

# FORT CARSON REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

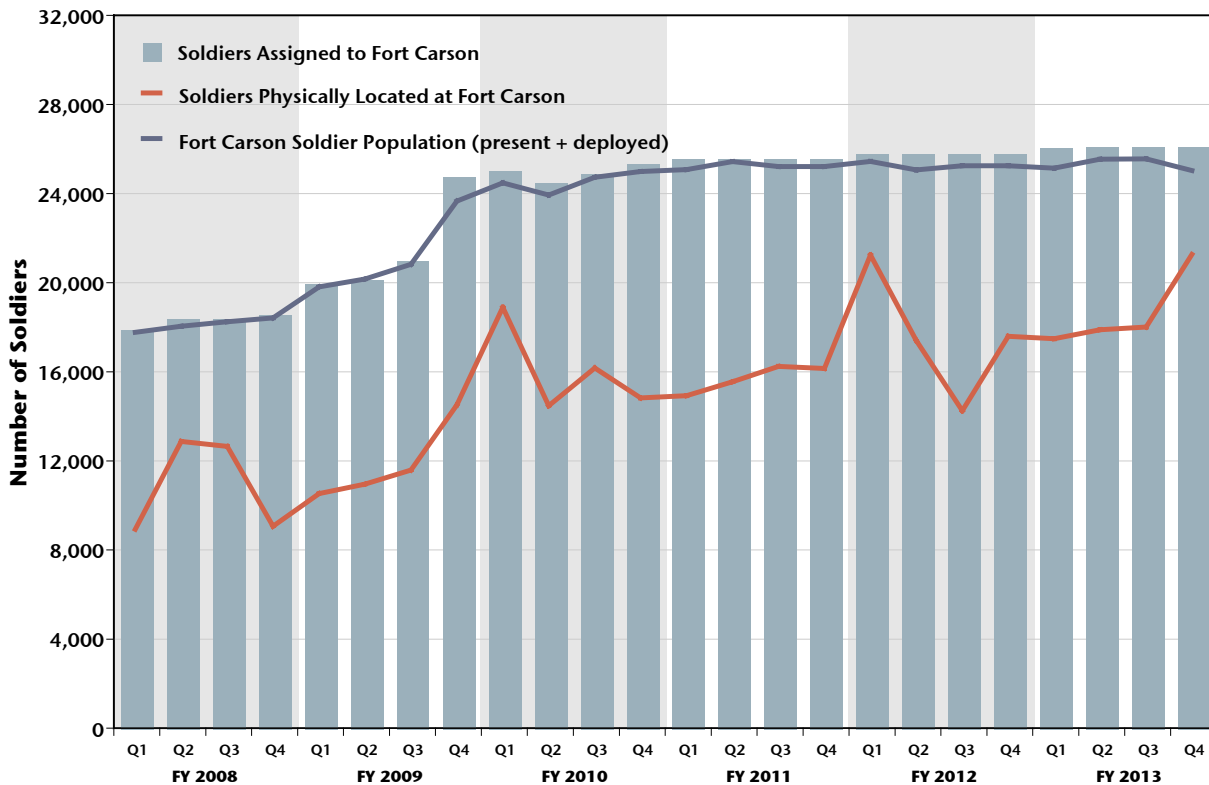
## KEY FINDINGS FROM PHASE II

The Fort Carson Regional Growth Plan is designed to help the Pikes Peak region — including El Paso, Fremont, Pueblo and Teller Counties — more accurately prepare for the military growth at Fort Carson. By providing the most current and accurate information about the Soldiers at Fort Carson, this comprehensive planning effort helps local communities address the effects of Fort Carson growth, ensuring the best quality of life for Soldiers, their families and the region.

The Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) will complete Phase II of the Growth Plan in June of 2010. The full draft report can be viewed on PPACG’s website at [www.ppacg.org](http://www.ppacg.org). Summarized below are some of the Growth Plan’s key findings.

### TROOP GROWTH PROJECTIONS

One of the key deliverables of Phase II is a dynamic model that better predicts the number of Soldiers and family members present in the region at any given time. Key findings are summarized below.



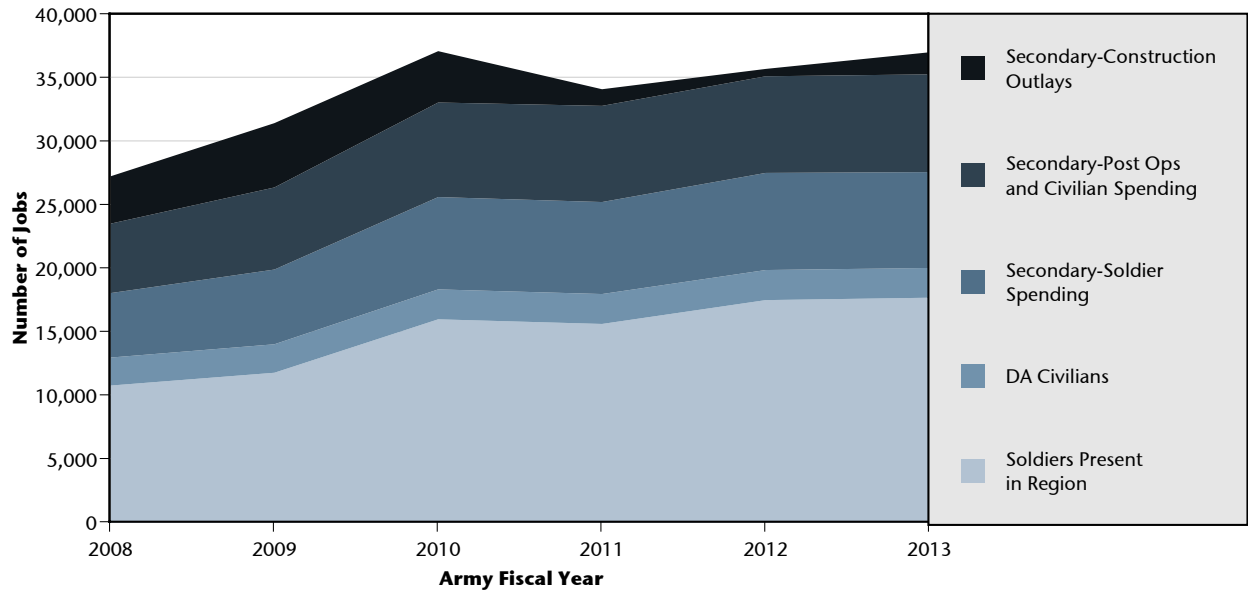
*It’s important to note that troop projections are continually changing in response to dynamic military conditions and deployment schedules. While deployment data are currently available only through FY 2013, deployment cycles are expected to continue beyond this time frame.*

- In the three year-period between December 2006 and December 2009, the total number of Soldiers assigned to Fort Carson grew from 12,600 troops to nearly 25,000 troops. Approximately 1,100 additional Soldiers are scheduled for assignment to Fort Carson through 2013.
- By 2013, these Soldiers will be accompanied by over 30,000 family members, including 12,000 spouses and approximately 18,500 children.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Growth Plan seeks to quantify how Fort Carson spending and Soldier presence contribute to the local economy. Key findings include:

- Between Post operating and construction expenditures, Soldier income, and Department of the Army (DA) civilian income, Fort Carson provides an estimated \$1.7 billion in direct stimulus for the state and regional economy on an annual basis.
- Fort Carson supports over 35,000 jobs a year, roughly one-half of which are off-Post.



- Fort Carson-related expenditures produce significant tax revenue for the region and the state. In FY 2009, Colorado Springs alone reaped nearly \$9.5 million in sales and use tax from Fort Carson-associated sales, while Colorado received nearly \$12 million in state sales taxes.

## HOUSING

The Growth Plan provides an extensive analysis of the regional housing market, including all forms of rental and for-sale housing. Key findings include:

- There was a dramatic shift in Soldiers' preferences to rent rather than own a home. A July 2009 survey found that 83 percent of Fort Carson Soldiers rent their homes — up from 43 percent in 2008. This change is driven by uncertainties of deployments and perceptions of housing market conditions.
- Travel times are particularly important for Soldiers who often travel back and forth to the Post multiple times during a single day. Consequently, most Soldiers will seek housing in the Fountain, Security-Widefield and southern Colorado Springs areas.
- The private market is expected to meet the demand for new off-Post housing units related to Fort Carson growth through 2013. There will likely be some tightness in certain segments of the rental market; however, the market will likely respond to this demand through new construction.
- Fort Carson growth has contributed greatly to lowering vacancy rates — particularly in the Fountain Valley, where rental vacancy rates are at their lowest in four years.

*Please note that the analysis discussed reflects impacts based on continuing deployments for the foreseeable future. As conditions change, the analysis will be updated.*

## TRANSPORTATION

In addition to analyzing regional vehicular traffic trends and roadway capacities, the Growth Plan also addresses non-motorized and public transportation options. Key findings include:

- Over the last four years, Fort Carson-related vehicle traffic has increased significantly. Gate counts from October 2009 show about 74,000-vehicle trips to and from Fort Carson each day — a 90 percent increase from counts taken in 2005.
- During the peak morning hours, inbound single occupant vehicles comprise about 93 percent of the traffic, which is consistent with the greater Pikes Peak area.
- Recent capacity improvements to the adjacent roadway system will likely accommodate both existing and projected traffic volumes. Challenges regarding peak hour congestion at some gates and limited public transit options continue to be addressed.

## EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

The Phase II analysis identifies both benefits and challenges in the areas of education and child care and development. Key findings include:

- From 2008 to 2010, the total number of Fort Carson children present in the region is anticipated to grow from 12,611 to 18,332. Relatively minor fluctuations in this number are expected through 2013.
- The vast majority of Fort Carson children have parents in the lower to mid pay grades, with almost 65 percent of all children belonging to Soldiers in the E-1 through E-6 pay grade range.
- More than 10,000 Fort Carson students currently attend Pikes Peak-area schools. Some schools, such as Widefield District 3 and Colorado Springs District 11, have seen 40 percent or more growth in Fort Carson students over the past 18 months. However, the number of Fort Carson children enrolled in local schools is anticipated to remain somewhat steady over the next three years.

Districts	2009-2010		
	Army Children	Total Enrollment	Army Share
Academy D-20	775	22,620	3%
Cheyenne Mountain D-12	362	4,578	8%
Colorado Springs D-11	999	29,673	3%
Falcon D-49	785	14,398	5%
Fountain-Fort Carson D-8	4,263	7,365	58%
Harrison D-2	1,157	11,309	10%
Widefield D-3	1,662	8,851	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,003</b>	<b>98,794</b>	<b>10%</b>

- Quality, affordable child care not only contributes to the development of children, but also directly strengthens the regional economy through job creation and parental workforce participation. The overall economic impact of the child care industry in the Fort Carson region equals \$413 million — the combined effect of working parents and child care operations.

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- The demand for adequate child care among Fort Carson families will challenge the region. While Fort Carson is constructing new child-development centers on-Post, the short-term supply is expected to be insufficient to meet child care demands in certain sections of the region.



- Approximately 15 percent of Fort Carson Soldiers and 20 percent of Soldier spouses participate in some form of adult education or workforce skills development program in any given year. Distance learning (a.k.a. online courses) is by far the preferred education method for Soldiers, although in-person classes, both on- and off-Post, are also utilized.

## MEDICAL CARE, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The Growth Plan analyzes the availability of medical care, social services and behavioral health services, both on- and off-Post. It also identifies areas of need and recommends ways to improve services. Key findings include:

- The top level need is to improve communication and coordination between Fort Carson and community-based service providers.
- General population growth, coupled with stresses on military families (such as living away from family supports and continued deployments), exacerbates already-existing challenges of limited resources and the lack of coordination and referral processes between agencies.
- An impact assessment was conducted to measure regional providers' ability to manage the increased demand related to the growth and fluctuations in Fort Carson Soldiers and their families.
  - Critical Impacts were identified in the areas where multiple concerns exist in the ability to provide fundamental services, including child advocacy and behavioral health.
  - Moderate Impacts were identified for legal services, where some specific concerns exist related to the ability to meet future demand.
  - Manageable Impacts were found in the areas of food and other emergency aid, financial counseling, and eldercare and accessibility services, indicating that the concerns are minimal relative to other social service providers.
- Data on the number of Soldiers in the region reveals anticipated shortages for some medical specialty areas, including neurosurgeries, endocrinology, urology, infectious disease, dermatology and rheumatology.
- A number of new programs, including the Veterans Trauma Court, were created in 2009 to address new demands for services related to Fort Carson growth. The success of these programs is dependent upon ongoing support, both in adequate funding and resources.

## SUSTAINABILITY

The Growth Plan identifies the opportunities that exist or can be created by the overlap of regional sustainability, economic development, and troop growth at Fort Carson.

- Regional opportunities were identified in six areas: regional collaboration; renewable energy; solid waste and recycling; education and training; transportation; and construction, retrofitting and maintenance.
- Key challenges include varying definitions/perceptions of sustainability, a strong focus on immediate rather than lifecycle costs, and a need for more regional coordination and collaboration.

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