

**Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan
Colorado Defense Mission Coalition Meeting
Wednesday, September 16, 2009
Meeting Summary**

Meeting attendees:

- Tim Amthor, Pikes Peak Workforce Center
- LTC Alan Bal, 4th Infantry Division
- Mary Barber, Fort Carson
- Brian Binn, Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce (CSCC)
- LTC Ron Bolton, Fort Carson
- Terry Brubaker, Fort Carson Adult Education
- Lisa Cochrun, City of Fountain
- Jason DeaBueno, Pikes Peak Behavioral Health Group
- Larry Fortner, CSCC
- Ford Frick, BBC Research & Consulting (BBC)
- Billie Garner, Fort Carson Public Affairs
- Kate Hatten, PPACG
- Casey Howard, Senator Mark Udall's Office
- Angela Joslyn, Senator Bennet's Office
- Christopher Juniper, Fort Carson
- Rob MacDonald, PPACG
- Adrian Miller, Governor Ritter's Office
- Bill Moore, Pueblo Area Council of Governments
- Charlotte Nal, Community Partnership of Child Development (CPCD)
- Rick Orphan, Fort Carson
- Marian Percy, Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Diane Price, Child Nursery Centers
- Dave Roudebush, School District 8
- Carl Schueler, City of Colorado Springs
- Frank Stampf, Partners in Housing
- Terry Storm, Pikes Peak Association of Realtors
- Mary Talbott, El Paso County Department of Health and Environment
- Sarah White, PPACG
- Justin Widhalm, Fort Carson Public Affairs
- Jason Wilkinson, PPACG
- Michelle Wright, Child Youth & School Services

Growth Plan Phase 2 Status

Kate Hatten started introductions. Ford Frick discussed BBC's draft interim report which was completed recently. The draft interim report is an extended version of the draft report submitted to the group in July. Mr. Frick noted that the numbers in the report reflect old data; therefore, the report should be considered an overview of project methodology and status. Updated numbers will be provided as they become available.

Mr. Frick provided a status report on the Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan which focused on the project's data sources, soldier population summary, soldier demographics, apartment vacancies in the region, tasks and issues, and the project schedule. For updated growth status and a PDF version of the presentation, please visit:

http://www.ppacg.org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=19&Itemid=49

Demographic Data:

Data sources being analyzed by PPACG and BBC include the following: Fort Carson Garrison data; Fort Hood and Fort Carson Mountain Post Welcome (MPW) survey results; 2008 Fort Carson Housing Analysis survey data (Neihaus Housing Survey); DEERS-West data; American

Community Survey Census data; “Boots on the Ground” comprehensive data sets of rank and numbers of Soldiers in the 4th ID; national demographic data sets from the Defense Manpower Data Center; and hospital data sets from Evans Army Community Hospital (EACH).

The MPW survey results indicate the Soldiers’ intentions about housing, child care and whether their families will be moving to the area with them. The Fort Hood survey results indicate families with more young children than the national average [for military families]. The Fort Carson survey results appear to be a more representative sample of population. The survey results are a good indication of the intentions that military families have about moving to the area.

The DEERS data, which provide more demographic information on Soldiers and family members, show some inconsistencies with other data sources. PPACG and BBC are working to scrub the data. The DEERS data will be valuable for identifying the current demographic makeup of Fort Carson Soldiers and where those Soldiers are currently living.

Mr. Frick explained the difficulty of gathering the key data needed for the project. These data sets are very large and difficult to analyze, which has delayed the project. Although some of the data presented are out of date, the model works well and will be dynamic enough to calculate fluctuations of future deployment numbers. Monitoring deployment cycles will be important as they determine how population growth is felt in the community. PPACG will also be able to manage the model in the future in order to better forecast deployment rhythms and impacts to the community. It is anticipated that the model should be finalized in the next six weeks.

Housing Data:

The Southwest/Security/Widefield/Fountain areas have experienced the most dramatic decrease in vacancy rates in rentals, although the vacancy rates for those areas are still high. Mr. Bill Moore asked whether the doubling of the vacancy rate in the Security/Widefield/Fountain areas may be more representative of the doubling of inventory rather than a doubling of families leaving or not renting in the area. Mr. Frick indicated that is probably correct. In addition, these figures most likely do not include inventory that is uninhabitable.

PPACG and BBC will be focusing on housing affordability for soldiers. Experian data are being sought to provide information regarding debt load of Soldiers. Mr. Frank Stampf expressed that developers need to know median income of population looking for housing to determine what to build.

Ms. Charlotte Nal asked about the Army families living in base housing at the Air Force Academy (AFA). The families can stay for as long as they are stationed at Fort Carson and have access to child care, medical and other services. LTC Ron Bolton stated that the wait list for on-post housing on Fort Carson is still around 1,000 families.

Tasks & Issues:

The data gathering task is almost complete. The cut-off date for data collection was 6 weeks ago, but PPACG and BBC are still receiving and reconciling data. Overall, BBC feels good about the model.

The education and workforce tasks are also close to being completed. However, the main issue related to this task continues to be reconciling school count numbers versus projection numbers. There maybe more concentrations of soldiers in certain areas than originally estimated.

Housing supply and demand are in good shape. The main problem for the housing market analysis is projecting the effects of external influences in an uneven and uncertain environment.

It is difficult to predict how soldiers will utilize community services and hard to know capacity for some off-post social services providers. PPACG has a separate contract with El Paso County Department of Human Services (DHS) to track DHS-specific data.

Focus groups with family members are scheduled in October. More qualitative data will be gathered from these focus group meetings.

PPACG and BBC are also working with TriWest to project growth and demand regarding medical services.

Sustainability is a broad task that will be integrated with long-term efforts of various entities in the region. However, it is difficult to receive buy-in from community members and officials regarding sustainability. GBSM, under BBC's contract, is the consultant firm working on regional communication and sustainability. Currently, GBSM is working with PPACG to redesign the Growth Plan newsletter and website. Technical challenges with the website are still being worked out and have slowed progress on the redesign.

Discussion:

Mr. Carl Schueler stated that here should be a couple of sensitivities built into the model (i.e., different projections of possible external influences, like more or less troops being deployed to Afghanistan). This is difficult as there are many external influences that can change projections. Fort Carson may be limited in relaying too much deployment information. However, the model has been designed to be dynamic and account for changing conditions.

LTC Ron Bolton reported that deployment schedules will be reviewed on October 1 and stated that typically at least one brigade will be deployed at any given time. Updates will be provided to PPACG when available.

Partnership Group Reports

Child Development

BBC received a low survey response rate from providers. Ms. Diane Price reported that efforts to get providers to fill out surveys continue. Currently, military families are referred through Child Care Connections (CCC). Anecdotally Ms. Price was told that all spots in accredited child care sites in the area are filled. Child Care Connections will refer to non-accredited sites if those sites agree to become accredited. Not a lot of sites are non-accredited or do not wish to seek accreditation. Therefore, space is limited. Ms. Price indicated that there have been discussions to develop state legislation regarding child care accreditation for serving military families.

Economic Development/Sustainability

The Operation 6035 final report will officially roll out to the public in a couple of months. There are about 71 action items listed in the report. There is discussion of combining the results and recommendations from the Dream City 2020 visioning sessions, the Quality of Life report, UCCS' plan and Operation 6035. This effort will focus more on economic opportunities and will be headed by the Chambers, UCCS, Leadership Pikes Peak and the Colorado Springs Economic Development Corporation.

PPACG will be conducting a sustainability/economic development session at the Southern Colorado Sustainable Communities and Expo conference on November 4th at the Double Tree Hotel. The session will be an opportunity for PPACG to introduce the sustainability/economic partnership group's efforts and receive public input for this section of the Growth Plan's report.

K-12 Education

Mr. Dave Roudebush announced Fountain/Fort Carson School District 8 is two months ahead of time for anticipated growth. The school district has 500 more students compared with the same time last year. The school district anticipated that most families would arrive in the June/July timeframe and now it is waiting to see whether population levels off or continues to increase.

Health & Behavioral Health/Social Services

The combined Health & Behavioral Health/Social Services Partnership Group will meet Friday, September 18th at 12:30 – 2:00 pm. PPACG will give an update at the next CDMC meeting.

Mr. Jason Wilkinson reported discussions he had with representatives from four other growth communities while attending the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) conference in Boston. Mr. Wilkinson indicated that all four communities have hired recruiters to bring in medical professionals to those growth communities. He asked how this community could attract medical talent and skill and who would be responsible for doing so. It was recommended that PPACG discuss this with the Community Health Partnership and with El Paso County Medical Society.

Housing

See Tasks & Issues above.

It was asked whether military families are having difficulty selling their houses, causing them to not buy houses locally. Mr. Frick stated that this population is too small a percentage to be a real factor.

Public Safety

Sarah White provided a brief update about the veteran's trauma court diversion program. Details of the program are currently being worked on by several entities, including the 4th Judicial District, Sheriff's office, District Attorney and Public Defender's office. Carrie Bailey is the new program manager for the program. Committees still have to prepare for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) evaluation tentatively scheduled for September 29th. The veteran's trauma court will only focus on veteran's cases, not active duty. Another pilot case regarding an active duty offender is currently being reviewed.

Transportation/Planning, Zoning & Compatibility

PPACG will host a planning forum on Friday, September 25th with regional planners to provide information regarding land use and transportation planning efforts of jurisdictions surrounding Fort Carson. Mr. Moore announced the Pueblo Springs Ranch development will most likely not be built closer to Fort Carson. The development will be more in the southern/east areas of Pueblo. Pueblo officials don't feel like they are going to have the economic impact from the troop growth they originally hoped for. Mr. Moore then reported the Rocky Mountain Rail Committee is conducting feasibility study for high speed rail along I-25 corridor. There was information leaked to media, which he assured is inaccurate. The project will likely not be completed for another 20-50 years.

Mr. Christopher Juniper reported Fort Carson has a goal to decrease vehicle usage by 25% in three years. Currently, Fort Carson is working on plans for a transit system to capture the most amounts of users. The City of Colorado Springs officials are talking about getting out of transit all together, except for RTA funded routes. Fort Carson is trying to determine who in the community will be a partner in transit before Fort Carson loses transit services to the post. Fort Carson is working with non-profits to try and obtain DoD mass transit money for transit services to and from Fort Carson. However, riders have to use the transit 50% of the time for their passes. Fort Carson is also exploring the possibility of high density transit oriented developments to house military families outside of gates 1, 4 & 20.

Utilities

Ms. White reported that the utility partnership group reconvened in August and discussed the construction status on Fort Carson's and local utility needs. The utility providers in the Fountain/Widefield/Security areas are having difficulty paying for infrastructure needs because of declining tap fees resulting from the lack of new construction. In addition, the recent wet weather and utility users increased water conservation cut into the utility providers' already strained funds.

Legislative Funding/Issues:

Ms. Hatten provided copies of the Military Children's School Investment Act, H.R. 2593. (See attached.) Ms. Hatten also stated that there is federal appropriations language that would potentially develop a grant program through the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) and/or the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to fund infrastructure projects in military growth communities. PPACG continues to monitor legislative actions and will inform the CDMC members of any and all pertinent information.

Mr. Christopher Juniper declared that there is a draft executive order which, if enacted, will make federal facilities address climate change.

Other Business

The next CDMC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21 at 3:00pm.

The Southern Colorado Sustainable Communities conference is November 3-4 at the Double Tree Hotel.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.