

Study will plan use for land on borders

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By **Jeremy Craig** | *Staff Writer*

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Now that base closure doubts are out of the way, area officials are putting final touches on a plan that will set the course for future development around Fort Gordon's borders.

Costa Pappis, the senior planner for the CSRA Regional Development Center, said a joint land use study, looking at appropriate land use around the post's borders, is being reviewed by Fort Gordon officials.

"It's coming along," Mr. Pappis said. "We had a delay in May because of BRAC."

While the study had nothing to do with the Base Realignment and Closure process, Mr. Pappis said the timing of the Pentagon's May release of a list of bases it wants closed or realigned affected Fort Gordon's ability to meet with other civilian officials.

The study will present recommendations of action for local governments for planning and zoning around the post, he said.

One of the issues that state and local officials are dealing with is encroachment around military bases, which is something the study seeks to limit.

Broadly defined, encroachment is anything that gets in the way of the military's ability to perform its mission.

More narrowly viewed, it's where civilian development - such as housing and certain types of businesses - abuts an installation and doesn't jibe well.

For example, noise from military aircraft flying over housing developments that are too close to bases can generate complaints, thus causing the military to have to curtail flights.

During the tense waiting before May's news, those concerned with BRAC were worried that encroachment on a military base could be a strike against a post's ability to stay open.

Experts have said Fort Gordon doesn't have much of an encroachment problem. But on the state level before 2003, local legislators helped co-sponsor a law that requires local governments to consult with base commanders about planning or zoning changes around posts in Georgia.

Mr. Pappis said he's expecting the study to be completed relatively soon, but he said he wasn't sure how long that would be.

"As soon as they send me the document back, I plan on posting it on the Web site," he said.

The RDC's Web site is www.csrardc.org.

The CSRA Alliance for Fort Gordon, which worked to prevent Fort Gordon's closure, and the Defense Department's Office of Economic Adjustment contributed funds and other resources for the study.

The alliance contributed about \$25,000, said Larry DeMeyers, the chairman of the group.

"It will be a valuable study," he said.

WHAT IS THE STUDY?

The joint land use study was embarked on by local governments around Fort Gordon and the CSRA Regional Development Center to determine the best way to prevent urban encroachment from affecting Fort Gordon. Such encroachment could limit the post's ability to perform its missions. The study will present recommendations for local governments to follow for future planning.

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