BRAC

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is the process by which the Department of Defense (DoD) and other top military leaders recommend changes regarding the nation's military bases to Congress and the President. According to how this program is set up, after the President approves the BRAC changes DoD and individual bases must initiate the projects within two years and be completed within six years, finishing by September 2011.

The BRAC process affected the various military facilities in the San Antonio area, yet the community is poised to have a net gain as the realignment unfolds. While Brooks City-Base--formerly Brooks Air Force Base (AFB)--lost missions and highly educated personnel, the increased operations planned for Fort Sam Houston represent a large boost to area military impacts.

The BRAC projects awarded in San Antonio follow the standard government contracting standards, including the contract award/construction-spending lag that occurs with government contracts. Most of the construction projects were awarded in 2008-2009, with most of the construction spending occurring in 2009-2011 and peaking in the latter half of 2010.

The projects will take place at most of the military bases in San Antonio with almost 75% of the construction cost being spent at Fort Sam Houston. The additional 25% will be spread between Lackland AFB and Randolph AFB as well as Camp Bullis.

According to Air Education and Training Command (AETC), and supported by Military Construction Corporation (MIL-CON), there are 59 projects taking place in San Antonio receiving funding through BRAC. The breakdown between installations is as follows:

- Fort Sam Houston: 37 projects
- Lackland AFB: 14 projects
- Randolph AFB: 8 projects

Construction

There will be two facility projects that make up a majority of the construction impacts of this current BRAC program:

**BAMC**--The first and largest single project is the new construction and renovation of the Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) at Fort Sam Houston. BAMC is adding 750,000 square
feet, expanding from 275 beds to approximately 425. After completion, this facility will be the only military facility in the area to provide level 1 trauma/emergency medical care and in-patient care. This facility will then be known as San Antonio Medical Center-North (SAMCN). The partner to this facility is the Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland AFB. The trauma center that previously was at Wilford Hall is being relocated to SAMCN (BAMC) and Wilford Hall will become a large outpatient clinic. This will include primary care, ambulatory surgery, laboratory, and pharmacy services. After finalization, this facility will be known as San Antonio Medical Center-South (SAMCS).

**METC**--The second major project is the new construction and renovation of various buildings across Fort Sam Houston and Camp Bullis to support Medical Education and Training Campus (METC). METC construction will include 2.6 million square feet of education, training, recreation, and living space.

In addition to these two projects, many other buildings will be constructed and renovated at Fort Sam Houston including: three dormitories, a commissary, office and administrative space, and motor pool/transportation facilities. The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is developing a 500,000 square foot shopping area on base that will house a 200,000 square foot base exchange, a movie theater, and eating and shopping tenants in a mall-like environment. In total, the entire BRAC construction will total to more than 6 million square feet between 78 major new construction and renovation projects.

Some of the projects at the other bases include an Airfield Maintenance Training complex at Lackland AFB, plus an equipment warehouse and an intelligence operations center. An Armed Forces Reserve Center and field training facilities are under construction at Camp Bullis. Randolph AFB is adding a new hangar to house a course in fighter fundamentals.

The City of San Antonio maintains a storyboard of the current projects under construction that are a part of the BRAC projects [storyboard]. The prime contractors for the current projects are as follows:

- **Clark Construction**
- **Walbridge**
- **Innovative Technical Solutions**
- **Hensel Phelps**
- **SpawGlass Contractors**
- **Bartlett-Cocke**
- **Scatterfield & Pontikes**
- **Zachry Construction**
- **Tepa EC**
- **Weston Solutions**
- **Environmental Chemical Corporation**
Projected Costs

The estimated cost associated with the BRAC projects is $2.3 billion, but could be as high as $3.1 billion or as low as $1.6 billion--depending on the source--which will be spent between FY2007-FY2011. This amount of construction is nearly ten times more than the normal military construction during a similar time period.

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Above is a rough estimate of how the budget is projected to be split between the time periods required by the BRAC Projects. As of January 15, 2010, 40% of the construction expenditures have been spent and 46% of the incoming personnel have arrived. Most of the information above has come from a growth management report that was produced for the San Antonio Office of Military Affairs, and the Military Transformation Task Force (MTTF) (see final economic report (OMA), MTTF 1/15/2010 meeting).

Economic Impact

These BRAC actions are projected to have a significant economic impact. The overall economic impact of the military bases in San Antonio is expected to be $15 billion.

One of the major impacts is the anticipated population growth during the BRAC timeframe. There will be an estimated 12,500 new military and civilian jobs created after the BRAC construction is completed. To go along with these new jobs, an estimated 10,000 family members (with close to 3,100 of the family members in the school age group) will arrive. Most of this population growth will occur in 2010 and 2011 after a bulk of the construction is finished. Another part of this population growth will be the increase in medical students, since Fort Sam Houston will become the only enlisted medical training facility for the entire Armed Forces of the United States. There will be an estimated average daily enrollment of 9,000 with a projected 46,000 students through annually. Classes will begin in June 2010.
It is hard to estimate how much spending will increase due to the increase in new workers in San Antonio. The City of San Antonio has estimated that there will be an increase in sales tax revenues of nearly $10 million during the construction years and close to $5 million annually after construction.

Another economic impact is the need for real estate, or more specifically housing, for the new workers moving into the San Antonio area. Fort Sam Houston, where most of the new military personal moving to San Antonio will be working, is not adding any additional housing as part of this BRAC construction period. It is uncertain if this is due to a surplus of housing on Fort Sam Houston, or if it is due to the surplus of housing in the San Antonio area. According to the MTTF, there is a need for market rate housing near Fort Sam, and quality businesses near the Post. MTTF and the San Antonio Joint Program Office are in the process of discussing changes that the City of San Antonio might be able to assist with under a program called Fort Sam Houston Community Revitalization.

There is data that shows current workers at Fort Sam Houston live throughout the north side of San Antonio, but the highest concentration is on the northeast side of town. I think this is due to the availability of housing in this area, and shorter traveling distance to work. Because of this concentration, the I-35 Corridor is extremely important to Fort Sam Houston.

**Personal Speculation**

After reading through this research, there are a few areas that I find interesting. First are the business opportunities that present themselves. Businesses will probably need to be focused on the 18-25 year old demographic. The average US soldier is 21 years of age; this will be especially true because of the high concentration of military students coming to this area. The average salary of the US Army is $54,000, but this can be expected to be much lower for the military personal moving to this area due to the low ranks and student status.

There will probably be no need for any additional housing to be built due to the surplus already existing in the San Antonio area, and the fact that most of the service men and women that are in a student status will be living in dorms. The City of San Antonio is preparing to spend significant amounts of money to renovate and re-develop the area around Fort Sam Houston. Some of this area has become quite dilapidated over the years, and is not on track for what the City and the DoD want surrounding what will become the premier military medical training facility in the US.

An area of interest, that may be significant, is the soon-to-come influx of around 3,100 school aged children into various school systems. I imagine some school districts are more apt
to receiving new students than others. This will need to be watched the closer we get to having all of the incoming personnel here in San Antonio.

Another interesting fact is that the number of general-grade officers will almost double in the next two years as various commands move to this area. Of the 49 total 3 and 4 star generals allowed by federal law, three or four will be located here in San Antonio, plus eight additional 1 and 2 star generals will also be stationed here. This might not sound like very many, but consider that 3 and 4 star generals normally command more than 20,000 soldiers each. This does not mean that this many people will be moving here, but high-ranking officers come with a staff of lower ranking officers. The average salary of an officer in the US army is close to $80,000 a year.

**Sources for Additional Information**

[San Antonio Office of Military Affairs](#)

[San Antonio Joint Program Office](#)

[Growth Management Report](#)

[embracebrac.org](#)