

**Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan  
Transportation/Planning and Zoning Forum  
September 25, 2009  
9:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Attendance:

- Todd Ahlenius – Pueblo Area MPO
- Mary Barber – Fort Carson
- Shelia Booth - Fountain
- Robert Burch – CDOT
- Craig Casper – PPACG
- Todd Frisbie – FHU
- Brian Grim – Metro Rides
- Kate Hatten – PPACG
- Stephanie Lind – PPACG
- Dave Menter – Colorado Springs Transit
- Richard Normandie – PPACG
- Rick O'Connor – City of Colorado Springs
- Beritt Odom – City of Pueblo
- Rick Orphan – Fort Carson
- Adam Ozier – Fort Carson
- Tim Roberts – Colorado Springs
- Elliot Sulsky – FHU
- Brian Vitulli - PPACG
- Travis Waldrip – CDOT
- Sarah White - PPACG
- Tom Wiersma – Fort Carson
- Jeff Woebur – Pueblo County

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Richard Normandie opened the meeting and led introductions. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for Fort Carson and local government representatives to update Fort Carson Growth Plan participants and each other about planning activities. Following are highlights from each presenter's summary:

Tom Wiersma – Fort Carson

- Fort Carson had 18,000 soldiers in 2008; projected to increase to 26,000 by 2013
- Now the installation has 45,000 total soldiers, civilian personnel, and dependents; projected to be 65,000 in 2013.
- There's now a \$2 billion construction program for the post. It is unknown how much that will be cut with the 47<sup>th</sup> Brigade not coming.
- Ongoing and future projects include a family care center east of Evans Army Community Hospital to open next year, more residential housing to the west near Gate 1, a new Commissary north of Ironhorse Park, a Warriors in Transition Unit complex near Gate 6, expansion of the PX, and planning for redevelopment to include more community support facilities in the middle section of the "Banana Belt". A Mountain Post Historical Center/Museum is proposed for outside Gate 1, but currently there are not enough funds.
- Freedom Crossing/Lifestyle Center project will not be built.
- A major development project is the Wilderness Road site which will have operational facilities for the 4<sup>th</sup> BCT, but no barracks. This will add a lot of traffic to limited north-south roads (Butts Road) between Wilderness and the core of the post. This may also increase impacts to SH 115, if/when Gate 6 opens. Final funding for the construction of Wilderness Road and Gate 6 is still to be determined.

Rick Orphan – Fort Carson

- Approximately 65,000 active duty, retirees and dependents use Fort Carson services. This number is expected to increase to approximately 140,000 in 2013.
- Projections are for a 95% increase and traffic from 2005 to 2013 if current traffic patterns (mostly single occupant vehicles) remain. The installation has already experienced 30% of the increase. There is a major push to reduce vehicle travel to decrease traffic. Deployments significantly affect traffic on-post.

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- A major completed project on-post is a new road connecting Specker to Titus. SH 16 improvements have also been a great benefit.
  - Other improvement needs have been identified in the 2008 Infrastructure Study on O'Connell, Childs, Specker, Pressman, and Titus near the new hospital. These are 2 lane roads that will be widened to 4 lanes, but funding has not been identified yet.
  - Queuing from Gates 3 and 4 into Academy is a problem. Fort Carson would like to add a staging area for commercial vehicles at Gate 3 and expand the access into Gate 4 from 2 to 4 lanes.
  - Access to the new Wilderness Road development is a concern. Road improvements are needed between the Wilderness site and the Cantonment area. Opening Gates 19 and 6 would help relieve congestion at Gate 20 and Gate 5. Wilderness Road construction traffic – 20-50 trucks/hour – that normally use Gate 4 will instead use Gate 6, under special arrangements.
  - CDOT is planning a project at the Gate 5/SH 115 intersection to line up the intersection for 4-way access and signalize. This will address long-standing safety issues.
  - With all the growth and unfunded roadway needs, sustainability solutions are needed. Fort Carson has aggressive goals to reduced single occupancy vehicles (SOV) use to/on post, including use of low impact vehicles, bike/pedestrian trails and travel demand management. Fort Carson has recently completed a study on pedestrian and Low Impact Vehicles (bikes, golf carts, Segways, etc.). However, many of the on-post roads are 2-lane 24 foot streets that don't accommodate Low Impact Vehicles (LIV) very well.
  - A feasibility study for Specker/Wetzel one-way alignment is currently underway, which is a more cost-effective option and may allow for bike/pedestrian lanes. Fort Carson is also looking at creating bike/pedestrian access at Gate 4 and working with El Paso County regarding a multi-use trail on east side of B Street. Funding for that project is an issue.
  - Fort Carson expects Gate 20 to be busiest gate, surpassing B Street. Gates 4 and 20 will account for 50% of total gate traffic (even with Gates 6 and 19).
  - Tom W. also discussed Fort Carson's rail yard expansion, including a pedestrian overpass over B Street for safer travel, particularly to local elementary school. Butts Army Airfield has a master plan, and he noted that additional aviation units are still a possibility for Fort Carson.
  - Mary Barber indicated that Fort Carson is looking at more ridesharing, bike/pedestrian access on post and is developing a pilot program for bike/car sharing. However there are no off-post services to complement such a program. Doing things like changing PT schedules or parking fees are not likely and an on-post shuttle system is too costly. Currently Fort Carson is working with non-profits to use mass transit benefit to pay for transit services to post. Additionally, there is Garrison level support to consolidate Garrison facilities (DPW, FMWR, Garrison HQ...) which will make walking to different offices easier.

#### Adam Ozier – Fort Carson Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Coordinator

- The 2009 Fort Carson sustainability report will be published soon.
- The role of the ACUB is to control surrounding development so development doesn't interfere with Fort Carson training (lights, noise...) and so that land use don't develop that would be impacted by the post.
- Fort Carson is working to establish a buffer zone (2 miles to the south, 1 ½ miles to the east/SE) through conservation easements, purchase options, and fee simple purchases (to a third party, usually El Paso County).
- The program has been very successful, but is competing with other installations for scarce dollars. Partners include US Fish & Wildlife, the Nature Conservancy, El Paso County. Key issues include working to ensure contiguous areas of central short-grass prairie.

- Craig Casper noted that PPACG is beginning to develop a green infrastructure plan, and Fort Carson should be included because of key impacts.

#### Tim Roberts (and Dave Menter) – Colorado Springs

- There is a lot of land in the incorporated City to accommodate residential growth needs generated by Fort Carson, including southern parts of the City north and east of Fort Carson and the southern parts of Banning-Lewis Ranch, which is seeing some development interest.
- Several PPRTA projects are completed, underway or coming that will influence Fort Carson transportation including: South Academy improvements north of Fort Carson (done last year); Proby Parkway, 1<sup>st</sup> phase underway for at-grade road from Powers to Academy, ultimate plan is an expressway from Academy to the airport; South Nevada Corridor Study (underway); a South Academy Corridor Study (coming soon); Powers EA (to be finished next year); Powers extension to the north and Powers/Airport/Stewart interchange (applying for TIGER grants)
- The City received a grant to make bike and pedestrian improvements to the Pikes Peak Community College / Fort Carson park-and-ride. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> busiest stop in the Springs Transit System (after downtown and Citadel). But the Fort Carson bus gets very little ridership and it will probably be cut with the upcoming drastic budget cuts (along with all weekend service, FREX, the Schriever AFB route and several others).

#### Sheila Booth - Fountain

- Fountain has experienced high growth for a long time – about 5% average growth/year over 20 years. Residential growth has occurred mostly to the south and east and industrial development has happened along I-25.
- The railroad rejected the planned Mesa Road crossing of US 85; there's now a plan for a new crossing at Duckwood Road which will be a major East-West crossing instead of Mesa Rd.
- A redevelopment plan for mixed use in the I-25/SH 85/Gate 19 area has been completed and is about to go to Council.
- Fountain is working with El Paso County, CDOT and Colorado Springs on plans for the extension of Marksheffel Road and Powers Boulevard to the south in Fountain.
- Sheila listed a number of pending developments, many of which are not currently active and some of which have been approved and dormant for a number of years. They include Crescent Canyon (900+ DUs), Mesa Ridge (1,974 DUs, including some multi-family), Independence Place (336 MF DUs), Crescent Heights (805-1180 DUs), Appletree (778 DUs), Almegra (2,031 DUs), Kane Ranch (7,273 DUs, has been inactive for a long time), and a couple of others to the south of town.
- Fountain has a ballot issue (sales tax) for transit and transportation improvements (including Duckwood intersection). Key issues/concerns: limited development = limited funding for transportation; also, CDOT and Fountain have differing plans for Powers extension. (Fountain prefers full interchange).

#### Jeff Woebur – Pueblo County

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- Most of the soldiers and others from Fort Carson who live in Pueblo County are in Pueblo West. Pueblo West is about 49 square miles and has a build-out plan for 18,000 lots. There are now about 11,000 DUs; most of the remaining 7,000 lots are in the north area.
  - County permits in 2008 and 2009 are much lower. Other development in the county includes St. Charles Mesa, east of Pueblo, and Colorado City, which is not close to FC (30-45 minutes S of Pueblo). Pueblo Springs Ranch, because of financing, water and other infrastructure challenges, is not really feasible at this time.
  - Energy and water infrastructure projects, including SDS, possible solar at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, Comanche Power plant would support additional growth.

#### Todd Ahlenius – City of Pueblo and PACOG

- I-25 corridor is the critical link between Pueblo and northern communities, and most development will be pushed into this corridor as Fountain grows south and Pueblo grows north.
- The area of Pueblo County north of the existing City of Pueblo is undeveloped and unprotected. It can be expected that there will be growth pressures to fill in like the North Front Range has.
- Infrastructure projects, such as rail for Nixon power plant and Vestas, as well as a CIG gas line to Pueblo, and water (either via Colorado Springs Utilities or Pueblo Board of Waterworks) will drive development location and amount.
- Pueblo Springs Ranch is a 23,000 acre long range development plan for more than 70,000 DUs. They are trying to get annexed into Pueblo, mainly to get access to Pueblo's water system.
- If Pueblo Springs Ranch starts to develop along with other development north of Pueblo, and Fort Carson and Fountain continue to grow, there will be more pressure on I-25. The railroad, Fountain Creek, Fort Carson and its conservation easements, and the Bacaulite Mesa are all constrained on building additional north-south transportation corridors.
- Pueblo County has taken steps to address Fort Carson buffer, removing a development ring in its development maps that went into the buffer zone and approving an ordinance to limit fugitive light. As far as alternative modes of transportation, vanpools are available and should be encouraged. Pueblo has no money for bus systems.
- There is a great concern that by 2035 unchecked development will eliminate compatible habitat in PACOG/PPACG region for up to 10 species. Fountain Creek Watershed is vulnerable to development.

Future Meetings: It was agreed that a meeting in October was not needed. PPACG staff will send notice of future meetings, as needed.