

# Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan Overview

The Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan (Growth Plan) is a comprehensive regional planning effort designed to help the Pikes Peak region prepare for rapid military growth and deployments at Fort Carson. The Growth Plan addresses the impacts that this growth will have on surrounding communities and seeks to anticipate the effects, manage resources, and coordinate regional services efficiently and effectively. PPACG initiated the Growth Plan in the fall of 2006 and is currently in the implementation phase, while continuing to monitor changing trends and conditions and update analyses related to ongoing growth and deployments. This report highlights key implementation tasks and provides an update of the Growth Plan recommendations.

This phase of the Growth Plan includes the following tasks:

- Fort Carson Demographic Model updates, including projections of Soldiers and families through FY 2015;
- Economic impact analyses, including direct and indirect economic impacts from Fort Carson spending, as well as estimated sales tax impacts and jobs supported by Fort Carson growth;
- Housing information updates, including trends related to financing for single family homes and construction of multi-family housing;
- K–12 education and child development analyses and support, including ongoing trends related to educational needs of Fort Carson children and child care mapping and planning efforts, as well as additional Touchpoints trainings to assist child care providers and home visitors regarding behavioral health needs of Fort Carson families;
- Medical, behavioral health, and social services implementation, including the development of the Network of Care website and a strategic plan to establish the Peak Military Care Network;
- Regional sustainability efforts, including development of the Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Plan; and
- Transportation analyses, including an improvements study to facilitate off-post access to Fort Carson's Gate 19.

## ***Regional Communication and Coordination***

In addition to completion of the above-noted tasks, PPACG works with Fort Carson and off-post entities to maintain and enhance regional communication and information-sharing between Fort Carson and the surrounding communities, as well as between local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that serve the military community. The data gathering, analysis, and information sharing conducted by PPACG assist Fort Carson and community-based providers in meeting the capacity and service needs of Fort Carson Soldiers and families.

## **Information Sharing**

The main avenues for this communication and coordination including the following:

- Coordination of Colorado Defense Mission Coalition (CDMC) and partnership group meetings. A list of these groups, participants, and meeting dates is available in Appendix A.
- PPACG staff participation in other related meetings;
- PPACG's website (<http://bit.ly/xx59Rt>).
- E-newsletters (see Appendix B for the most recent Growth Plan newsletter); and
- Community Provider Trainings. These trainings share information regarding key topics; the most recent trainings have focused on enhancing Fort Carson's and the community's understanding and use of the Network of Care website (discussed in the Medical, Behavioral Health, and Social Services section).

## **Data Analysis and GIS Mapping**

Growth Plan implementation efforts include ongoing data-gathering and analysis, as well as mapping of key data to help keep Fort Carson and the public better informed about ongoing trends and impacts, and to assist in local planning efforts as conditions change. With the assistance of partnership groups and other stakeholders, PPACG continues to collect regional data, including economic information; housing data; Soldier and family demographics from survey data, non-personally-identifiable Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) data and other sources; child care data; and other information to develop maps and other reports to assist local governments and service providers in adjusting to changing conditions and planning for additional Fort Carson Soldiers and families. The results of these analyses and map products are available on PPACG's website; samples are included in Appendix C.

## **Ongoing Actions and Implementation**

The status of Fort Carson growth continues to remain fluid as large units deploy to war zones and a combat aviation brigade is added to the installation. PPACG will continue to work with Fort Carson and the community to monitor conditions and trends and update analyses related to Fort Carson growth and deployments. Where appropriate, PPACG also continues to transition coordination of key issue areas to other entities in the region to ensure continuity and ongoing regional communication and coordination.

PPACG monitors all Growth Plan recommendations and works with Fort Carson and local entities to implement the recommendations, where appropriate. A complete list of Growth Plan recommendations and their implementation status is included as Appendix D.

## Demographic Modeling and Economic Impacts

PPACG continues to conduct primary and secondary research to inform the Growth Plan analysis and update the Fort Carson Demographic Model (FCDM) in order to provide the region with timely, detailed data regarding Fort Carson troop and family member projections. Key data sources include Army Stationing and Installation Plan (ASIP) and G-1 (“boots on the ground”) data from Fort Carson, Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) data sets, 2010 Census, and American Community Survey data and survey information<sup>1</sup>.

PPACG utilizes these data in order to obtain a more complete picture of Soldier and family demographics and preferences specific to Fort Carson. A more comprehensive picture of Soldiers and families enables PPACG and the region to better anticipate and prepare for continuing changes in demands for off-post services related to Fort Carson growth.

### ***Fort Carson Demographic Model and Economic Model Update***

In September 2011, PPACG retained BBC Research & Consulting to update the Fort Carson Demographic Model (FCDM) and the Fort Carson economic impact analysis originally developed for the Growth Plan in 2009. BBC had developed the original models and analyses for PPACG. This section includes an overview of the FCDM and economic impact updates. The full report is included as Appendix E.

In 2009, the FCDM was developed to support demographic and economic projections and regional planning related to Fort Carson growth. At the time the model was developed, available data specific to Fort Carson Soldiers and families were limited; therefore, demographic factors, distribution of Soldiers by rank, family member information, and other factors were estimated based on the data sources noted above. For a detailed description of the data sources, analyses, and assumptions used in the development of the FCDM, see Section I of the Phase II Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan, Fort Carson Demographic Model, available on PPACG’s website: <http://bit.ly/xs62zZ>.

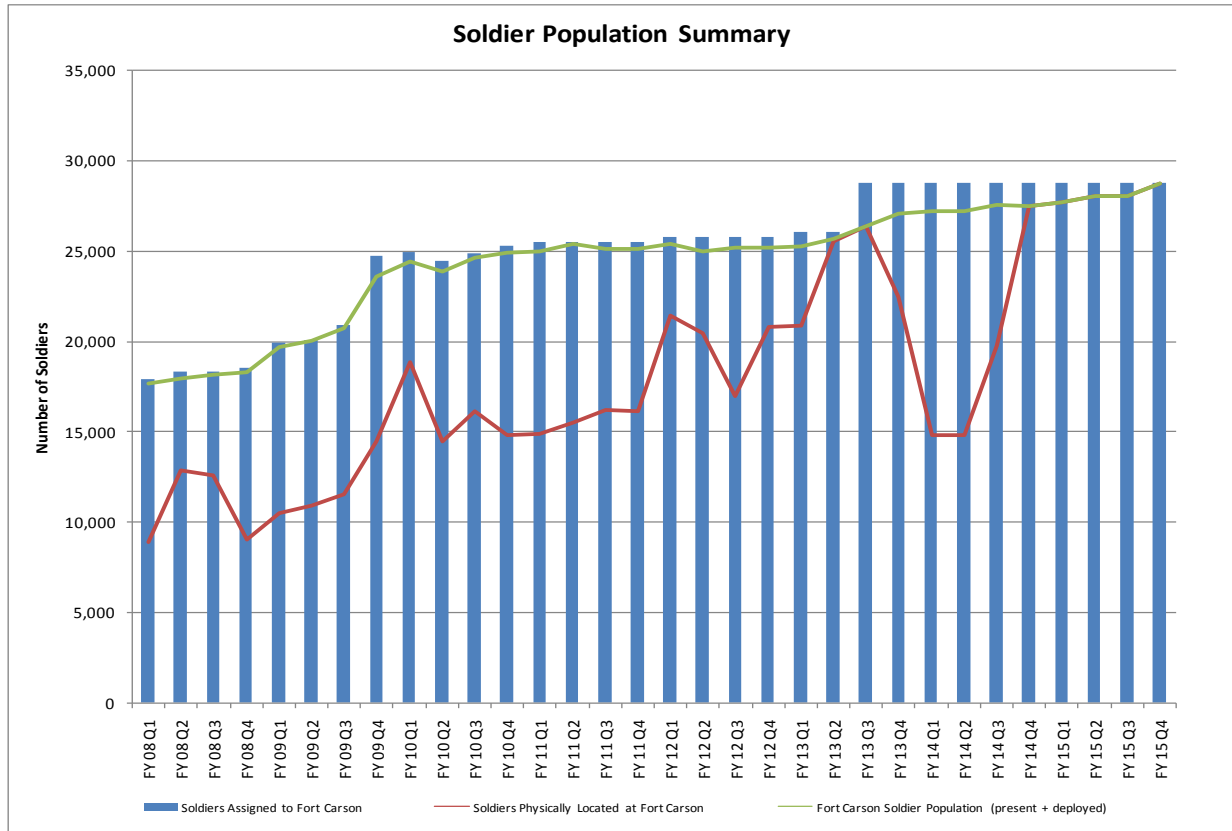
For the update to the FCDM, PPACG has obtained more complete data regarding (non-personally-identifiable) Fort Carson Soldiers and family members from DEERS, G-1 data, and other sources. Therefore, the updates to the FCDM illustrated in this report reflect the more complete DEERS data and new information regarding the stationing of a combat aviation brigade (CAB) at Fort Carson, as well as updated information regarding Soldier deployments. The report includes an explanation of the 2011 FCDM updates compared with the original analysis completed in 2009 and provides projections regarding the number of Soldiers stationed at Fort Carson and deployed by quarter, and the number of family members accompanying Soldiers (i.e., who move with a Soldier to the Fort Carson area and stay in the region when a Soldier is deployed).

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 1 of the Phase II Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan for a detailed explanation of the Fort Carson Demographic Model and the datasets utilized in the Growth Plan modeling.

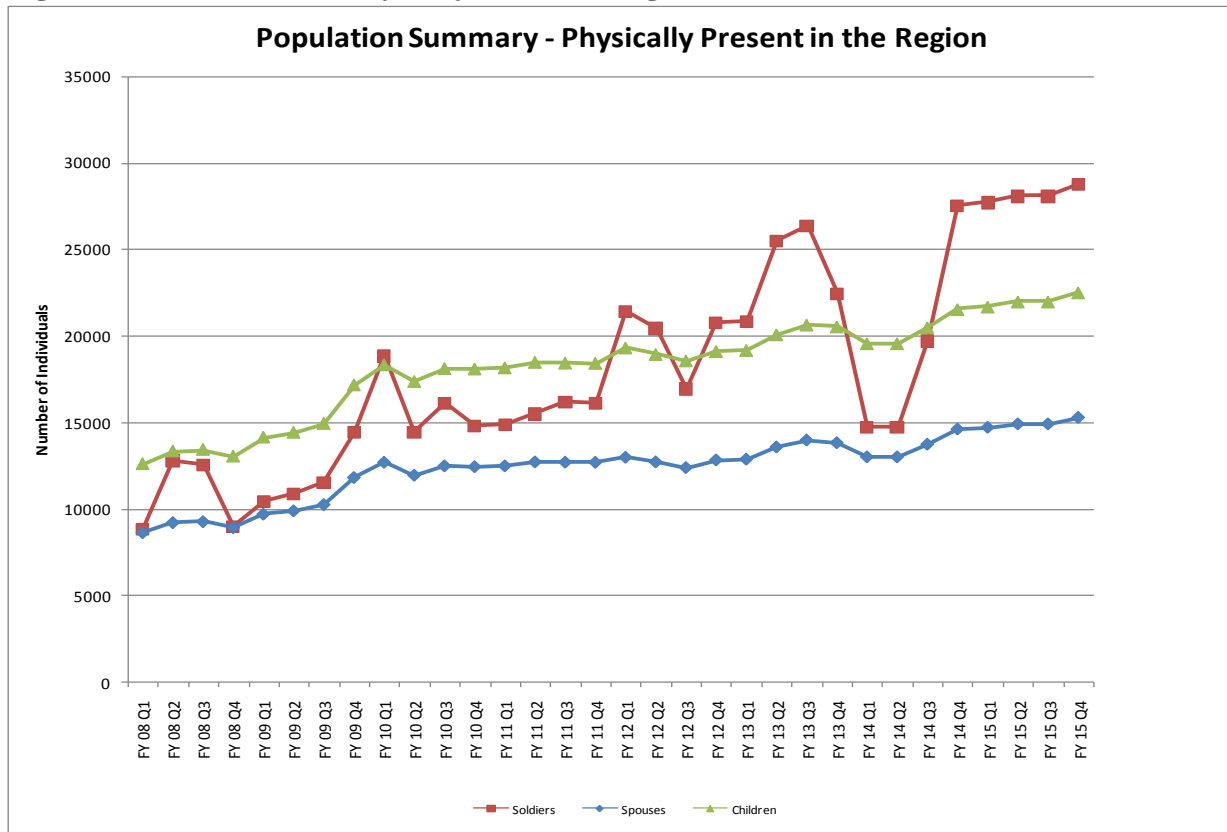
Figures 1 and 2 below illustrate the updated modeling which includes the numbers of Soldiers and family members projected to be physically present in the region through FY 2015.

**Figure 1. Soldier Population Projections through FY 2015**



Source: BBC Research & Consulting

**Figure 2. Soldier and Family Projections through FY 2015**



Source: BBC Research and Consulting

### ***Economic Impact Update***

Based on the FCDM revisions discussed above and new Fort Carson spending data, BBC worked with PPACG to update regional and statewide economic impact estimates and projections resulting from Fort Carson growth. The updated estimates span the period of federal fiscal year 2010 through federal fiscal year 2015.

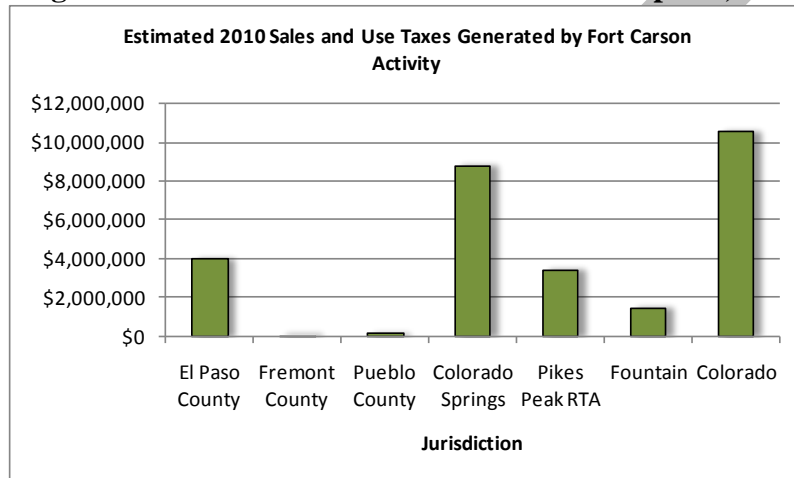
The analysis results indicate that Fort Carson continues to be a significant economic driver in the Pikes Peak region and the state, providing more than \$1.9 billion in direct economic impact to the region in FY 2010. Fort Carson also supported nearly 37, 000 direct and secondary jobs in FY 2010. Figures 3 and 4 below illustrate the estimated and projected economic impacts of Fort Carson in the region through FY 2015.

**Figure 3. Direct Economic Stimulus from Fort Carson, FY 2010**

Direct Economic Stimulus from Fort Carson	FY2010
Adjusted Disposable Income from Soldiers	\$903 million
DA Civilian Disposable Income	\$139 million
Local purchases/GPC	\$167 million
Utilities	\$21 million
Tuition assistance/grants (in region)	\$3 million
TRICARE payments	\$142 million
Construction Expenditures	<u>\$533 million</u>
<b>Total Direct Economic Stimulus in Region</b>	<b>\$1,907 million</b>

Source: BBC Research & Consulting

**Figure 4. Estimated Fort Carson Sales Tax Impacts, FY 2010**



Source: BBC Research & Consulting

PPACG will continue to update the FCDM and economic models periodically in order to provide the region with revised demographic and other information to assist in ongoing planning efforts.



FCDM projections help the housing industry plan for vacancy/capacity fluctuations based on upcoming deployments; additional mapping information also supports planning efforts. PPACG shares information with the region through the PPACG website, as well as through periodic housing forums, which provide Fort Carson and the housing industry with opportunities to review and share new information regarding ongoing trends and changing housing market conditions. The most recent forum is described below.

### ***Fort Carson Housing Forum Summary***

A Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan Housing Forum was held on Friday, September 17, 2011, at the PPACG offices. The forum theme was “Trends in Apartment Rents and Vacancies in the Pikes Peak Region and the Present and Future of Mortgage Financing”. Approximately thirty-five people attended the event.

Doug Carter of Sperry Van Ness provided insights into apartment rent and vacancy trends in the Pikes Peak region. Johnson Capital Senior VP Joseph Brill discussed the present and future of apartment complex financing. George Will of Equity Lending Mortgage discussed single-family mortgage financing. Copies of the forum presentations are available on PPACG’s website (<http://bit.ly/wRJPG3>).

Following the formal presentations, the guest speakers, along with Sam Young from the Denver HUD Office, engaged in a panel discussion. The panelists posed questions to each other regarding the information disseminated during the formal presentation session.

Attendees, including real estate and home-building professionals, transportation planners, Fort Carson representatives, and others, asked questions of the panelists. Some common themes of the discussion included:

- Many Fort Carson buyers are unable to qualify for home loans because of poor credit ratings;
- There are too many uncertainties for military families (i.e., future deployments or change of station, ability to sell home, etc.);
- Housing values remain flat; there are still a number of foreclosures on the market;
- Many Soldiers are purchasing cars instead of considering housing first; and
- Soldiers need financial planning education.

Dean Quaranta, Chief of Housing at Fort Carson, provided information regarding on-post housing construction, including the number of barracks and current and planned family housing units. As of August 2011, Fort Carson is in the process of constructing approximately 300 new family housing units, with plans to tear down 100 older junior enlisted family housing units. Additionally, approximately 800 barracks units are planned to support the new combat aviation brigade. Fort Carson is also in the process of conducting a new Housing Market Analysis in order to determine potential future housing needs for the post.

Laura Russmann, Executive Director of the Apartment Association of Southern Colorado, provided information regarding the current multi-family vacancy and rental rates in the region.

She confirmed that as many as 1,200 additional multi-family units were either approved for construction or proposed. She also discussed the ongoing need for better information and understanding of the number of single-family residential homes that are currently rentals.

The panelists agreed that PPACG should continue its ongoing role of communication and coordination with the real estate and development community, including regular updates of demographic information and deployment cycles.

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# Education and Child Development

## ***K-12 Education***

Local school districts continue to face ongoing challenges of uncertain growth; limited funding to serve Fort Carson students, particularly those with special needs; and behavioral health and other issues stemming from ongoing deployments. These issues are exacerbated by severe fiscal challenges affecting school district operational budgets. The Growth Plan Education Partnership Group has continued to meet to discuss these challenges, and local school districts continue to work with PPACG and Fort Carson to share data to better understand and address these ongoing challenges. This section provides the most recent information regarding student enrollments for military-impacted school districts and highlights local efforts to address the ongoing challenges noted in previous reports.

### Student Enrollments

While data regarding military student enrollments for the 2011–2012 school year are not yet available, overall numbers indicated only minor changes in total student enrollments. The figure below indicates that most districts with significant military student populations saw two percent or less growth from the previous school year. Once military-specific numbers are available, additional analysis will address Fort Carson-specific impacts on overall enrollments and special education services.

**Figure 6. Change in student enrollments, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012**

Student Enrollment Changes					
District*	2010-2011			2012	Percent Change in Total Enrollment
	Military students	Total students	Military students as percent of total students	Total students	
Academy D-20	3,072	23,119	13%	23,657	2%
Cheyenne Mountain D-12	482	4,561	11%	4,612	1%
Colorado Springs D-11	1,825	28,464	6%	29,543	4%
Falcon D-49	2,244	14,708	15%	15,063	2%
Fountain-Fort Carson D-8	4,428	7,536	59%	7,702	2%
Harrison D-2	1,338	11,147	12%	11,108	0%
Lewis-Palmer D-38	306	5,977	5%	6,076	2%
Widefield D-3	2,052	8,985	23%	9,184	2%

\*This table does not include all school districts in the region; the districts listed here include those districts with significant military student enrollments.

Source: Fountain-Fort Carson District 8, regional school districts

## Fort Carson Education Summit

Fort Carson has begun hosting education summits to address the issues affecting military children and families that impact schools. PPACG supported and participated in the most recent education summit, held in October 2011. For this event, Fort Carson brought together local school district officials, community leaders, and others to address five key areas: (1) attendance and achievement; (2) bullying (3) creative funding;; (4); resiliency; and (5) special needs<sup>2</sup>.

The summit included breakout sessions of key stakeholders to discuss each issue, identify specific topics to address, and make recommendations. Key issues and recommendations include the following:

### Attendance and Achievement

Deployments and other factors, including block leave, affect student attendance, and chronic absences affect achievement. Summit attendees discussed the need for more collaboration between schools, families, military agencies, and community agencies to increase attendance rates. Key recommendations included increasing the involvement of chain of command, educating parents, and increased monitoring of attendance.

### Bullying

Military students face additional internal and external stressors that can affect their behavior and interactions with others; some may be more likely to bully or be victims of bullies. Key recommendations include the need to foster a culture in schools that is supportive, caring, and compassionate through staff/Soldier mentoring, development, and student training. Additional recommendations stated that all schools should implement an anti-bullying curriculum that reflects Colorado's anti-bullying statutes and that "kids chat" be included in all deployment trainings.

### Creative Funding

School districts are facing significant budget reductions because of state and local fiscal challenges while also facing increased needs for services. The summit participants recommended the creation of a collaborative funding council to identify creative funding solutions to assist schools (i.e., outside normal funding streams). Recommendations also included educating parents on the importance of completing count-day surveys to ensure that all military students are counted, enabling schools to receive full Impact Aid funding.

### Resiliency

While resiliency ("A human ability to recover quickly from disruptive change or misfortune without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional or harmful ways"<sup>3</sup>) is addressed in some schools, it is not standardized. The group recommended utilizing both a top-down and bottom-up approach in order to embed resiliency training and culture in schools through the Pikes Peak

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<sup>2</sup> For a complete list of issues and recommendations, see the full report from the Education Summit: "Working Together: Finding Solutions for Military Youth," Fort Carson Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation – Child, Youth and School Services, October 19, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Definition obtained from the Resiliency Center (<http://www.resiliencycenter.com/>).

Area Superintendents Association, classroom teachers and parents, and the creation of a task force to identify current best practices and next steps.

### Special Needs

As noted in previous Growth Plan reports, local school districts that serve Fort Carson children have high incidence rates of children with special needs; providing services to students with special needs can be very costly for school districts and stressful for military families. A key issue addressed by the summit is the lack of consistency between school districts in the region, as well as between states, regarding implementing individualized education plans (IEPs) and other resources for students and families. Recommendations addressed the need for more standardized regulations, use of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, and increased military presence on local and state education groups to raise awareness and advocate for needs.

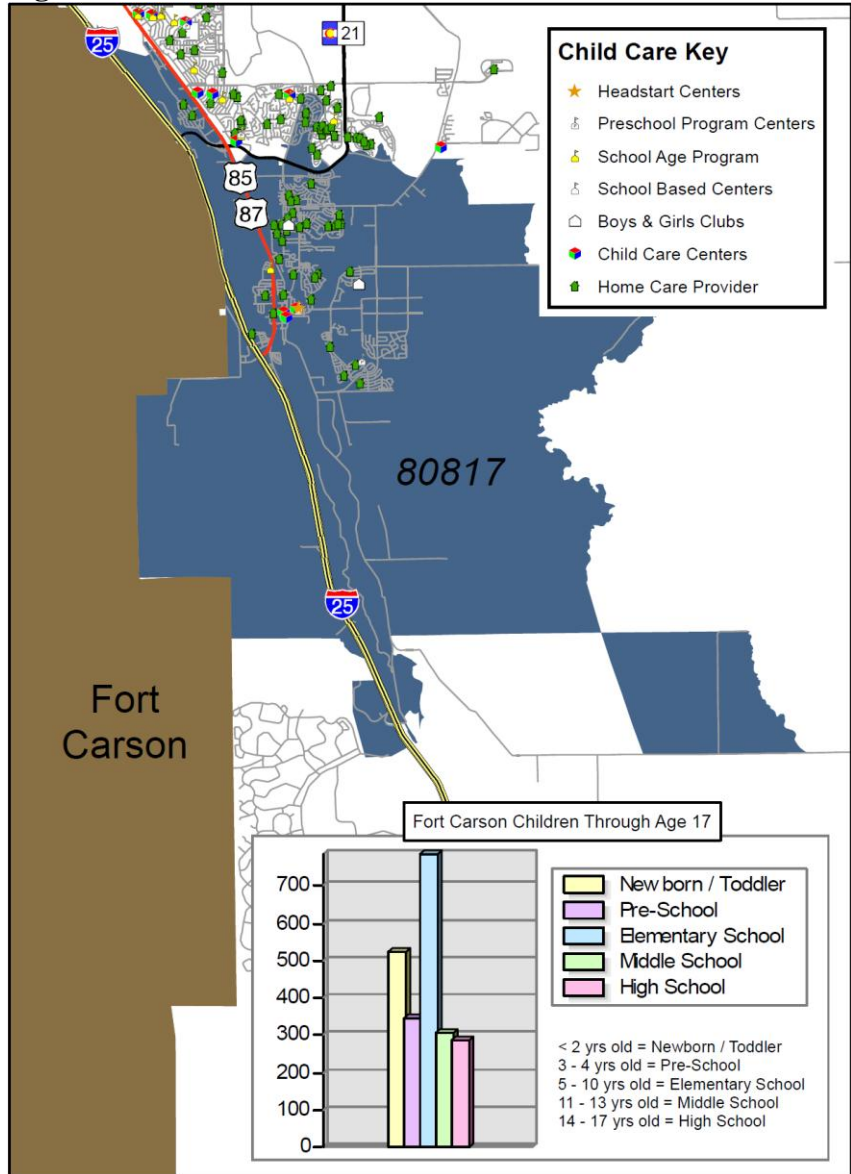
Following the summit, Fort Carson's Garrison Commander formed an Education Task Force to work on implementing the recommendations from the summit and begin planning for a future summit to continue addressing these key issues. PPACG staff will continue to work with Fort Carson and local school districts to monitor and implement the recommendations from the summit and the Growth Plan.

## ***Early Care and Education***

### **Demographic and Mapping Projects**

Ongoing analysis and updates to demographic projections through FCDM and PPACG's mapping analysis indicate significant numbers of young Fort Carson children living in the Pikes Peak region. PPACG has transitioned the coordination activities that previously fell under the Growth Plan Child Development Partnership Group to the Alliance for Kids/Early Learning Committee; however, PPACG staff continue to provide information and data analysis to Fort Carson and off-post early care and education providers to help address ongoing capacity and service needs for Fort Carson children and families. Figures 7 and 8 below provide examples of the mapping resources that PPACG provides, based on FCDM and DEERS data analysis, to assist the region in planning for child care and other needs for young children. Additional maps are available in Appendix C and on PPACG's website (<http://bit.ly/yt9v4r>).

**Figure 7. Fort Carson Children and Child Care Facilities in the 80817 Zip Code**

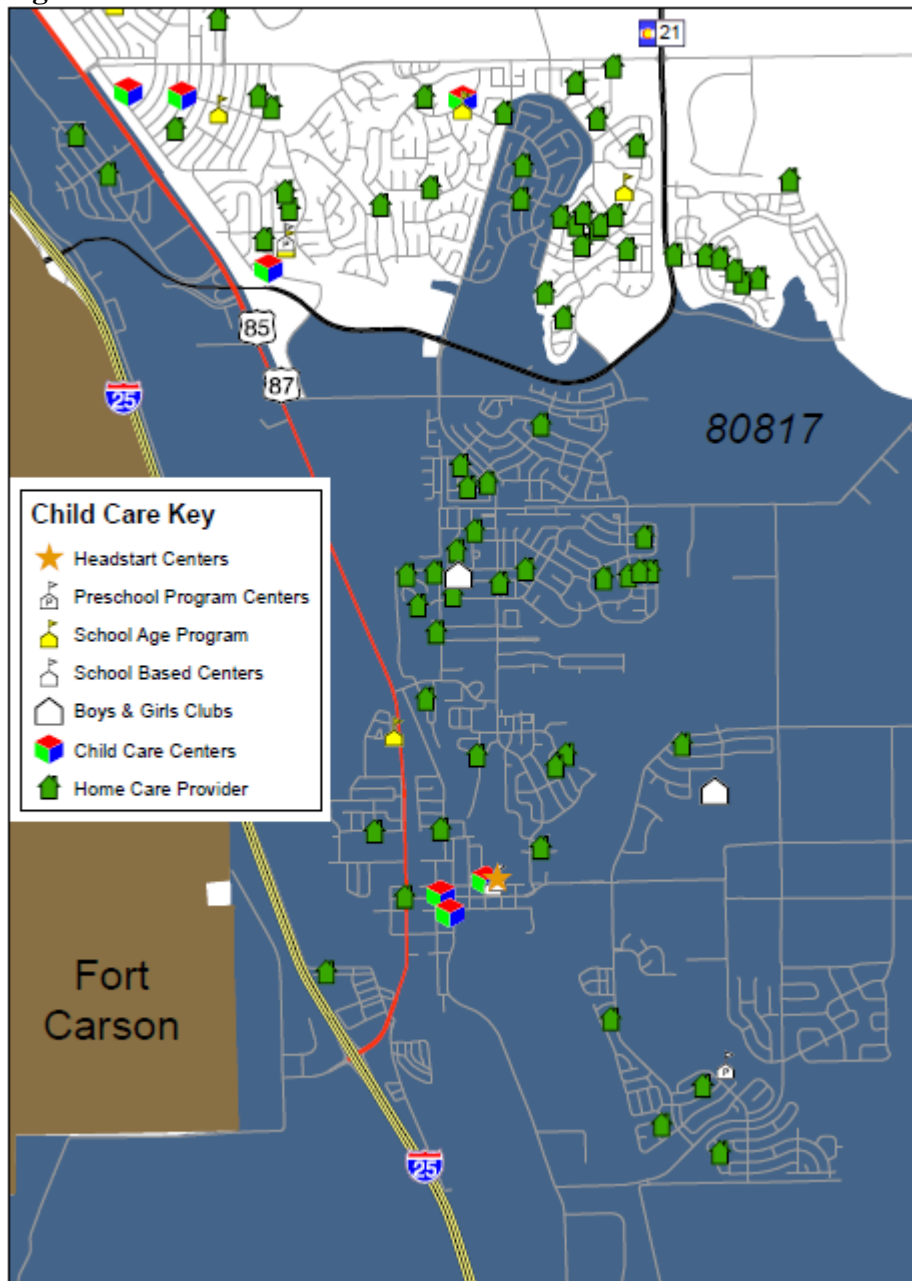


Fort Carson Children = Children of active duty soldiers stationed at Fort Carson who live in the 80817 ZIP Code, based on August 2011 DEERS Data

Source: Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments

Because of a slow economic recovery in the Pikes Peak region and ongoing fiscal challenges for local providers, several child care facilities in the region have closed. As Fort Carson adds child development centers on-post, both Fort Carson and off-post providers continue to struggle with hiring and retaining qualified staff. Therefore, capacity challenges, particularly for infant and toddler care, will continue. In addition, pending DoD budget cuts have led to increased uncertainty regarding the availability of future services. PPACG will continue to work with Fort Carson and off-post providers to monitor these trends.

**Figure 8. Inset of Fort Carson Children and Child Care Facilities in 80817 Zip Code**



Source: Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments

## Touchpoints Training

PPACG contracted with Alliance for Kids to conduct additional Touchpoints trainings to assist child care providers, educators, and home visitors to address the behavioral health needs of Fort Carson children. The Alliance for Kids established a Touchpoints Training Team as a resource for early care and education providers in the region, and the Growth Plan included a pilot training program in 2009–2010 that utilized the Touchpoints training program to assist providers serving Fort Carson children. The Growth Plan recommendations include continuing/expanding these trainings, pending available funding.

Alliance for Kids conducted two additional trainings in October and November 2011 for a total of thirty-five providers. These providers reported serving more than 1,700 military children and families. Results of the training indicate that providers receive valuable information and tools that they will implement in their programs in order to better assist Fort Carson families, particularly those stressed by deployments. The complete Touchpoints training report is attached as Appendix F.

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## Medical, Behavioral Health, and Social Services

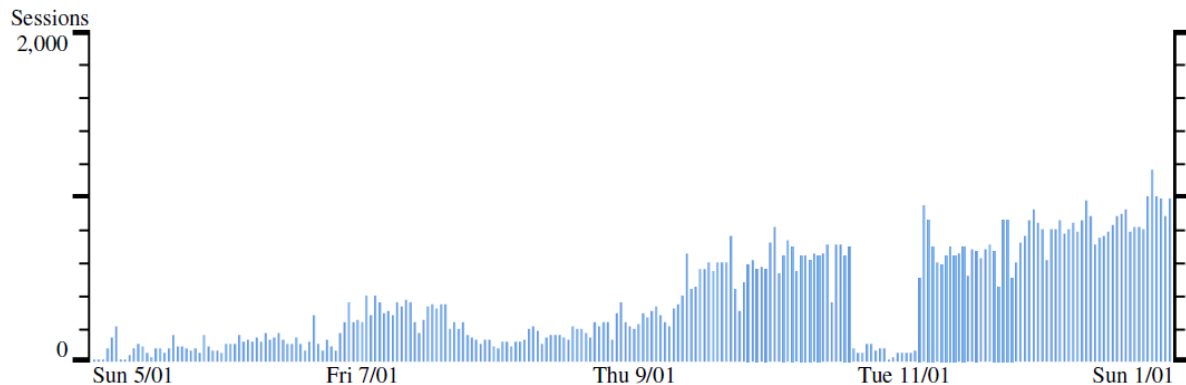
The Growth Plan effort facilitates ongoing information-sharing and collaboration to address increased needs of Soldiers and family members (both on- and off-post) related to medical, behavioral health, and social services. As noted in previous reports, Fort Carson and community-based providers have greatly expanded services to assist Soldiers and families across a broad range of needs. However, rapid growth at Fort Carson and the ongoing stresses on Soldiers and families because of deployments has resulted in increased demand for services while funding continues to decrease. Fort Carson and community-based providers are working together to better leverage resources and enhance collaboration to ensure better service delivery. Two critical implementation components of the Growth Plan are the Network of Care™ website and the establishment of a system of care collaborative to better serve Fort Carson Soldiers and families.

### **Network of Care**

In May 2011, the Network of Care for Service Members, Veterans and their Families (<http://pikespeak.networkofcare.org>) was launched. This web-based resource was developed with input from the Medical, Behavioral Health, and Social Services Partnership Group to implement the Growth Plan recommendation to establish a primary point of entry for information and assistance for Fort Carson Soldiers and families.

The Network of Care includes a service directory to help connect Fort Carson Soldiers and family members to local, state, and national resources; a library of articles on veterans issues, behavioral health, and other topics; spouse and other employment information; and other features, including a Personal Health Record, which allows service members and veterans to keep electronic copies of their service records, medical, and other information to assist in care coordination. PPACG has also partnered with Pikes Peak United Way to include 2-1-1 data for El Paso and Teller counties in the service directory. Since launch, usage of the site continues to increase, as illustrated in Figure 9 below.

**Figure 9. Network of Care Site Activity (May–December 2011)**



Source: Pikes Peak Network of Care Site Traffic, Trilogy Integrated Resources

## **Peak Military Care Network**

Through the Growth Plan partnership group and other efforts, PPACG convened a Military System of Care Committee in order to develop a strategic plan to better address the needs of Fort Carson Soldiers and families. This committee, which evolved into a steering team to develop the strategic plan assisted by Jody Alyn Consulting, includes representatives from military installations, the Department of Veterans Affairs, business and community leaders, behavioral health providers, crisis intervention service providers, and others. The purpose of this group is to develop a system of care for coordinated service delivery for service members, veterans, and their families, an effort now referred to as the **Peak Military Care Network (PMCN)**. Steering team members include the following entities:

- AspenPointe
- Colorado Springs Chamber, Military Affairs Council
- Community Partnership for Child Development
- Dept of Defense State Liaison
- El Paso County Department of Human Services
- Fort Carson
- Peterson Air Force Base
- Pikes Peak United Way
- Veteran Trauma Court
- CASA of the Pikes Peak Region
- Colorado Springs Police Department
- Denver Options
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- El Pomar Foundation
- Haven Warrior Support Center
- Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments
- TESSA

The strategic plan was informed by the steering team, a survey of stakeholders, and twelve focus groups that included more than 100 participants, including first responders; crisis intervention service providers; government, military and business leaders; representatives from all local military installations and the National Guard; early care and K-12 educators and higher education officials; faith-based providers; nonprofit organizations; and military community users of the system of care. A copy of the focus group assessment report and draft strategic plan are attached as Appendix G. The PMCN steering team will continue to meet to update the strategic plan as more details are defined and additional participants join the effort. The ongoing focus will be to develop the PMCN board and relevant committees to further the goals and objectives identified in the plan.

## **Ongoing Communication and Coordination**

PPACG will continue to work with the Medical, Behavioral Health, and Social Services Partnership Group, the Peak Military Care Network Steering Team, and other stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the Growth Plan and ensure ongoing communication and information sharing between Fort Carson and community-based providers. Additionally, key tasks moving forward will include continuing and enhancing the Network of Care website and developing the Peak Military Care Network.

## **Transportation**

PPACG staff continues to work with Fort Carson and regional entities to monitor the regional transportation impacts of Fort Carson growth. As identified in the Growth Plan, traffic impacts both on- and off-post are significant; however, several major regional projects have been undertaken to mitigate these impacts. Below is an update to key projects, as well as an overview of ongoing regional efforts to address transportation, including roadway and other initiatives to address regional transportation needs.

### ***Fort Carson-Related Transportation Improvements***

#### **Interstate Highway 25 (I-25)/State Highway 16 (SH 16) Interchange Improvements**

Gate 20 is a major installation access point for Fort Carson Soldiers and experiences very high volumes of vehicular traffic. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has recently completed a \$63 million project to improve the I-25/SH 16 interchange, providing direct access to Gate 20, as well as making capacity and safety improvements to SH 16 (Mesa Ridge Parkway) and US Route 85. The federally and state-funded project has helped mitigate congestion at Gate 20, making Fort Carson more readily accessible to the troops and making the area safer for all drivers in the region. The improvements also facilitate Fort Carson's rapid deployment needs by providing a direct, high-capacity roadway link between Fort Carson and the post's deployment facility located at the Colorado Springs Airport.

#### **South Academy Boulevard Improvements**

South Academy Boulevard is another major access route to Fort Carson, in addition to serving Pikes Peak Community College and other businesses and residential areas. Improvements to South Academy Boulevard are part of the South Metro Accessibility project funded by the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority. This entirely locally funded project includes the widening of South Academy Boulevard between State Highway 115 (SH 115) and I-25, the replacement of bridges, a new expressway between Academy and Powers Boulevard, and improved access to Fort Carson's Gates 3 and 4. More than \$26 million in improvements to South Academy Boulevard between I-25 and SH 115 were completed in November 2010. This project provides significant enhancements to support Fort Carson growth and improve traffic flow and safety in the region.

#### **State Highway 115**

State Highway 115 borders Fort Carson on the west and serves as a major access route to the installation. Because of current traffic needs and anticipated future traffic and access requirements, Fort Carson recently opened Gate 6 off SH 115, approximately four miles south of Gate 1 (which is across from Cheyenne Mountain State Park). Improvements on SH 115 are needed to accommodate increased traffic and improve safety along the corridor. The Growth Plan previously completed a planning study for SH 115 that addressed needs for safety and

capacity improvements between Gates 1 and 6. Phase 1 of the resulting project was recently completed. The work included safety, capacity, and access improvements near Gate 5. Phase 2 extends these improvements southward through the area near Gate 6. This phase is currently underway and is scheduled for completion in December 2012. Phase 3 will provide capacity and safety improvements northward from the Gate 5 area to South Academy Blvd. This final phase of construction will begin in the spring of 2012, with completion scheduled for December 2012.

### ***Ongoing Challenges to Providing Transit Service to Fort Carson***

Ultimately, on- and off-post improvements to transportation systems will benefit Fort Carson and the region by increasing mobility to and from the installation and providing more transportation alternatives for Fort Carson personnel and the surrounding community. Therefore, Fort Carson representatives continue to work with PPACG and the surrounding communities to address transit, non-motorized, and alternative transportation planning to meet Fort Carson needs. As identified in the Growth Plan, these efforts include Fort Carson's ongoing sustainable transportation initiatives and efforts to pursue transit-oriented development near the installation.

Transportation planning efforts for Fort Carson have addressed long-term needs, including scenarios that all Soldiers assigned to Fort Carson are present in the region and the addition of a combat aviation brigade (CAB). As noted above, many roadway improvements have been made, providing significant congestion relief near Fort Carson. However, because of budget restrictions (both on- and off-post) and ongoing limits to transit service in the region, implementing multimodal solutions to anticipated transportation issues related to Fort Carson continues to remain a challenge. PPACG will continue to work with Fort Carson and through regional planning efforts, including PPACG's Long Range Regional Transportation Plan, to implement the recommendations of the Growth Plan to address long-term transportation impacts of Fort Carson growth.

### ***Fort Carson Gate Additions***

Fort Carson recently completed facilities to accommodate an infantry brigade south of the cantonment area along Wilderness Road. Additional construction is planned along Wilderness Road and at Butts Army Airfield (BAAF) to support a new combat aviation brigade slated to arrive in FY 2013–2015. These new facilities necessitate the activation of access control points (ACPs) at Fort Carson's Gates 6 and 19. The ACP at Gate 6 was activated in June 2011. While the timing of the Gate 19 ACP activation will depend on federal funding, Fort Carson officials have been working with off-post entities to ensure improved access to both of these gates. As noted above, improvements are already underway along SH 115 at Gate 6. Fort Carson is also preparing for on- and off-post improvements needed to support the opening of Gate 19. Additionally, off-post improvements will be needed to provide adequate access to that gate from the surrounding communities. The results of a study to assess these needed improvements are discussed below.

### ***Improvements Study to Facilitate Access to Gate 19***

In July 2011, PPACG retained Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU) to conduct an improvements study for Charter Oak Ranch Road and Santa Fe Avenue in order to facilitate access to Fort

Carson Gate 19. This improvements study specifically focuses on the “study corridor,” which is defined as Santa Fe Avenue from I-25 (Exit 128) west to Charter Oak Ranch Road and Charter Oak Ranch Road from Santa Fe Avenue west and south to Gate 19. The major purposes of the improvements study were as follows:

- Document existing traffic and roadway conditions;
- Bring together local agencies to develop improvement recommendations to Charter Oak Ranch Road and Santa Fe Avenue;
- Develop a set of goals and objectives for improvements in the study corridor;
- Determine the most efficient, cost-effective, and least impactful alignment for the study corridor;
- Determine the appropriate typical sections within the study corridor;
- Use available GIS data to prepare conceptual design plans of the preferred alternative;
- Prepare an opinion of probable costs based on the preferred alternative;
- Estimate travel demand projections and determine traffic control needs;
- Evaluate impacts to the natural and built environments; and
- Lay the foundation for future NEPA efforts related to the construction of improvements within the study corridor.

The following provides an overview of the improvements study. The full report is attached as Appendix H.

### Existing Conditions

The existing off-post roadways providing access to Fort Carson’s Gate 19 are inadequate to serve the anticipated needs of Fort Carson once Gate 19 is permanently open. The existing pavement structure is failing as evidenced by significant areas containing interconnected cracks and potholes. The existing roadway alignment has substandard turning radii, grades that exceed local agency standards, and no turn lanes at intersections or existing individual business access points.

Daily classification counts show that Santa Fe Avenue carries approximately 4,000 passenger cars per day and about 1,000 tractor-trailers per day just west of Interstate 25. Vehicle classification counts on Charter Oak Ranch Road range from 200 to 700 vehicles per day and show only one-third of the traffic on Charter Oak Ranch Road are passenger vehicles.

### Project Goals and Objectives

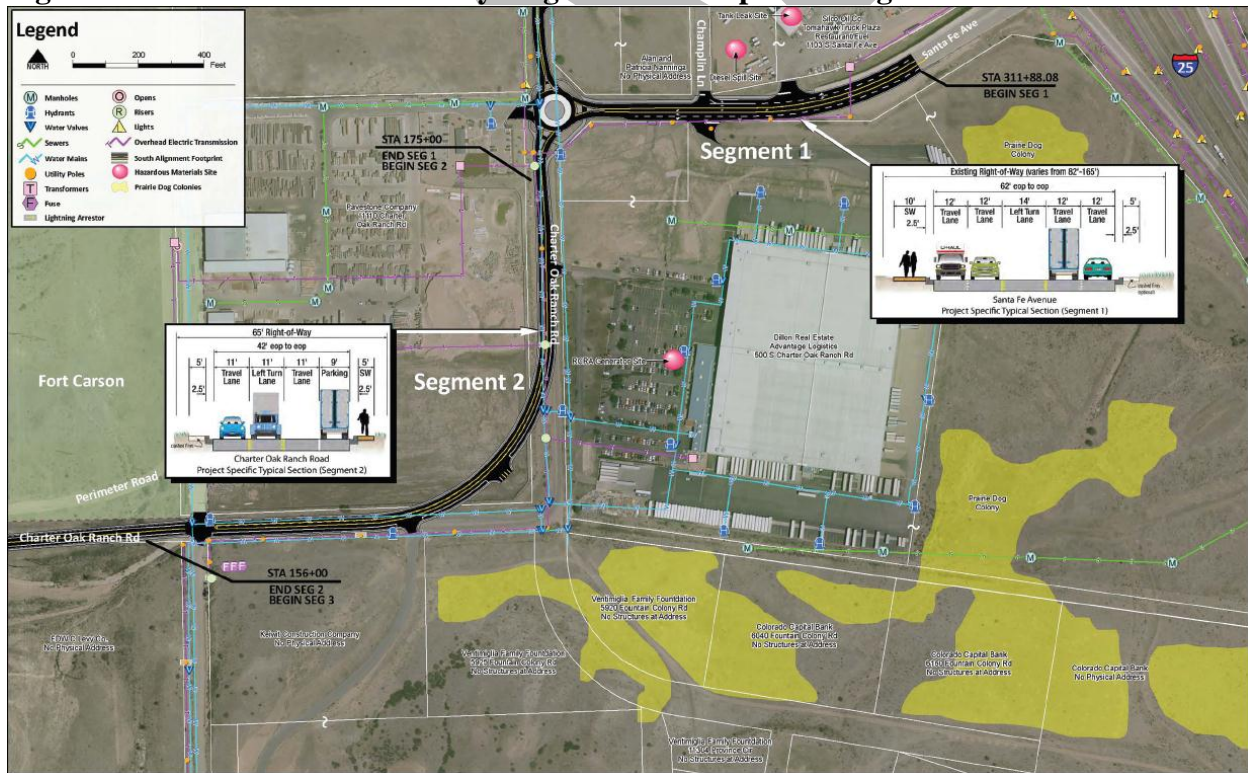
As part of this improvements study, a set of goals and objectives was developed for evaluating improvements to the study corridor. The goals and objectives were developed primarily from input and guidance given by PPACG and Fort Carson. Other major stakeholders, including El Paso County, the City of Fountain, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), reviewed and commented on the proposed goals and objectives during stakeholder meetings. In general, the goals and objectives focused on providing a safe and efficient route between I-25 and Gate 19 while minimizing impacts to Fort Carson property.

## Preferred Alternative Development

The development of the preferred alternative for the study corridor was a two-step evaluation process. First, an alternatives alignment evaluation was conducted in which a full range of alternative alignments was identified to address the need to facilitate access between I-25 (Exit 128) and Gate 19. These alternative alignments were evaluated with respect to adherence to the goals and objectives of future study corridor improvements, the transportation benefits provided, local agency and public input, property impacts, and safety and environmental consequences. This process resulted in a preferred alignment for future roadway improvements that mostly follows the existing locations of Santa Fe Avenue and Charter Oak Ranch Road.

The second step was an extensive conceptual design analysis to define typical sections and determine the appropriate traffic controls at the intersection of Charter Oak Ranch Road and Santa Fe Avenue. This conceptual design analysis resulted in three typical sections recommendations. The Santa Fe Avenue typical section was generally four lanes with a center left-turn lane. The two typical sections for Charter Oak Ranch Road each had one lane in each direction but differed in that one typical section had a center left-turn lane on sections where adjacent businesses had access points, and the other typical section did not have a center left-turn lane where there were no access points to adjacent land. At the intersection of Charter Oak Ranch Road and Santa Fe Avenue, the preferred alternative was determined to be a roundabout because it was the most cost-effective alternative treatment. See Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10. Gate 19 Access Roadway Alignment Conceptual Design**



Source: Felsburg, Holt & Ullevig

### Preferred Alternative Opinion of Probable Costs

Based on the conceptual design, the probable cost for the preferred alternative was estimated at just over \$5.2 million. Detailed cost estimates worksheets showing roadway quantities, unit costs, and percentage were developed based on input from project stakeholders.

### Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

The alternatives screening analysis and the conceptual design analysis were reviewed through regular progress meetings with major project stakeholders. Major project stakeholders included representatives of PPACG, El Paso County, the City of Fountain, CDOT, Fort Carson, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Defense Access Road (DAR) program. These project stakeholders met a total of five times during the study effort to provide input and recommendations into defining the preferred alternative. Because project stakeholder members were actively involved in the alternatives screening and conceptual design analyses, there was consensus among the project stakeholders in endorsing the preferred alternative.

At key study milestones, meetings were held with study area neighborhood business and property owners. Two meetings were held at a location within the study corridor and were intended to provide information on the study progress and to obtain input on preferred alternative recommendations. Overall, there was general support for improving Santa Fe Avenue and Charter Oak Ranch Road. Additionally, the public agreed that the public involvement process was thorough and provided opportunity for meaningful participation.

### Next Steps

The following details the next steps and outstanding issues that will need to be addressed before implementation of the Preferred Alternative:

- Continue to explore funding options to make up the gap between DAR funding and the project cost estimate for the preferred alternative.
- Upon the issuance of DAR funding, the following steps could be initiated:
  - ◆ Local agency issues a Request for Proposal (RFP) for preliminary and final design services.
  - ◆ Commence with right-of-way discussions and negotiations with affected property owners. This could occur prior to the issuance of the RFP or occur during preliminary design.
  - ◆ During preliminary design, the following activities may take place:
    - Determine the level of NEPA analysis needed and prepare required NEPA-related documents.
    - Conduct field survey of existing right-of-way, contours, utilities, and other study corridor features. Conduct geotechnical borings.
    - Bring the conceptual design up to a preliminary design level based on field survey and geotechnical data.

- Prepare a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Army, FHWA, CDOT, and El Paso County that outlines the future construction of improvements, the background and scope of the effort, responsibilities of project stakeholders, the required documentation, the funding, the preferred alternative improvements, and any other necessary information related to the construction of future improvements.

The improvements study will be presented to the relevant jurisdictions (El Paso County and the City of Fountain) for further action, as needed, to proceed with funding and completion of the roadway improvements needed to support access to Gate 19.

**DRAFT**

# **Regional Sustainability**

## ***Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Plan***

As identified in the Growth Plan, more collaborative off-post community support, assistance, and planning are needed to help Fort Carson and the region's other military installations achieve their sustainability goals. The Growth Plan also identified several planning efforts related to sustainability, economic development, and community planning in the Pikes Peak region that are currently underway or are in various stages of implementation.

The Growth Plan effort determined that other entities in the region, including major institutions, governments, and businesses that have sustainability goals cannot achieve their initiatives and goals in isolation and therefore require a more collaborative and regional approach to implement their plans and leverage resources. Therefore, PPACG along with regional representatives from nonprofits, military installations, businesses, local governments, and members of the public initiated the Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Project to develop the region's first long-term sustainability plan. The plan would serve as a first step for the region in becoming more collaborative, focused, and strategic in its long-term planning.

### **Phase 1 – Development of Stretch Goals**

From August 2010 through December 2010, PPACG facilitated more than one dozen focus group and Consensus Committee meetings with nearly 100 community participants to develop 20-year sustainability “stretch” goals for transportation, health, economic development, arts & culture, education, built & natural environment, materials management and procurement, energy, and water. The “stretch” goals are intended to be both aspirational and inspirational and push people to move beyond the status quo. The draft goals were reviewed and approved for public review by the Consensus Committee.

In December 2010, the sustainability goals were approved by the Consensus Committee – the oversight committee of the project – ending Phase 1.

### **Phase 2 – Development of Strategies and the Plan**

The purpose of the Phase 2 Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Project was to identify baseline conditions, metrics, indicators, and strategies for achieving the goals developed during Phase 1. Phase 2 of the Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Project was initiated in January 2011 and is anticipated to end in January 2012.

After a Phase 2 project kick-off meeting in February 2011, the existing focus groups from Phase 1 were reconfigured into four focus group teams based on similarities identified among the focus group areas and/or goals. The nine focus groups were reconfigured into the following teams: Red Team (Natural Environment, Water, and Air); Blue Team (Transportation, Built Environment, and Energy); Green Team (Economic Development, Materials Management, and Procurement); and Yellow Team (Health, Education, and Arts and Culture). Agriculture was added later and became a part of the Red Team. Individual goal topic task groups were formed and provided technical expertise and advice for the larger teams. The task groups met separately and were not facilitated by PPACG.

Since July 2011, the teams identified overarching strategies (referred to as meta-strategies) for achieving the stretch goals, revised some of the original goals based on Consensus Committee feedback, and developed the narratives for the sections of the draft Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Plan. The Consensus Committee reviewed, refined, and approved the recommendations and strategies identified and developed by the teams.

In October 2011, the Consensus Committee approved the public release of the draft Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Plan with suggested corrections and revisions to some sections of the draft plan. The Consensus Committee also approved a subgroup of Consensus Committee and task group members to develop an executive summary to be included in the final draft. Task groups also met and revised sections based on Consensus Committee comments. PPACG staff and consultants compiled the revisions from task groups, the executive summary, definitions, acronyms list, and appendices.

Robert MacDonald, Executive Director of PPACG, participated in a panel with representatives from regional organizations from around the state at the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado's annual sustainability roundtable on November 16, 2011. The Alliance for Sustainable Colorado touted PPACG as an example of how other regional organizations can successfully coordinate a sustainability planning effort.

PPACG moderated a panel discussion with three Consensus Committee members at the Colorado Sustainability Conference on November 17, 2011, during which the Consensus Committee members discussed how each of their organizations' and communities' sustainability efforts integrated into the Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Plan. Audience members asked the panelists and PPACG staff questions regarding the plan and regional sustainability efforts. PPACG also had a booth at the Colorado Sustainability Conference at which staff talked to conference attendees about the plan and distributed the draft executive summary, goals, and questionnaires regarding the goals.

After the draft plan was finalized, PPACG Board Chair and El Paso County Commissioner Sallie Clark and Fort Carson Garrison Commander COL Robert McLaughlin presented the draft plan at a press conference held at the Pioneer's Museum on November 22, 2011. The two leaders discussed the importance of the plan as an example of regional collaboration with the area's largest military installation. Media coverage of the press conference and the release of the plan can be found at the following links:

FOX 21: <http://bit.ly/AdLLGq>

The Gazette: <http://bit.ly/tF3zQT>

PPACG released the draft plan for public comment on its website at [www.ppacg.org](http://www.ppacg.org) with an online questionnaire regarding the draft plan. The public comment period was from November 22, 2011, through December 23, 2011. The Consensus Committee will review the comments from the public and is anticipated to finalize the plan in January 2012. The draft Pikes Peak Regional Sustainability Plan is attached as Appendix I. The full plan and appendices are also available on PPACG's website at <http://www.ppacg.org/sustainability/aboutregplan>.