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Booming times at Buckley [In-Depth Coverage](#)

By Julie Hutchinson

Big changes loom for Buckley Air Force Base with the addition of hundreds of personnel and more than two dozen major construction projects in the works or planned.

"We are one of the fastest-growing Air Force bases in the country," said John Spann, of the base's public affairs office. "The missions here at Buckley are constantly changing."

Three years ago, the federal panel that decides the fate of military installations recommended only a modest expansion for Buckley. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission envisioned that only 13 additional civilian jobs and 81 military jobs would end up at the base in Aurora.

But as threats to America's security have changed, so, too, has Buckley, which is a key player in the military's global surveillance and missile warning network.

In addition to Air Force personnel, the base is home to so-called "tenant units" representing every branch of the U.S. armed services, including the Coast Guard. Some simply occupy office space at Buckley; others are involved in complex cross-training and mission-sharing.

John E. Pike, director of Virginia-based GlobalSecurity.org, is a frequent commentator on space and security issues. Citing increasing security threats around the globe, as well as ongoing U.S. military actions, Pike said Buckley is a key player in the nation's defense and it's not surprising that the base is growing.

In an environmental assessment required by law to study how growth will affect the base and its neighbors, the Air Force described Buckley as "transforming from a minimally developed installation for weekend influxes of Reserve and Guard personnel into a fully developed, active-duty AFB."

Since 2000, 19 major construction projects have been completed. In 2007 alone, projects at Buckley totaled \$37 million, Air Force officials said.

And more growth is in the works:

* An additional 800 people will be assigned to Buckley over the next three years, a combination of enlisted, private and contractor jobs. That includes about 600 workers at the Air Force Air Reserve Personnel Center near Lowry who will move to Buckley by 2011.

"If you're bringing people, you have to guesstimate you're bringing multiple family members as well," said Aaron Cram, a technical sergeant in Buckley's public affairs office.

* Three additional F-16 aircraft will be based at Buckley, home to the Colorado Air National Guard.

F. Buckley Air Force Base Area

VISION

When the goals of the city are achieved...

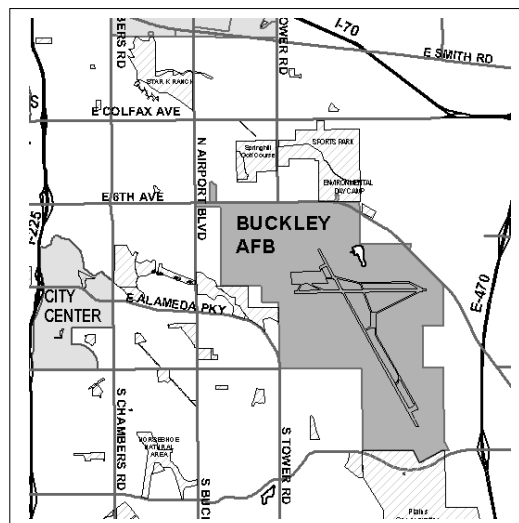
- Buckley meets all Air Force standards as an active-duty air base.
- Adjoining land uses are located to maximize air operations safety and to minimize noise impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.
- 6th Avenue extends directly east from the base and connects with E-470 at a new interchange, providing improved highway mobility in this quadrant of the city.
- Adequate commercial development, open space, and parks exist to serve the needs of residents of the area, both on and off the base.

DISCUSSION

Existing Conditions. Buckley Air National Guard Base became an active-duty Air Force base in October of 2000. Air and space operations have been growing at Buckley Air Force Base — the home of the Air Force’s newest wing, the 460th Air Base Wing. The base is also home to the 140th Wing of the Colorado Air National Guard and 27 other units, representing every branch of the service as well as active duty, Guard, and Reserve components.

Other major activities on the base are associated with the development of space and missile systems, satellite tracking, data reception, and early warning radar (space command). The airfield provides services for government and military aircraft crossing the country. The total area of the base is 3,897 acres (approximately six square miles) including one active runway. Excluding contractors, the number of civilian and military personnel working on the base is approximately 9,400, with projections for additional future growth.

The economic impact of the facility within the region is estimated at \$547 million in 2002, up from \$381 million in 2001. The annual military payroll alone is in the order of \$164 million. The base is expanding its operations and plans to make capital investments of nearly \$110 million over the next five to seven years. A new \$23 million Base Exchange and Commissary opened in early



Map V.F-1

2002. Also, the Air Force is seeking a developer to privatize nearly 332 housing units on the base for military personnel and their families by 2005. The “Buckley Vision 2020” plan anticipates \$26 million in “quality of life” improvements through the year 2007, including new dorms, a fitness center, visitor quarters, and youth center.

**BAFB EMPLOYMENT
2001**

3625	Active Duty
3337	Civilian Employees
1750	Contractors
2415	Nat'l Guard & Reserves
11127	Total

Airport Area Regulation. A key issue requiring close cooperation between the city and BAFB involves restrictions on lands affected by base air operations. The city zoning regulations recognize that airport operations subject certain areas within the city to high aviation noise levels and possible crash hazards. U.S. Air Force studies have established noise and hazard area boundaries whose enforcement is critical to the continued safe flight operation of Buckley:

- **Airport Influence District (AID):** within this area, an “avigation easement” shall be conveyed to the city by any person subdividing lands or initiating construction of any structure on already subdivided lands. Also, vendors of real property located within the AID shall provide written notice to purchasers that the property is located in the district, and have the notice recorded with the appropriate county.
- **Noise Impact Districts:** these are districts defined by noise contour lines. At higher noise levels, incompatible land uses such as dwellings are prohibited.
- **Accident Potential Zones:** these are highly restrictive zones with absolute

limits on density of employees and building by acre of land area.

These city-enforced districts are in the Zoning Code. These districts are in addition to building placement and height restrictions the federal government imposes. The Federal Aviation Administration’s Regulation Part 77 establishes zones in the airport vicinity for the purpose of avoiding height obstructions which may cause hazards to air navigation.

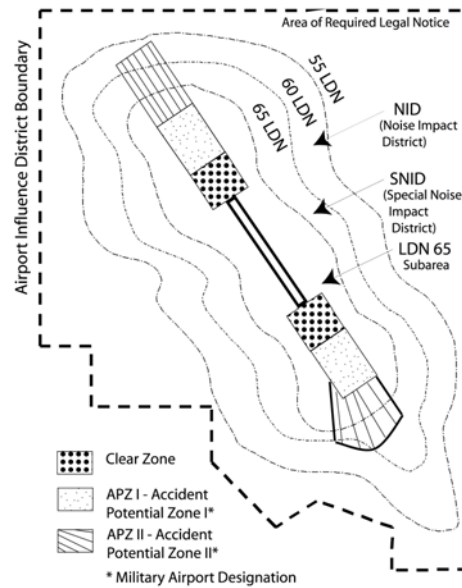


Fig. V.F-2

**Components of Typical
Airport Influence District**

Buckley Research and Development Subarea Zoning District. The E-470 corridor zoning district includes the Buckley Research and Development Subarea designation. This district was established as part of the largest master planning effort in Aurora’s history. A special focus of that effort was preservation of the base’s continued ability to undertake flight operations. All of the areas in Aurora immediately to the east of BAFB are currently zoned to this designation. According to the E-470 Land Use Plan Map, additional areas that might be annexed to the east of BAFB will also be zoned to this designation. This subarea district allows office, commercial, and industrial



**F-16's of the 140th Wing, Colorado Air National Guard Do Fly-by.
Gov. Bill Owens Welcomes Buckley Troops Returning from Iraq War**

development. It does not allow residential uses, in order to avoid noise and other concerns that might interfere with operations at BAFB.

economic development engine for Aurora. In addition to direct salaries, many personnel will live and shop off base, increasing demand for local goods and services.

Issues & Needs

- Street improvements are needed to serve the base, including:
 - ◆ The widening of 6th Avenue from Airport Boulevard to Tower Road.
 - ◆ The extension of 6th Avenue to E-470.
 - ◆ Widening of Mississippi Avenue, east of the BAFB south gate.
- The city is generally in need of more east-west roadway connections, including the extension of 6th Avenue directly east to E-470 to provide better connections to BAFB.
- The evolution of Buckley toward a full-service base will enhance its role as an

- Newly implemented requirements that certain personnel live within a 30-minute drive of the base will add to the local housing demand.
- Military staff do not expect significant amounts of new high-tech civilian employment as a spin-off from base activities unless the base mission changes or expands.
- To support the mission of BAFB, it is critical that regulations be maintained and enforced limiting certain land uses in areas potentially impacted by the base.

STRATEGIES

1. Continue to work closely with Buckley on the cooperative planning process for the BAFB 2020 Master Plan.
2. Continue to strictly enforce land use restrictions in the BAFB airport influence district to ensure that air operations can safely continue.

3. Work closely with Buckley on their new water needs and the timing of water demands on the Aurora water system.
4. Work closely with Buckley and the state to ensure adequate street access to the base and to avoid unnecessary impacts on Aurora streets resulting from base development.
5. Working with Buckley, evaluate the potential impact of base development to the new city park on the western boundary of the base and to Airport Boulevard.
6. Work closely with Buckley on the planning of the housing privatization project on Airport Boulevard.
7. Continue to use the E-470 Corridor, Buckley Research and Development subarea designation for areas east of BAFB.

* Entry gates at Sixth Avenue, Telluride Street and Mississippi Avenue will be demolished and rebuilt with improved security, traffic control and landscaping.

* A 3,000-square-foot visitors center will be built at the main gate on Sixth Avenue.

* An \$11 million communications center will open in August.

Also planned: a \$30 million building for temporary lodging, a \$1.42 million kennel for military dogs, a \$5.5 million training center and a \$10.7 million fuel-distribution complex "required to accommodate the new development," according to the Air Force.

The ripple effect of Buckley's evolution extends far into the metro-area economy.

How the growth affects Aurora, according to Mayor Ed Tauer, "is a two-word answer: It's fabulous. We've had a long-term love affair with that base."

The added military and civilian jobs are great for the local economy, Tauer said, but it's the quality of people the jobs attract that matters more.

He mentioned strong families and people who volunteer, stay informed and care about improving the quality of life in the city.

"To get the extra jobs is great, but more important, it says the Air Force has a long-term commitment to Buckley," Tauer said.

About Buckley

* **Name:** Buckley Air Force Base is named after 1st Lt. John Harold Buckley, a World War I flier from Longmont.

* **Size:** About 3,328 acres.

* **Personnel:** Home to more than 10,000 men and women who provide commanders with global surveillance, worldwide missile warnings, homeland defense and expeditionary forces.

* **Jobs:** The Air Force estimates Buckley indirectly created more than 6,000 jobs and spent \$37 million on service contracts in 2007.

* **Payroll:** More than \$624 million.