

2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

May 22, 2005

To whom it may concern,

As a concerned Killeen citizen I write to ask if any one from your commission has spent any time in my town observing (without prejudice) the ongoing problems we are facing with our huge street and traffic situation. We even made the news! I understand our City Council was to send you updated information to tell you these little problems have been misinterpreted or corrected but, they have not.

I know the BRAC is considering the possible increase of troop strength to Fort Hood some time in the future. I know our city counsel has generated information to you that paints Killeen in a positive light. Indeed Killeen is a great place. The city has however not been able to grow as fast as needed to provide the infrastructure required.

The current problem has several parts to it. First, our road and street design does not provide for large traffic volumes. Much was designed in the 1960's with little growth built in. Physical characteristics cannot be changed. In many parts of the city, the traffic lanes are narrow but citizens and soldiers have taken it on themselves to create whole new traffic lanes from single lane roads. This has caused tragic results. Road rage has increased. Second, our city blocks are short. Many are just a few yards long (40 to 50 yards) corner to corner. Third most of the traffic to and from Fort Hood mixes directly with downtown Killeen business traffic and is co-mingled with our local school district and neighborhood schools.

In the areas providing highways speeds (Highway 190) the posted speed limit is 60 MPH. The entrance (exit to) to Fort Hood main gate is posted 45 MPH here lies one of the problems: Also in the same short stretch is an exit from another road to Highway 190. Once traffic backs up from the main gate, (because of the

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security check points) those stopped cars are stopped on the highway, blocking traffic for everyone. No one on the highway can move, no one on the exit ramp can get to the highway. Everything stops. This causes a rippling effect all the way back to the eastern edge of town, some 5 miles away... and more slamming of brakes. It also causes traffic accidents on that same five mile stretch of roadway daily.

I just described one "rush hour". Figure this six times a day, five times a week. I mentioned one stretch of road and only one gate. Fort Hood has six gates that fall in to Killeen control. Fort Hood has 9 gates in all for regular vehicle traffic and other gates for industrial and HAZMAT traffic. I don't know how to do the math... I invite you to try. I'm sure there are good days, but there are bad ones too, especially just after it starts rain, freeze or fog sets in.

On May 18th, 2005 there were six accidents within two gates distances (the main gate and Clear Creek road gate, (about 1 mile) resulting in one death. All happened in about a thirty minute time frame. Oh, and it was about 72, clear and dry. I later learned there was another accident coming from Copperas Cove, TX (on Highway 190 eastbound.) These were accidents I passed, or saw police working. There is no way for me to know how many around town happened that morning. I wonder how disproportioned that would be to Arlington, VA and Fort Myer?

Another causal effect is the regular schedule that the military has. Killeen has six (6) rush hours each day: first formation, going home to shower and breakfast, back for work formation, out for lunch, back for afternoon formation, and home for the day. As I stated before, everybody is rushed-or feels rushed.

Our traffic folks are working to resolve some of this by re-timing our street lights. This has had a minimal effect. People still run the lights, pay little attention, little attention to posted signs and time is critical.

I suggest an undercover visit. Just show up unannounced. "Boots on the ground" Don't even tell Chet Edwards. Just get a hotel room overlooking Highway 190 (anywhere between Stan Sleuter Loop and the main gate of Fort Hood.) Ask for a highway side room, stock up on some "poogie-bate," get up about 5:30 a.m., and watch the show. Bring a video camera so you can show your friends back home.

Thank you,


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