



ARMY-COMMUNITY HERITAGE
PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM
FORT BRAGG-FAYETTEVILLE
ASSESSMENT VISIT

MAY 8-10, 2006

MAIN STREET



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATIONSM

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§ I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the observations and recommendations of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Center's Assessment Team that visited Fayetteville and Fort Bragg on May 8 — 10, 2006, as part of the Army-Community Heritage Partnerships Program. Information in this report is based on meetings the Assessment Team had with members of the Fort Bragg-Fayetteville Heritage Partnership Team and other meetings and interviews with individuals and representatives from the fort, local organizations, and the community. During its visit, the Assessment Team had a walking and driving tour of downtown Fayetteville, the surrounding areas, and Fort Bragg. Prior to the visit, the team reviewed background materials pertinent to the issues which were being studied.

The assessment visit is one of several services provided to Fort Bragg and the Fayetteville community through the Army-Community Heritage Partnerships Program (ACHPP). The ACHPP has four major objectives:

- To better serve the needs of Army personnel (military and civilian), and those who visit or work on the installation by enhancing shopping opportunities, product availability, and services offered in adjacent or nearby downtown commercial districts.
- To encourage expanded economic vitality in adjacent or nearby downtown commercial districts by leveraging marketing opportunities afforded by the Army installations.
- To create linkages and parallels among the historic buildings and cultural heritage of the Army installations, the development of adjacent or nearby downtown commercial districts, and the evolution of the residents' social life.
- To investigate the potential for a heritage tourism strategy that would benefit economic conditions in adjacent or nearby downtown commercial districts and add value and opportunities for reuse of historic buildings on Army installations.



The historic barracks buildings ca. 1930 in the Fort Bragg Old Post Historic District.

(Photo courtesy of Fort Bragg CRMP.)

THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

The Assessment Team included the following members:

Teresa Lynch is a program officer with the National Trust Main Street Center (NTMSC). She delivers commercial revitalization technical assistance to small- and mid-sized communities, to urban neighborhood commercial districts, and for Main Street Center special projects throughout the country. For the past six years, Ms. Lynch has managed work activities under a Cooperative

Agreement between the Army's Office of Historic Properties and the National Trust for Historic Preservation and has provided technical assistance and training to Army installations and communities in Pennsylvania, New York, Georgia, Arizona, Kansas, North Carolina, and Virginia, all of which are participating in the Army-Community Heritage Partnerships Program. Before coming to the NTMSC, Ms. Lynch worked in a variety of Main Street roles – state coordinator for the Main Street Arkansas program; manager of the statewide Virginia Main Street program; and executive director of the Orange Downtown Alliance, a Main Street program in Orange, Va. On several occasions she served as a consultant to the NTMSC on technical assistance projects and was a co-author of the Main Street Committee Members Handbooks.

Joshua Bloom is a principal in the Community Land Use and Economics (CLUE) Group. Before joining the CLUE Group, Josh spent ten years as a program officer at the National Trust Main Street Center. Josh teaches communities how to revitalize their commercial centers by first gaining an understanding of their local economies and then helping them apply that knowledge to a series of market-driven and achievable projects. He has particular interests in using research on local customers to deepen the picture painted by traditional demographic data sources, and in cultivating sustainable clusters of chain and independent businesses. He has published articles on both of these subjects. While he works in communities of all sizes, he was instrumental at the Main Street Center in expanding the program's urban reach to cities that included Boston, Cleveland, St. Louis, Los Angeles, and others. Before joining the staff of the Main Street Center in 1995, Josh served as executive director of Main Street South Orange in South Orange, New Jersey, his hometown.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Assessment Team could not have completed this report without the assistance of so many people of Fayetteville and Fort Bragg. This report reflects observations and recommendations based on meetings and interviews with a large and varied cross-section of individuals and groups who generously gave their time to provide the team with insight on opportunities for moving the objectives of the Partnerships program forward.

Special thanks are extended to Partnership Team co-coordinators Mike Lynch and Gayle Nelson for their help in coordinating and facilitating all aspects of the visit, including the walking tour of downtown and the driving tour of Fort Bragg. The Assessment Team would also like to thank Partnership task force chairs and other Partnership team members who provided their input and counsel at informational meetings and during interview sessions. The continuing strong support and leadership for this Partnership effort exhibited by Team Co-chairs COL Al Aycock and Gordon Johnson ensured that the Assessment Team was given cooperation by those participating in the process and access to all of the information and materials requested.

USING THIS REPORT

The observations and recommendations in this report are structured around five work areas deemed important for achieving the objectives of the Army-Community Heritage Partnerships Program. During the introductory visit on February 22-23, 2006, task forces comprised of

partnership team members and other individuals from Fort Bragg and Fayetteville were established to work in the areas of:

- ***Heritage Tourism:*** Emphasizing the arts, cultural, and historical connections among the post and attractions in and around the Fayetteville-Fort Bragg communities.
- ***Visual and Physical Linkages:*** Finding ways to better connect Fort Bragg with the Fayetteville downtown commercial district through visual enhancements along the vehicular and pedestrian byways, by using appropriate landscape design and signage on entranceway corridors, and by creating additional physical linkages between the two sites.
- ***Communications:*** Investigating opportunities to market downtown Fayetteville's businesses, products, services, and attractions to the military community and to heritage tourism visitors; and to improve all communication methods between the downtown district's stakeholders and Fort Bragg's constituency.
- ***Business Development:*** Expanding the capacity of downtown Fayetteville businesses to serve the needs of the Fort Bragg community, visitors to the post, and heritage tourists; and improving the overall commercial mix by recruiting new businesses that complement the existing ones.
- ***Property Development:*** Creating opportunities for the rehab and re-use of vacant or underutilized downtown buildings; encouraging a positive investment climate to accommodate new retail and service businesses; and establishing new uses for existing buildings that might include housing, small-scale industry, offices, entertainment, and civic activities.

The Assessment Team has detailed its observations and made recommendations within each of the above work areas in this report.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

There are numerous assets in Fayetteville and at Fort Bragg upon which to build a climate of investment that creates economic vitality within the downtown commercial district and leads to increased business and property development opportunities. Many of those community strengths were cited in the *Report on Introductory Visit*, which was produced following the February 22-23 visit.

During the Assessment Visit, the team was updated on current community happenings and was given an excellent economic forecast for the region brought about by the troop expansion that will occur at Fort Bragg over the next few years. There is an expectation that between 9,000 to 17,000 new soldiers will be arriving at the post during that time and that half of them will be married. This expansion is spurring tremendous growth in the community's housing market as well as in the commercial retail sector. The Fort itself is planning for \$260 million worth of military construction to take place by 2008. Fayetteville and Cumberland County is responding to the influx of new Army families by accelerating housing development in the community – building major apartment complexes and single family home developments to accommodate the newcomers.

Concurrent with the population expansion at Fort Bragg, downtown Fayetteville is witnessing some major property developments:

- New construction of mixed-use development on the 300 block of Hay Street to include retail, condos, townhouses, and parking;
- Rehab and re-use of the vacant 50,000-sq. foot Capitol Department Store into a family dining/entertainment complex; and
- Construction of a 46,000-square foot office building at the gateway to Festival Park

All of this activity comes at the same time that the Fort Bragg-Fayetteville Heritage Partnership Team and task force members are working to help the downtown commercial district become more responsive to the needs of the Army family. The ACHPP presents an opportunity to channel much of that underserved military market into downtown Fayetteville. The community's downtown commercial district will need to diversify and expand to better serve the existing military market and to ready itself to accommodate the new needs resulting from Fort Bragg's expansion. The Assessment Team sensed enthusiasm from downtown stakeholders for the tasks ahead and a great desire to tackle the issues and to learn as much as possible from the technical assistance and training being delivered through the Partnership Program.

During the Assessment Visit, the team was able to interview many downtown stakeholders, gain insights from them, and learn about their concerns. After meeting with business and property owners it became obvious to the Assessment Team that Fayetteville's downtown commercial district, while possessing a variety of business uses, is not attracting as much as it could of the market currently afforded by the post's population and others in the region affiliated with the military. It was also apparent that the heritage tourism market was not being tapped the way it could given the significance of the architectural and cultural assets in the community and at Fort Bragg.



Assessment Team Member Teresa Lynch interviews downtown business owner.

To assemble this report, the Assessment Team reviewed how business is being conducted in downtown Fayetteville today; looked at the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that exist in the central business district; and studied the reasons why Army and civilian personnel, their family members, retirees, and visitors to the post are not connecting with downtown. This report identifies the issues impeding progress and makes recommendations for each task force so they can begin working toward solutions. During a follow-up visit to Fayetteville, two program officers from the National Trust Main Street Center will facilitate work planning sessions for each of the task forces that will be based on

strategies recommended in this report and will examine ways in which the task forces can work together on crosscutting issues.

§ II. HERITAGE TOURISM

OBSERVATIONS

Heritage tourism is traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. The term “heritage tourism” includes cultural, historical, and natural resource assets that attract visitors.

A complete assessment of heritage tourism assets and recommendations for specific actions and projects to be undertaken by the Heritage Tourism Task Force will be made later this year after a visit to Fayetteville and Fort Bragg by two heritage tourism specialists from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The tourism-related issues and recommendations for actions that are stated below are meant to start the Heritage Tourism Task Force on preparing for that visit.

HERITAGE TOURISM ISSUES

Issue 1: There are existing heritage tourism documents to be studied and tourism data to be gathered. All previous tourism plans/reports/ surveys for Fayetteville/ Cumberland County and the region will provide valuable information to the Army-Community Heritage Partnership and the Heritage Tourism Task Force that will be developing a tourism strategy based on a Fayetteville and Fort Bragg collaborative effort.

Issue 2: Fayetteville’s downtown business owners have put little emphasis on targeting the heritage and cultural tourism market and the many visitors to Fort Bragg. Fayetteville has some extraordinary architectural assets within

the downtown’s National Register Historic District. The City continues to expand and beautify its public spaces and to enhance the downtown district through public improvements. Many of the downtown businesses benefit from the influx of visitors who attend the arts and cultural activities and events within the district. Also, an ever-growing number of visitors are visiting Fort Bragg. However, business owners (either individually or as a group) are doing little to market their products and services aggressively to this broad visitor audience.

Issue 3: There are significant architectural and historical sites on Fort Bragg grounds that have not been promoted to heritage tourism visitors. There are 4,200 archeological sites, 372 historic buildings, two historic districts, 27 historic cemeteries, and a Civil War battlefield within Fort Bragg’s boundaries. There are also numerous recreational venues located on Fort Bragg

Heritage tourism represents significant economic development potential

- Cultural heritage travelers spend, on average, \$623 per trip compared to \$457 for all U.S. travelers.*
- Cultural heritage travelers stay, on average, 5.2 nights away from home as compared to 3.4 nights for other travelers.*
- Forty-four percent of cultural heritage travelers include shopping during their trips, compared to 33 percent of all other travelers.**

* From The Historic/Cultural Traveler 2003 Edition study prepared by the Travel Industry Association of America.

** From The Historic/Cultural Traveler 2001 Edition.

grounds that are open to the Fayetteville community. But there has been no unified effort to promote these historical, cultural, and recreational assets to the community and to visitors.

Issue 4: The museums associated with Fort Bragg – 82nd Airborne Museum, JFK Special Warfare Museum, and the Airborne and Special Operations Museum (ASOM) – are not being marketed in a unified manner to visitors. Each museum seems to be generating its own independent visitor traffic. Since ASOM is located directly within the downtown district, cross-promoting the two on-post museums with ASOM could create a synergy that does not now exist and could have some spill-over benefit for businesses and arts/cultural entities in the downtown district.

Issue 5: While ASOM is located within the downtown district, there is nothing that visually or physically connects it to the businesses and other properties within the district. In fact, ASOM's physical structure turns its back to the downtown business district and there are no way-finding signs at the museum that would direct visitors to other attractions in the business district.



US Army 82nd Airborne Division War Memorial Museum, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Issue 6: There are few directional signs and visual enhancements along the roadways leading to the downtown commercial district. The effort to gain additional heritage tourism visitors is heavily dependent on providing appropriate visual signals and enhancements that direct visitors into the downtown commercial district.

Issue 7: There is no tracking system in place to determine the level of response from the Army family for arts and cultural activities held within the downtown district. Many of these special events seem to attract a large contingent of the Army family but there has been no effort to measure the effectiveness of marketing these activities to the military audience.

HERITAGE TOURISM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: In order to fully educate Heritage Tourism Task Force members and to adequately prepare for the upcoming National Trust's heritage tourism team visit, which will be scheduled for the late fall 2006, the task force should:

- **Collect** and become familiar with all existing heritage and tourism reports and other documents that relate to Fayetteville and Fort Bragg.
- **Complete** an inventory of arts and cultural heritage assets in the community, at the post, and in the surrounding region.
- **Assess** and evaluate the quality of tourism infrastructure.

- Complete a downtown retail businesses inventory that concentrates on businesses that have the potential for attracting visitors. Include:
 - a) Name and type of business
 - b) Name of owner and contact information
 - c) Business hours
 - d) The type and quality of products that would interest military-related tourists and other visitors
 - e) The type and quality of local products carried, if any.
- **Compile** existing visitor surveys and any other market information available from local/regional tourism offices, museums, historic sites, and other pertinent market data that will assist in developing a complete profile of heritage tourism visitors to Fayetteville.
- **Compile** a list of tourism-related partnering entities and organizations. Set up a database with complete contact information.
- **Compile** a list of local, regional, and state tourism marketing resources. Include niche publications and resources that target specific types of cultural heritage tourists, as well as more general tourism media.

Recommendation 2: After completing an inventory of downtown retail businesses and a list of the products and services that are currently offered to visitors, the task force should:

- **Identify** products and services that would have additional appeal and which could be absorbed by existing businesses or form the basis for establishing new businesses.
- **Develop** ideas on how existing business owners might promote their products and services to heritage tourists and other Fayetteville visitors by identifying marketing strategies used by those businesses that serve the visitor market well.
- **Consider** new products or businesses that build upon the heritage of Fayetteville and Fort Bragg.

Recommendation 3: Begin to tell the story of the history of the community of Fayetteville and its relationship to Fort Bragg.

- **Select** one cultural- or history-related project that can better link the downtown business district with Fort Bragg. For example, bring the history of the post into the downtown district through window displays, art shows, performances, and design elements.

Recommendation 4: Work with the Visual and Physical Linkages Task Force in establishing way-finding and directional signage for Fayetteville. New public signs (directional and way-finding) will be a key element in developing a heritage tourism strategy.

Recommendation 5: Work with the Communications Task Force to outline ways to cross promote the museums on the post, the Airborne and Special Operations Museum, community museums, and other arts/cultural venues.

§ III. VISUAL AND PHYSICAL LINKAGES

OBSERVATIONS

A primary objective for the Army-Community Partnerships Program is to improve all forms of connections between downtown Fayetteville and Fort Bragg. Creating visual and physical linkages is an important component of that objective. The following are some of the activities in which this task force will become involved:

- Identifying the vehicular and pedestrian ways from Fort Bragg to the downtown.
- Recommending enhancements to vehicular roadways and pedestrian passageways through signage and landscaping improvements.
- Investigating if new modes of physical transport should be recommended to better link downtown and Fort Bragg.
- Planning way-finding and directional signage systems that better connect downtown with Fort Bragg and that encourage heritage tourists to find attractions in the downtown and at the Fort.



Longstreet Presbyterian Church was built ca. 1850. (Photo courtesy of Fort Bragg CRMP.)

VISUAL AND PHYSICAL CONNECTORS ISSUES

Issue 1: There is visual pollution along Bragg Blvd., which is the main corridor leading from Fort Bragg into downtown Fayetteville. Unattractive and deteriorated conditions exist both in the private properties and along the public way.

Issue 2: The Fayetteville downtown business district lacks a “sense of entrance” along the roadways leading into the district. There are no visual signals, either through landscaping or directional signage, to guide a traveler into downtown, and there are no established gateways to indicate that a traveler is entering a “special place.”

Issue 3: On entering the downtown business district, there are no way-finding signs to direct residents or visitors to points of interest and there are no visual signals that demonstrate a linkage between Fort Bragg and the downtown community. Downtown Fayetteville is well landscaped with many amenities for pedestrians, but there is a lack of way-finding and directional signage and there are few visual indicators within the downtown that show the role that Fort Bragg plays in community life.

Issue 4: There is a lack of historic district signage within the downtown district and on highways and major roadways leading into downtown. Any new residents who are unfamiliar with the area (including all of the newcomers to Fort Bragg) and visitors to the region would have no indication of the wealth of historic assets that exist in downtown Fayetteville.

Issue 5: Parking signs within the downtown district are dark and poorly placed. Badly designed or poorly placed signs that direct residents and visitors to parking locations can cause a potential customer to become angry and decide to not return to the district.

Issue 6: Currently there are few alternative modes of transportation into the downtown. Development of alternative methods of getting into the business district and moving through the district to shop or to participate in arts and cultural activities would encourage people affiliated with the Army family to frequent the downtown district.

Issue 7: There is a multi-modal transportation facility being planned for the downtown district. Since many military affiliates coming into Fayetteville would use this facility, involvement of this task force in the planning stages might improve the project's chances of moving forward.

VISUAL AND PHYSICAL LINKAGES RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Begin a process for eliminating visual pollution along Bragg Blvd.

- Work with the City to improve the visual appearance and deteriorated conditions on private property along this road by:
 - Expanding demolition by neglect ordinance to corridors/entranceways with an appropriate fine for non-compliance; and
 - Enforcing existing ordinances.
- Work with the City to improve the appearance of the public areas along Bragg Blvd. by:
 - Assisting in the implementation of existing plans for improvements along the roadway, such as the pending TEA-3 enhancements along Bragg Blvd.;
 - Using landscaping enhancements to soften the edges of Bragg Blvd.; and
 - Establishing an “Adopt-a-Highway” program for Bragg Blvd.

Recommendation 2: Improve the appearance of all entranceways into the downtown district and create “gateways.” Work with the City to identify key locations along entranceways into the downtown district where signage and landscaping can be placed to create a sense of entrance through gateways into the downtown district. After those key areas have been identified, these are some sign and landscape improvement tasks to follow:

Signage

- Become knowledgeable about any city plans for creating directional or way-finding signs along the entranceways into downtown.
- Work closely with the City and the Business Development, Heritage Tourism, and Communications Task Forces to get their input on design and wording for directional and way-finding signs that will best communicate downtown's image to local residents, military affiliates, and visitors.

- Consult with a professional design specialist to ensure quality in graphics and color selection.
- Consider tying in the connections between Fort Bragg and the downtown district through the graphic elements on signs.

Landscaping

- Become knowledgeable about any city plans for initiating landscape projects along the entranceways into downtown.
- With the city and other community groups, develop a unified plan for landscape design improvements to downtown's entranceways and gateways.
- Consult with a professional landscape architect to determine appropriate landscape design enhancements and materials.
- Consider establishing a gateway leading to the downtown district at the intersection of Bragg Blvd. and Ft. Bragg Road. Through landscaping and signs, traffic coming from the Fort into the downtown along Bragg Blvd. could be encouraged to turn onto Ft. Bragg Road and proceed through the Haymount district, a more attractive entranceway. This traffic pattern change could also benefit businesses in the Haymount district.

Recommendation 3: The task force should work with the city to identify locations for way-finding signs so that visitors can find downtown attractions and make visual connections with Fort Bragg:

- Determine where way-finding signs can be best placed to lead local residents, military affiliates, and heritage tourism visitors to points of interest within the downtown commercial district. The design of those signs is just as important as the placement; so it is important that the task force work closely with the city, the downtown community at large, and a design professional to develop appropriate color palette and graphic imagery for the signs.
- Find opportunities in the downtown to place visual connectors that would announce to the Fort Bragg community, the many local military retirees, and visitors to the region the special relationship that exists between the Fort Bragg and the Fayetteville community. Here are a couple of ideas for drawing those linkages:
 - ***Locate a kiosk in the downtown*** with a map showing the physical relationship between downtown and Fort Bragg and listings of downtown and Fort attractions in which visitors would be interested. (The information on the kiosk should have a broad appeal to a wide audience.); and
 - ***Consider placing statues*** or other art work downtown to symbolize a connection to Fort Bragg.

Recommendation 4: Establish a system of signs that mark and direct people into the downtown's National Register Historic District.

- Identify locations at entranceways into and within the district for Historic District signs.

- Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to locate Historic District signs on those key entrances and at the major highway exits leading to the downtown.

Recommendation 5: Review, with the City, the location and condition of existing parking signs and make plans for improvements. The parking signs that the Assessment Team saw were darkly colored and poorly placed and the number of parking signs that currently exist are inadequate. The signs need to be universally recognizable.

Recommendation 6: Increase opportunities for alternative modes of transportation.

- Investigate whether abandoned rail corridors near the downtown district can be converted into trails for jogging and biking. These are activities in which the Army family participates and the establishment of such trails would create another attraction for downtown Fayetteville.
- Look into the possibility of establishing some sort of bus/shuttle link between the Fort and ASOM for occasions when there are special events in the downtown district, such as 4th Fridays.
- Consider creating a trolley service that travels within the downtown district along Hay and Person Street, stopping at various attractions. This could certainly help to tie in the visitor traffic to ASOM but that does not proceed down Hay Street beyond that museum.

Recommendation 7: Become involved in the process currently underway within the City to develop a multi-modal transportation facility on property adjacent to the downtown train station. The development of such a building is in the planning stages. The participation of this task force in the planning process would add valuable citizen input to the venture.

§ IV. COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING

OBSERVATIONS

- Communicating a marketing message from downtown Fayetteville to the Army family has been a disjointed affair – for both individual business owners and the arts and cultural community. Fayetteville’s Downtown Alliance has, through the years, tried to help market downtown to its various customer bases but there has never been a comprehensive marketing program in place. Downtown Fayetteville’s largest target market – the Army family – has been the most ignored and that military customer remains downtown’s largest untapped market.
- While the Downtown Alliance is in an enviable position to assume the role of the central organization that markets the downtown as a unit and helps individual businesses promote their products and services, the organization lacks the financial and personnel resources to play this important role. Individual businesses are left to their own devices to navigate a circuitous route to get their message out to the military audience. And although the Alliance (with its limited resources) has done a good job of highlighting those businesses that pay membership dues to the organization, those who may not choose to participate as a member are left out of the Alliance’s marketing efforts.
- During its visit, the Assessment Team saw few image development materials that promoted the downtown as a unified shopping district. There was little indication of a coordinated retail promotional calendar. Fayetteville’s many arts and cultural organizations have done a good job of marketing their performances, events, and activities individually – but they certainly could use guidance in promoting their venues in sync with the business community so that together they could better reach the Army family market.
- It is likely that people associated with Fort Bragg are too busy and occupied in their daily work and lives to think of ways to open broader lines of communication so that downtown businesses, arts and cultural organizations, and restaurants can be better utilized by the Army family. It is the responsibility of individual business owners and an organization that represents the business community to ensure that they are doing everything possible to get their message out.
- During the course of its visit, the Assessment Team interviewed several downtown business owners and talked with others in their shops during the walking tour of the commercial district. The team was very glad to find that the downtown has a number of very effective business owners who understand their customers’ needs and who have developed their own personal marketing strategies to attract local customers and people affiliated with the Army family. While some of those market-savvy merchants exist, many of the downtown business owners lack training and sufficient information to know how to best communicate their message to the Army family. The Assessment Team have found the following reasons that contribute to this lack of individual marketing expertise:
 - The military market is extremely transient, often in flux. Soldiers are deployed; families re-assigned to new posts; and new families take their place – routinely and regularly. So savvy business owners must understand how to promote

services, products, and attractions to an existing military customer base – which can be tricky at best – and then understand how to capture the attention of those newcomers to the post who know nothing about the community.

- Where there had been open lines of communication in the past between the downtown business community and outlets for marketing at Fort Bragg, many of those channels of communication had closed through the years – and the situation was exacerbated after 9/11 when heavier security was enforced at the Fort.
- Some downtown business owners feel that the military personnel and civilian staff at Fort Bragg have a negative image of downtown Fayetteville and that this negative image gets passed on to soldiers and their families from generation to generation. They don't know how to correct that misperception.

So it appears that there are misunderstandings that need to be clarified, perceptions to be changed, and communication bridges to be built. But the timing has never been better to reinstate and improve those connections. The influx of new personnel at the post has spawned a new awareness of what these additional families will mean to the community's economy and there is a real desire on the part of downtown businesses to tap into that market. The team has seen a strong resolve coming from Fort Bragg personnel to improve lines of communication and to assist the downtown businesses owners in getting their message out.

The work that will be done by the Partnership Team's Survey Task Force will certainly help identify the shopping and entertainment gaps that exist within the downtown district. Once businesses learn more about the unmet needs of the Army family they can find ways to become more responsive to that customer base. And the Communications Task Force can help them market their products and services more effectively.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING ISSUES

Issue 1: The downtown merchants' ability to market themselves to the Army family as a unit is almost non-existent and many have limited skills in promoting their businesses individually to the Fort Bragg audience. The Fayetteville Downtown Alliance has developed some effective forms of communicating downtown's message – through its downtown map/business directory, its website, and newsletters. But the business directory/map is limited in that it only promotes businesses that are members, the website is inadequate, and newsletter production is sporadic.

Issue 2: Spouses and family members of active and retired military provide a promising customer base, but most of these individuals are unaware of what exists in the downtown business district. Word is not being effectively carried to those working at the post through channels at Fort Bragg and, as a result, spouses and other family members have limited knowledge as to the products, services, and arts and cultural activities available in the district.

Issue 3: The most effective retailers know their customers and understand which marketing vehicles reach them. The best method of marketing among the most effective merchants appears to be through "word of mouth." But the most successful business owners also understand that,



Visitor's Guide.

because of the changing audience at Fort Bragg, they need to use conventional and regular methods to promote their businesses.

Issue 4: ASOM offers opportunities to market the downtown business community to the Army family. The significant presence of the Airborne and Strategic Operations Museum in downtown Fayetteville represents an untapped resource for cross-promoting downtown businesses and arts and cultural activities with what is going on at ASOM.

Issue 5: Downtown businesses can create effective marketing messages for Fort Bragg's population and military retirees by recognizing the sophisticated tastes and shopping patterns of that group. Many of the military families associated with Fort Bragg and the military retirees in the area are well-educated, well-traveled, and comfortable shopping in the historic commercial centers of Europe and Asia.

Issue 6: The arts and cultural community could use help in marketing its venues, events, classes to the Army family. Although representatives of the arts and cultural facilities are individually doing their best to communicate their activities to the broad military audience, they are consistently frustrated in their attempts to get their messages across. There is no downtown organization that is cohesively promoting performing and visual arts venues, museums, and special cultural events.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

When the Survey Task Force has completed its work, the Communications Task Force should create unified marketing strategies that target the Fort Bragg audience. The best market position for downtown Fayetteville is promoting it as an “un-mall” experience by touting the products, services, and experiences that are not available elsewhere — or, at least, not as conveniently. Target marketing efforts toward the following niche segments:

- Soldiers
- Military officers
- Civilian staff
- Military and civilian family members
- Military retirees (current and potential)
- Heritage visitors to the post
- Visitors coming to the post for other reasons
- Heritage tourism visitors to the region who might be interested in Fort Bragg attractions
- Fayetteville residents who could take better advantage of post attractions

Several of the following recommendations may have already been adopted by the Communications Task Force.

Recommendation 1: Let the Army family know what is available downtown by:

- Identifying venues for distribution of information on post.
- Creating a calendar highlighting downtown events for publications at Fort Bragg and Pope and through Bragg and Pope TV.
- Identifying methods of communication delivery already existent in the community.
- Attaching a link for downtown events to the website entitled www.iBraggle.com.
- Providing briefings to newcomers, through venues like the officers' spouses' club.
- Arranging for tours of the downtown for newcomers to the post.
- Bringing a contingent of military representatives and their spouses to the Arts Council to gain a better understanding of the arts and cultural activities available to the Army family in Fayetteville.
- Linking with local community-based websites such as www.gofayetteville.com, www.Fayettevillenc.com/military/spouse and www.fayettevillealliance.com.
- Working with the library, the United Way, and the school system to notify the Army family of activities and opportunities for children in the downtown district.
- Creating Downtown Welcome Packets for Fort newcomers that include offers of free merchandise, coupons, price breaks for military-affiliated customers.
- Establishing a new website directed to military families that promotes products and services that are available in the downtown. Downtown businesses could contribute about \$10-\$20 a month for a listing and a link to their business website. It is possible that the Downtown Alliance could expand its website to include this direct connection to the military market.



Communicate the wide variety of businesses available downtown.

Recommendation 2: Let downtown stakeholders know what is available at Fort Bragg by:

- Arranging tours of Fort Bragg for key downtown representatives.
- Briefing Fayetteville-based businesses and organizations on the structure of Fort Bragg, the vehicles for communication at the post, and the fort's organizations that serve the Army family.
- Having a consistent liaison from the downtown community work with the Fort's MWR office to ensure that information transfer is occurring both ways.

- Assisting MWR in gaining the public's attention to the many recreational offerings available at the Fort such as bowling, swimming, fitness centers, golf, and conference facilities with catering.

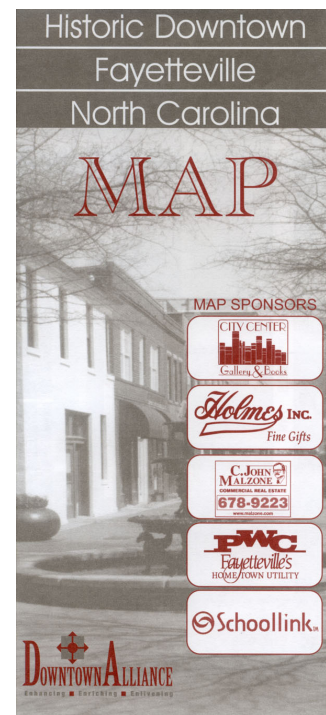
Recommendation 3: Promote the special events, arts and cultural activities, and architectural assets that exist within the downtown by:

- Developing a simple brochure that highlights all of those venues and targets the Army family. Include in the brochure some of the private businesses that are involved in arts and cultural activities.
- Beginning to promote the coming of Festival Park, which will be completed in May of 2007, and explaining how military affiliates can use this space.
- Ensuring that events such as the Dogwood Festival, 4th Fridays, International Folk Festival, A Dickens Holiday, and Market Square Days are promoted at the post and to military retirees. There may be an opportunity to offer special gifts, prizes, or coupons to members of the Army family who attend these events. Be sure that civilian personnel and their families are included in these offerings.
- Cross-promoting museums on the post and the Airborne and Special Operations Museum with downtown museums and arts/cultural venues.

Recommendation 4: Work with individual business owners to sharpen their advertising/ promotions skills so that they can more effectively get their message out to the Fort by:

- Producing a “best practices” list that highlights the methods used by the business owners who are successful at marketing. Some of these practices include sponsorships of activities that relate to the post; volunteerism on committees and in organizations that include Army family members; and aggressively courting people who are attached to the military through social interaction.
- Having the more successful business owners “tutor” those that are having problems.
- Promoting goods and services at officer spouses’ luncheons.

Recommendation 5: Develop a business directory that lists all businesses, products, services, and arts and cultural attractions available in the downtown district and decide how to distribute it most effectively to the Army family. This would be a likely project for the Downtown Alliance, since it already has established a directory for its members.



Business directory.

Recommendation 6: Consider holding focus groups with appropriate target audiences to identify which communication channels and media are most effective in reaching specific groups. Spouses of active and retired military would be an excellent choice for a focus group.

Recommendation 7: Begin to develop a comprehensive, aggressive marketing program.

Whether marketing to Fort Bragg soldiers, civilians, military retirees and their families, or to the heritage tourists in the region – downtown Fayetteville business owners could use a managed approach to advertising their products and services individually and cooperatively in joint promotions with other businesses. Such a program should be:

- Planned initially on a quarterly basis and then annually.
- Written comprehensively.
- Strategically targeted toward identified niche markets.
- Communicated through a variety of niche-oriented media.
- Professionally designed with a high-quality image.
- Cost-effective.

(Again, this is another project that would be best undertaken by the Downtown Alliance.)

§ V. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

OBSERVATIONS

Fayetteville and Fort Bragg are linked as communities, but *downtown* Fayetteville's economic connections to Fort Bragg are indirect. Downtown is about seven miles from the installation's gates, and between the two points are numerous shopping options, including Cross Creek Mall and several large shopping centers. For people based at the Fort, downtown constitutes a special trip, unless they happen to pass it on their way to or from work.

That said, downtown offers a variety of shopping alternatives that could be attractive to the Army family, including culture and entertainment, restaurants, and unique retailers. One store downtown caters almost exclusively to military personnel: Future Warrior, which sells both field equipment and leisure accessories and games.

With regard to "business development," the ultimate purpose of this assessment is two-fold:

- Grow customers downtown by establishing better connections to the Army family, and
- Grow businesses downtown by establishing better connections with Army family entrepreneurs (or potential entrepreneurs).



Future Warrior caters exclusively to the military market.

To a large extent, increasing the number or frequency of Army-related customers downtown will depend on learning more about those individuals' shopping habits, perceptions, and desires. By understanding more about their profiles and experiences, the ACHPP task groups can guide downtown improvements to better address the Army family's needs. This customer research is already underway, through an ad hoc Surveys Task Force. The outcome of this work (to be completed in early October 2006) will help ACHPP and the Business Development Task Force refine their priorities and work.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRENGTHS

Among downtown Fayetteville's business development assets, we observed the following:

- Downtown Fayetteville (and, in fact, most of the City) is designated by the Small Business Administration as a "Historically Underutilized Business Zone" (HUBZone). Businesses meeting certain size, location, and employee residency criteria qualify for preferential consideration when bidding on federal contracts. Given the Fort's presence and its frequent use of private suppliers, the HUBZone should work to the advantage of most businesses in the city, even if not specifically located downtown.

- New, innovative businesses continue to open in downtown, including:

- Art and Soul Gallery
- Arc Design
- Future Warrior
- Just Desserts
- Pet Boutique and Barkery
- White Trash & Colorful Accessories
- Chocolate Lady
- Blue Moon Café
- Market Street Cakery (opening soon)
- Baskets of Blessings (moved to storefront space)
- And others, including a natural foods store anticipated to open in the next several months.



Creative businesses like “White Trash & Colorful Accessories” have opened throughout downtown.

- Many downtowns talk about cultivating “specialty shops.” Fayetteville has succeeded in its mix of arts, jewelry, gifts, creative food, and pampered-pet boutiques.
- Several engaged property owners are actively creating small, non-retail businesses downtown. These have included a number of micro-businesses in the Self-help Credit Union building at 100 Hay Street.
- Downtown is full of cultural activities, including:
 - Airborne and Special Operations Museum
 - Arts Council – Cultural Arts Center
 - Cameo Theatre
 - Cape Fear Regional Theatre (Haymount district)
 - Fascinate-U Children’s Museum
 - Gilbert Theatre
- A couple of businesses have restructured their format in response to shifts in the economy. While we did not interview the owners of Holmes Electric, we observed that it has transformed itself from an appliance store to a gift and housewares store.
- Both lunchtime dining and nightlife are growing uses downtown – and we suspect these activities are drawing customers from the Fort.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

We observed the following challenges to business development:

Issue 1: While many new businesses have opened downtown, we also noted that a number of them depend on foot traffic to succeed. Foot traffic is especially important for businesses selling “impulse-purchase” items, such as bakery goods and chocolates.

Issue 2: Hay Street and Person Street are at different stages of revitalization, Person Street having many more vacancies and even fewer pedestrians. The two halves of downtown need to function together, but will require different kinds of solutions.

Issue 3: It appears that shoppers go to particular businesses, but an individual shopper is less likely to patronize multiple businesses in the downtown. The customer surveys will help reveal how much “cross-shopping” currently takes place.

Issue 4: Little has been done to encourage entrepreneurial environment – especially among military spouses and retirees. These have been a source of some of the best/most savvy new business owners in downtown Fayetteville, and in many of the other ACHP sites.

Issue 5: Without an active recruitment plan, new businesses develop haphazardly in downtown. The best example of this is the proliferation of gourmet coffee shops throughout downtown. The newest of these could adversely affect those that are still getting their footing.

Issue 6: Downtown lacks a one-stop-shop resource center for small downtown businesses, where they can learn about available incentives and assistance programs. CCBC and the Downtown Alliance are not currently positioned to offer this service.

Issue 7: Downtown hosts relatively few restaurants, especially of international cuisines. Army personnel tend to be well-traveled and are therefore often familiar with a wide range of international foods.

SURVEYS

At our recommendation, the ACHPP established an ad hoc task group to survey a broad cross section of Army personnel, their families, and civilians associated with Fort Bragg. During our May 2006 visit, we worked directly with the survey task group to launch this project. Through ACHPP’s connection to the National Trust Main Street Center, Josh Bloom will continue to guide the task group through the survey project to completion.

Among the Survey Task Group’s short-term projects are the following:

1. Finalize the customer survey instrument. The Survey Task Group began designing the survey instrument. With guidance from Josh, they will need to finalize the questions and test the survey before full distribution.

2. *Distribute and collect the customer survey.* The Survey Task Force will work on a distribution plan to get the survey to a representative sample of active military, civilian contractors, retirees – and spouses of each group. This will require the survey to be distributed through several channels simultaneously. Most surveys will be distributed by e-mail invitation, containing a link to a web-based survey interface. (This simplifies tabulation, as the data is, in effect, entered by the respondents.) Reaching military retirees will likely require mailing the paper surveys to retiree households in the Fayetteville area, and then manual data entry of the responses.

3. *Apply the survey results to help downtown businesses.* Once the surveys are completed, the Main Street Center has arranged to have the data tabulated and will provide a written summary of the findings. The results should show the following:

- What other shopping areas represent downtown's most significant competition for sales of various products and services – and how might downtown attract more of that business?
- Where should merchants spend their advertising dollars to reach more Fort Bragg affiliates?
- What are the most important image strengths and liabilities for downtown – and how can they be enhanced or addressed?

The survey results will also provide useful guidance to other task forces, too, such as property development, heritage tourism, communications, and visual and physical linkages.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Much of the work of the Business Development task group will be guided by the outcomes of the customer survey, now in progress (above). There are also activities that the Business Development Task Force can begin before the surveys are completed.

STRENGTHENING AND RETAINING DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

Recommendation 1: Share the customer survey results with downtown business owners to address the following:

- What other shopping areas represent downtown's most significant competition for specific products and services – and how downtown Fayetteville could attract more of that business?
- Where should merchants spend their advertising dollars to reach more Fort Bragg affiliates?
- What are the most important image strengths and liabilities for downtown – and how can they be enhanced or addressed?
- What services or products are lacking in downtown Fayetteville so that existing businesses can expand their product lines and offer needed services to the Fort Bragg customer base?

Recommendation 2: Interview downtown business owners individually to see how the Partnership might be able to offer specialized assistance or incentives. We will provide the

committee with a business-owner survey instrument that it can use to collect additional information. From the business-owner survey, the task force will be able to identify needs for assistance or resources like these:

- Store presentation and window displays;
- Merchandise presentation;
- Customer service training;
- Developing/changing business plan;
- Accounting and recordkeeping;
- Compliance with local, state, and federal regulations;
- Inventory control;
- Website development;
- Personnel management and training;
- Financial incentives;
- Improving advertising and promotion;
- Capturing new markets; and
- Planning for business expansion.

Recommendation 3: Predict and manage business transition. As the business development task force gains familiarity with the business owners, it will also gain awareness of likely business transitions (e.g. lease expirations, retirements, family illnesses, and the like). For key downtown businesses, the team may uncover opportunities to save a business and prevent a demoralizing closure by helping to find a new operator or new space, for example.

RECRUITING AND DEVELOPING NEW BUSINESSES

Recommendation 4: Use the results of the customer survey (when available) to assist retiring Army personnel in planning new businesses for downtown Fayetteville. Because most military retirees are young, they frequently move on to second careers. Our experience of new-business development in downtowns near other Army installations shows itself to be true in Fayetteville, as well: new businesses in downtown are often started by local, Army-affiliated entrepreneurs. Therefore, rather than this task force or the Downtown Alliance focusing on recruitment of businesses from other towns or other parts of Fayetteville, we recommend identifying local entrepreneurs and help them get the tools and assistance they need. Working through offices like MWR and other on-post resources for soldiers and their families, the Business Development Task Force can help seed new business ideas and bring them to life by:

- Distributing information about survey responses and market demand;
- Analyzing the business mix and identifying gaps downtown; and
- Directing retiring military to business development resources in the City and the County.

Recommendation 5: Working with the Property Development Task Force, create a formal network with downtown property owners to identify spaces where entrepreneurs can start micro-businesses – and work with the same property owners to identify existing upper-story businesses that could transition to storefront spaces. In our interviews, we learned that several upper-story businesses have grown into larger office spaces and at least one grew to occupy a downtown storefront.

Recommendation 6: Help new downtown businesses take advantage of HUBZone contracting preferences. Based on our interviews, many business owners are aware of the HUBZone designation, but few knew how they could take advantage of the program's benefits. Most downtown Fayetteville businesses are eligible for the federal sourcing preference: they fall within the size requirement established by the SBA; their primary place of business lies within a designated Zone; and at least 30 percent of the business' employees also live in a (any) designated Zone. In the past, the Cumberland County Business Council (CCBC) has offered a workshop on HUBZone qualifications. Based on our interviews, we think it is time to offer this workshop again and make a strong effort to have all downtown business owners attend.

Recommendation 7: Work with “Dock’s at the Capitol” owners on a marketing plan to reach potential patrons at the Post. The Dock’s at the Capitol renovation has already attracted a lot of attention and its opening is much anticipated by people familiar with happenings downtown. But we suspect that much of the population on the Post does not know when the new entertainment complex and restaurant will open, or what types of businesses the new development will contain. Working with the Business Development Task Force, we’d like to see Doc’s owners develop marketing activities on-Post (such as events or advertising), perhaps even including a “viral” e-mail campaign with an incentive to visit the new venue.



Soon-to-be-completed renovation of the Capitol Department Store.

Recommendation 8: Before the opening of the new natural foods store, work with the owner on a marketing program. We have not conducted a market study in Fayetteville, but our impression is the new natural foods store will find a local audience. Since natural foods and healthy dining are scarce offerings on-Post, the Task Force could assist the new food store to market itself to households at the Fort. In addition, the Task Force could work with downtown restaurants on healthy menu offerings and tie those in to a healthy/natural foods marketing program for downtown – an effort that would benefit multiple businesses.

§ VI. PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

OBSERVATIONS

As a first-time visitor to downtown Fayetteville, the first thing we were struck by is its intimate scale. For a city of its size – even historically – one would expect a larger downtown, and we learned that a portion of the original downtown burned in 1831.

Maintaining the original scale and setting, many of downtown's early buildings remain intact with few vacant parcels or gaps in the fabric. It's an unusual and charming setting – one not available elsewhere in Fayetteville, nor in the commercial areas of Fort Bragg.

Its intact qualities notwithstanding, portions of the downtown, particularly Person Street, face challenges of poorly maintained (and sometimes non-habitable) buildings, and a lack of current demand for commercial space development downtown.

It's a benefit that the most active and influential downtown commercial property owners live locally and participate actively in revitalization planning. Some have initiated a variety of creative real estate development projects downtown, including the creation of upper-story living spaces and the new entertainment complex set to open in the old Capitol Department Store building. In addition, a large mixed-use project is nearing ground-breaking near Hay Street and Ray Avenue.

The surveys of Army-affiliated customers (discussed in the Business Development section, above) will also inform potential property development activities. Some questions on the survey relate specifically to downtown housing and should provide insights into the interest levels among various members of the Army family.

In our interviews with property owners and business owners, we heard numerous complaints about the lack of available parking downtown and the need to develop new parking structures. An 850-space structure is currently in the planning stages, to be developed jointly by the County and the City.



Upper-story housing on Hay Street.

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT STRENGTHS

Many of the pieces critical for fostering downtown property development are in place. These include:

- Owners of large downtown buildings and parcels are involved and participating in revitalization plans;

- Building owners are actively managing the business mix among their properties with an eye toward developing sustainable clusters (although, as noted under “Issues,” below, they are not doing so in a downtown-wide coordinated fashion);
- The City has published design guidelines for exterior changes to historic buildings and new construction in designated historic districts;
- The long-anticipated Dock’s at the Capitol dining and entertainment complex is within a few months of opening;
- Great, small-scale, downtown housing projects have already been completed. These quickly-rented, preservation-sensitive, upper-story units have demonstrated strong demand for downtown living;
- A large mixed-use development project is in the final planning stages for the 300 block of Hay Street. The project includes retail, condos, townhouses, and parking; and
- A new office building is nearing completion at the gateway to Festival Park.

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Impediments to property development include the following:

- Unstable soil issues on Person Street have increased the cost of development on this side of downtown.
- Design guidelines exist, but there is no design assistance offered in the course of project development.
- Downtown property owners and business owners perceive code enforcement to be inconsistent.
- Because property owners are not following a downtown-wide business development plan, they have in some cases recruited tenants (e.g. bakeries) who compete directly with other downtown businesses – some of which are still new themselves.



Vacancies on Person Street.

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Increase the availability and establish closer management of façade improvement grants to stimulate additional downtown improvements. Currently, the City offers a matching grant of up to \$3,000 and has completed approximately 20 projects downtown, of varying quality. Currently, recipients must follow “Design Guidelines for Fayetteville’s Historic Districts and Local Landmarks” (2000); however, the City offers no design assistance. The review process required by the Historic Resources Commission checks for compliance with the guidelines, but offers limited design guidance. We recommend that the City, working through the

Cumberland County Business Council, the Downtown Alliance, and the Army Community Heritage Partnership, require:

- Design assistance in the project development phase,
- Competitive selection of proposed projects for the limited matching-grant resources available, and
- Design review of proposed projects by a design review committee, in order to assure the *design guidelines are achieving the desired result.*

Recommendation 2: Establish a tax abatement program for the historic downtown district. In order to stimulate improvements to the historic buildings in the downtown district, we recommend the City consider a tax abatement program for this specific area as a way to lessen the obstacles to preservation-sensitive building improvements.

Recommendation 3: Inventory all of the properties and businesses in the downtown district. It is important that the Property Development Task Force has a clear understanding of all of the buildings within the downtown – gaining information about ownership, building amenities, building condition, assessed valuation, property availability, and any historic significance. Information on the businesses within those buildings should also be captured, in collaboration with the Business Development Task Force. When we return to Fayetteville in August, we will be providing a sample building and business inventory form and guidance on how to use it.

Recommendation 4: The City should promulgate its code enforcement policies and procedures in a user-friendly format. Whether true or not, business and property owners downtown perceive code enforcement to be irregular and the standards to be non-uniform. Historic buildings require the thoughtful application of building codes with an eye toward creative solutions to the challenges these buildings present. At the same time, downtown business and property owners are more likely to be compliant if the rules are clear and uniformly applied.

Recommendation 5: Study the need for additional meeting and banquet facilities downtown. In our interviews with representatives from Fort Bragg and downtown restaurant owners, we heard that facilities downtown are limited for hosting meetings and private parties (e.g. “Hail & Farewell” events). Restaurant owners indicated the need for back rooms or areas they could close off for a private group. We recommend the Property Development Task Group contact officials on-Post who are involved in meeting and event planning to learn of their space needs and frequency of use. As new restaurant uses develop downtown, demand may prove sufficient to incorporate additional private-meetings space.

Recommendation 6: Study the potential for additional office space in downtown. With the growing population at the Fort, we believe there will be additional demand for office space, especially on the part of contractors. The Property Development Task Force should establish an inventory of available office space downtown and work through the Communications Task Force to market them to appropriately scaled military contractor tenants.