatest increases. Stakeholders acknowledged that while military-dependent students are found in all 17 districts, most are concentrated in the nine districts closest to Fort Carson.

Passage of an open enrollment law in 1994 created the opportunity for any student to apply for entry in any school outside their resident school, subject to available space and teaching staff. This creates an environment of competition for students among schools and is a factor when parents make choices about where to relocate or where to “choice in” to a school.

In addition to proximity and academic performance, the ability of districts to attract new students may be influenced by how well a district markets themselves as “military-friendly” by providing programs such as all-day kindergarten, early education, pre- and after-school activities, and special need programs such as speech, occupational therapy, and other family support systems.

School districts determine how many military-dependent students attend their district through an annual “count day”. Districts with at least 400 students or at least 3 percent of all children in the district are eligible for the Federal Impact Aid Program, which provides funding for a portion of the educational costs of military-connected students.

However, some stakeholders shared concern that many districts do not collect detailed information about the branch of service or post to which their guardian(s) is assigned. Stakeholders noted that districts could collect more detailed information during the “count day” to aid the region in understanding how many students in each district specifically result from families stationed at Fort Carson.



Stakeholders suggested that detailed “count day” information could also be important as initial attempts to project the distribution of additional military students were based on the assumption of where military-dependent students attended – regardless of branch of service or post. The initial projections also assumed that new military-dependent students would locate where existing military-dependent students currently live. As older areas are built-out, all interviewees recognized that most growth would occur on the developing fringe closest to the post, in districts such as D2 Harrison, D3 Widefield, and D8 Fountain-Fort Carson.

Should this occur, it would likely result in a misalignment between supply and demand: school districts with the greatest capacity (e.g., D11 Colorado Springs) may not receive as many students, and already overstretched districts may receive the highest proportion. Regardless of their proximity to Fort Carson, all districts were very interested to learn exactly how many students they might be expected to absorb.

Issue #2: District Capacity

Out of 17 school districts in the Pikes Peak region that potentially serve Fort Carson families (including two Pueblo districts), nine districts will likely experience increased enrollment based on a total of approximately 6,000 new students. Most districts have capacity for additional students.

Fountain-Fort Carson School District (SD) 8: Fountain-Fort Carson is the only district that has schools on-post. In preparation for troop movements, the district recently completed a new elementary school on-post and extensive expansions to the on-post middle school. Fountain-Fort Carson indicated that they can supply sufficient capacity for the troop expansion and construction of 400 new housing units on-post anticipated through FY 2011. Beyond the troop expansion, however, there may not be sufficient long term capacity due to regional in-migration, natural population increase and additional on-post family housing. Given the high regional growth occurring in Fountain-Fort Carson, an increase in on-post housing could affect the districts more acutely.

Widefield SD 3: Located in southeastern Colorado Springs adjacent to Fort Carson, Widefield SD 3 is experiencing high levels of general population growth



Districts have been planning for capacity – the real question is timing. “When will the troops arrive?” was a common sentiment echoed by District officials.

due to land availability and housing affordability. SD 3 appears to have sufficient current capacity to serve Fort Carson’s current expansion.

Harrison SD 2: Like Widefield SD 3, Harrison SD 2 abuts Fort Carson and is experiencing high rates of growth. SD 2 appears to have sufficient current capacity to serve Fort Carson expansion.

Colorado Springs SD11: The oldest and largest of the region’s school districts, D11 has been affected by an aging population and fewer new housing starts. As a result, it has the largest capacity for additional students. A new elementary school will be opening in the southeastern portion of the District to increase capacity near Fort Carson.

Manitou SD 14: Considered a “quality of life” town, Manitou Springs is built-out and has had little natural enrollment increases, but has become increasingly desirable as a school-of-choice district.

Falcon SD 49: With student enrollment increases over 10 percent annually, Falcon SD 49 is the fastest growing district and consequently has the most serious capacity issues. Fortunately, it is one of the districts most removed from Fort Carson.

Cheyenne Mountain SD 12: Like Manitou SD 14, Cheyenne Mountain SD 12 is relatively built-out but was second only to Falcon SD 49 in the percent of enrollment growth in 2006 due to school-of-choice migrants.

Pueblo Rural SD 70: While removed from Fort Carson to the south, SD 70 has limited capacity to accommodate additional students.

Academy SD 20: Growing above average, Academy SD 20 appears to have capacity for additional students. 20 percent of its students come from military families; however, only 2% of its total enrollment comes from Fort Carson families, probably due to distance.

Issue #3: Wait-and-See Philosophy

With an average annual growth rate in the Pikes Peak region of nearly 2 percent over the last ten years, districts are accustomed to and supportive of growth. As Mark Hatchell, superintendent of Widefield D3, said, “We’re ready. We’re waiting.” Their preparation has been



evident since districts learned about BRAC-recommended increases at Fort Carson in 2005. For example, Colorado Springs D11 hired a consultant to evaluate its enrollment and marketing procedures for military families, and Fountain/Fort Carson SD 8 immediately began planning for a new elementary school.

The questions we heard being asked by the stakeholders were: districts and universities have been planning for adequate capacity, yet the real question is timing; when will military students arrive? What are the ages of these students? And how many will each specific facility absorb? What post-secondary training do troops or their spouses' desire? The timing issue affects adequate preparation in staffing, adequacy of services for what might be labeled a special needs population (particularly due to deployment), and creating a smooth transition depending on date in the school year of arrival. Timing is most acute in capital construction efforts, as a lengthy time frame for planning and voter approved bond measures and construction can take up to 7-10 years before occupancy.

Given the delay in troop movements, several interviewees expressed a conservative approach to any further preparations. Fountain/ Fort Carson SD 8 overstaffed in FY 06-07 in anticipation of troop movements that did not occur. Their inclination to wait until actual student enrollment numbers are gathered in early August FY 07 means hiring from a more limited pool of teachers to fill new positions.

Issue #4: Funding Quality Programs

Local school districts recognize themselves as the primary source of stability and continuity for military families, and feel obligated to offer high quality programs. All interviewees shared the philosophy of treating military students as permanent students rather than as short-term retention investments. However, all interviewees expressed concerns about equity in funding and tax limitation that limits the high quality programs they wish to provide.

Because of laws enacted by Colorado in past years, limits have been placed on the annual increase of revenue and spending of school districts, as well as state and other local governments. In other words, property taxes can only increase from the prior year by the



percent increase in the Denver-Boulder consumer price index plus the percent increase (or decrease) in the district's student population. So even though property values may be experiencing substantial growth, the mill levy rate will be reduced from the prior year so property taxes collected do not exceed the growth restrictions. Stakeholders suggested that low taxes and/or the 20 percent assessed value tax caps are barriers that could result in lower services. They shared concern that overall growth anticipated in the region will eventually outpace the ability to fund schools.

Issue #5: Labor Resources

Similar to national trends, all school districts have expressed a need for sufficient science, math, and special education (occupational therapy, speech pathology, etc.) teachers. Language teachers are also in demand in some districts.

Issues #6: Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion is a concern for several schools, and may act as a constraint on the ability of schools to accommodate open-enrollment students from outside the area due to increased travel times. Other transportation-related issues include the capacity of surrounding streets, access and egress from congested streets such as State Highway 16, safety, and on-site traffic circulation. Some suggested that infrastructure and transportation issues, not just education, required attention.

Potential Tools and Solutions

While there is a pronounced commitment to supporting military-dependent students and an attitude of acceptance towards changes resulting from regional growth in the districts, there is a general feeling of uncertainty and a need for timely, clear communication to plan for necessary funding, resources, and adequate space. Some of the solutions offered from interviewees include a focus on timely and consistent distribution of information to school districts to aid in preparation for the influx. A hub for communication, such as monthly newsletters or a website similar or in addition to the current PPACG website would provide centralized, easy to access information for the districts.



Keeping partnerships active, such as the successful effort to pass second count day legislation, was a priority. House Bill 1232 adds a second student-count day in Fort Carson-area schools so that local school districts can apply for additional per-pupil funding. Other stakeholders suggested that multiple contingencies and relocation scenarios and timelines should be planned for each District. EDAW and RKG Associates will correlate student enrollment projections to housing supply and demand analysis to understand projected military distribution.

Solutions to the problems associated with timing would include opening avenues of communication between school districts and the new families assigned to Fort Carson. For example, the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce arranged a trip for school district representatives to go to Fort Hood and meet with families. There is an understanding that there are many more families coming from disparate and currently unidentified parts of the country. Access to those families would be helpful.

Regional and federal funding (such as DoD grants), local fees, and other creative financial solutions, such as partnerships, should be reviewed to determine whether they may assist school districts in alleviating some of their financial constraints.

Districts with additional capacity are interested in increasing their enrollment through open enrollment. In order to focus on high quality schools that will attract a larger range of students, innovative ideas such as laptops for all students and post secondary credits should be considered.

Best practices (e.g. military-family welcoming websites) and proposed programs (e.g. satellite registration offices) evaluated by D11 may be applicable to other districts. Ideas include a regional map of School Districts color coded by school distribution, an interactive map on website for families to find information about all schools, amenities in the Pikes Peak region, a single point-of-reference website for new arrivals, informational/recruitment materials to market schools to new military families that may not live within District boundaries, and a "School Transition Workbook."



HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Throughout February and March, Navigant Consulting, Inc. conducted approximately a dozen interviews with key stakeholders in the Pikes Peak area to obtain information on the current health care resources and the potential impact that increased troop levels and dependents will have upon service capacities.

- Who has been interviewed to-date?
 - Rich Strycker; Executive Director, Greccio Housing Opportunity Center
 - Will Temby; President, Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce
 - Wes Clark; Vice President for Operations, SAIC; Military Liaison, Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce
 - Leo Chaney; Vice President, Military Affairs, Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce
 - Ted Ortiz; Housing and Human Services, Pueblo County
 - Steven J. McCoy; Deputy Garrison Commander, Fort Carson
 - COL John M. Cho; Commander, Evans Army Community Hospital, Fort Carson
 - COL James D. Terrio; Deputy Commander for Clinical Services, Evans Army Community Hospital
 - Linda J. Boedeker; Executive Director, Southern Colorado AIDS Project
 - Barbara Drake; Director, El Paso County Department of Human Services
 - Mike Decker; Director, Pikes Peak Area Agency on Aging
 - Howard Brooks; Vice President of Community Impact, Pikes Peak United Way
 - Rick O'Connell; President and CEO, Penrose Hospital
 - John Suits; Associate Administrator of Business and Government Affairs, Memorial Health System
 - C.W. Smith; CEO and President, Parkview Medical Center
 - Trudy Strewler; Executive Director, CASA for Children of the Pikes Peak Region
 - Patricia Randle; Acting Director of Army Community Services, Fort Carson



Competition for employees and patients may affect cooperation among providers.

A common concern was recruiting enough qualified nurses to meet community and military needs.

Issue #1: Labor Resources

There is a growing awareness around the Pikes Peak region that the availability of community, medical, and social services may need to increase, specifically for the military and dependents. Qualified providers are the limiting factor in expanding services.

The national nursing shortage affects both military facilities and community hospitals. As Col. Terrio, at Evans Army Community Hospital, described, “We currently have excess numbers of physicians on staff; however, it is difficult to recruit enough qualified nurses to meet our needs.” The result is competition among providers for competent nurses, particularly in the more skilled areas, and the potential for that competition to affect cooperation on other issues.

It currently appears that the Growth Plan study area (El Paso, Pueblo, and Fremont counties) has more than enough physician capacity to meet current and expected future demand. While there are positive reports that many community physicians are making themselves available to military members, other stakeholders suggested that a limited number of primary care physicians accept TRICARE or Medicare patients. Navigant will assess to what extent this influences access to care.

Colonel Terrio highlighted a recent recruitment drive that landed 33 new providers to the area. Navigant’s initial review of total physician supply in the region shows that there are an adequate aggregate number of doctors; however, the distribution of doctors by location and specialty hampers the ability to provide needed access to care to all citizens in the region. Local administrators affirmed that primary care physicians, especially in general medicine and family practice, are difficult to find. A local community leader stated that long waiting times for primary care appointments are often the norm rather than the exception.

As the gatekeeper for many insurance plans, the primary care physician is often the referral source to specialty services. A bottleneck in primary care services can impact how expeditiously a patient can access both primary and specialty services.



Issue #2: Service Capacity

Fort Carson is served directly by Evans Army Community Hospital on-post and indirectly by several community hospitals and specialty clinics throughout the region. While it appears that the region may have an excess in bed capacity, some stakeholders suggested that specific hospitals may be inadequate given projected growth.

Evans Army Community Hospital, in particular, currently has 78 inpatient beds. In 2005, the average inpatient census hovered near 30 percent, with an elevated census count during winter months. This census level shows there are growth opportunities for inpatient services.

Evans also reported other positive findings, including significant growth in the volume of outpatient services, with a 49 percent increase in encounters from 2005 to 2006. In 2006, Evans provided 2,362 outpatient services per day, or more than 592,500 throughout the year. In addition, its operating room volume increased 20 percent, deliveries grew by 10 percent, and pharmacy prescriptions escalated by over 20 percent to more than 2,300 filled prescriptions per day.

As Evans has experienced strong growth, its leadership has procured funding to enhance its capabilities to meet future needs. Currently, Evans has ongoing projects to increase the number of labor, delivery, and recovery rooms by December 2007, build an addition to the MRI facility to house a permanent magnet, renovate the Larson Dental Clinic by December 2007, replace a vet clinic, upgrade the Emergency Department, and improve its inpatient bed configuration to allow for better patient flows.

Issue #3: Communication

Colonel Cho, the Commander at Evans Army Community Hospital, organized a recent healthcare symposium of regional leaders to discuss key issues and trends in the Pikes Peak area. Colonel Cho, as well as Colonel Terrio, wished to ensure that the Army base was seen as a concerned member of the wider community of health care providers, and that they would continue their outreach efforts.



Issue #4: Behavioral Health

The adequacy of behavioral health services for troops and their dependents as well as retirees has become a major concern locally and nationally. Barbara Drake, the Director of Human Services in El Paso County, suggested a correlation between an increase in troop levels and an increase in domestic, spousal, and animal abuse.

Currently, Fort Carson has a soldier readiness center that has provided 34,000 screenings of soldiers in preparation for their departure or return from deployment. This center works actively with military families to provide a safe environment for military families to talk with professionals about familial issues, managing stress levels, identifying risk factors for disease, and other related matters of concern.

Recent published reports show that the leading barrier to behavioral care is that military personnel are worried about being seen as weak for having sought out behavioral health services. Navigant will continue to explore how behavioral health services can be improved.

Issue #5: Child Care

Nationally, child care has almost become a requirement for military personnel and their spouses as spouses have increasingly gained employment outside the home. At Fort Carson, child care facilities are in high demand both on- and off-post; however, on-post facilities are seen as more convenient while providing the same level of care or greater. Additional child care facilities are planned on-post, although these will not meet demand. There is promise in a new public-private partnership for off-post care; the success of this pilot program will be monitored and duplicated if successful.

Issue #6: Payment

The payment levels for medical services provided by non-military organizations to enrollees in the various TRICARE plans are a concern to community providers. The extent to which this influences access to care will be examined by Navigant.



Potential Tools and Solutions

Stakeholders suggested a number of questions for PPACG and the consultant team to analyze through the Regional Growth Plan. These included questions regarding:

- The supply of TRICARE and Medicare primary care providers, and whether there are sufficient providers to meet the need associated with the planned troop expansion;
- The regional health care capacity, including the supply of in-patient beds;
- Health care utilization rates (i.e., the number of admissions by service line per 1,000 people); and
- Access issues, such as the uninsured rate and waiting lists for behavioral services.

Navigant Consulting, Inc. will utilize the following tools in preparing for the troop expansion and future population growth. These tools will enable community leaders and planners to make informed decisions in regard to health care resources in the region.

- Utilization rates as a basis for calculating future patient volumes;
- Gap analysis in the supply of physicians that will show the number of doctors needed by specialty;
- Physician density and distribution levels throughout the study area; and,
- Best practices in providing behavioral healthcare for local providers, as well as identifying key trends and issues in improving behavioral services to military personnel and their families.
- In addition, behavioral health issues are a growing concern for military planners and non-military personnel. Navigant will provide guidelines for educating local providers about military culture and will work with military leadership to educate soldiers about behavioral health.
- Annual (or more frequent) symposiums of regional military and community medical leaders can continue to strengthen outreach and cooperative efforts between military and community providers.



SUMMARY

This report summarized the concerns and ideas of stakeholders interviewed in February and March 2007 for the housing and economic impact, education and health and social services/resources areas. Key issues for each resource area were as follows:

Housing and Economic Impact:

- Requests for Demographic Data
- General Health of the Building Community
- Direction of Growth
- On-Post Housing Supply
- High Multi-Family Vacancy Rates
- Housing Affordability

Education:

- Distribution of New Students
- District Capacity
- Wait-and-See Philosophy
- Funding Quality Programs
- Labor Resources
- Traffic Congestion

Health and Social Services

- Labor Resources
- Service Capacity
- Communication
- Behavioral Health
- Child Care
- Payment

The Growth Plan will be guided by this initial feedback, and the project team will continue to evaluate comments.

