



North Carolina  
**DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY  
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**ROY COOPER • Governor**

**WALTER E. GASKIN • Secretary**

**ARIEL APONTE • Assistant Secretary, Military Affairs**

April 29, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The program of investments outlined in the Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (FAMPO) *improving Bragg Roads and Access for Greater Growth Project* ("iBRAGG" or "the Project" hereafter) application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's RAISE Program offers an opportunity for the State of North Carolina to Build Back Better and improve the road system within the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, and rural areas. This road system serves military, civilian personnel, and commuters within the broader regional community. iBRAGG proposes to repair and rehabilitate approximately 47 miles of publicly accessible roadways within Fort Bragg, but outside of the cantonment and other secure areas.

The Fort Bragg road system was originally designed and constructed to support the Army's training activities only. However, as time evolved, the road system transitioned to a Fort Bragg and public metropolitan roadway which supports military activities and serves civilian commuter routes. As a result of this road system evolution, the Fort Bragg road system began to carry a higher volume of traffic than envisioned when they were initially constructed. Consequently, the Project road system is assessed by the North Carolina Department of Transportation as unsafe and inefficient for travel due to deteriorating pavement conditions, pavement edge drop-offs, substandard guardrails, inadequate signage, vegetation encroaching on clear zones, and erosion as depicted in the Project proposal and the State of Good Repair Section.

The proposed Project will bring the roads into a state of good repair to enhance rural-urban connectivity, address erosion and stormwater management concerns, improve resilience, increase road safety, and improve emergency services response. The Project roads are used daily by the public to access essential services and employment centers around the larger metropolitan area as well as within Fort Bragg. Regional cut-through traffic, for which the base is neither an origin nor a destination, has grown in recent years as travelers use the Project roads to avoid nearby congested arterials and reduce vehicle miles travelled. Consequently, a rising number of trips are being made on poorly maintained roads that were not originally designed to meet NCDOT standards. The Project will facilitate the upgrade of roadway maintenance in the rural area of Fort Bragg in the Fayetteville Metropolitan Area, yielding long-term travel and cost savings, as well as reducing vehicle emissions by eliminating detour routes currently needed to circumvent unsafe roadway sections.

Aside from commuter travel, the Project will enhance military training routes that support the movement of military equipment and training exercises in support of mission readiness and Global Response Force requirements. Fort Bragg is the core of our nation's current Global Response Force, composed of strategic units such as: U.S. Army Forces Command, XVIII Airborne Corps, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, U.S. Army Reserve Command, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, and other tenant units, thus classifying this military installation as a critical military facility within the Department of Defense (DoD). Fort Bragg supports a population of 325,636 active-duty soldiers, reservists, students, DoD civilians and contract employees, retirees, and family members.

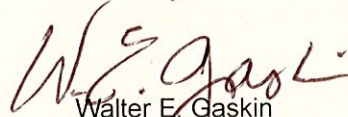
Additionally, the Project is an important step forward to connecting rural and urban central North Carolina by rebuilding and rehabilitating what has become a vital portion of the region's road, bicycle, and pedestrian network to benefit the region's commuters. The collaboration between the State of North

Carolina, North Carolina Department of Transportation, FAMPO members and Fort Bragg will foster a unified approach in funding, performing repairs, and maintenance activities. The Project will bring the road system into a state of good repair and add it to the state maintenance system by the Board of Transportation. This transfer of ownership and maintenance responsibilities to NCDOT will be accomplished by an established Public-Public Partnership MOA between NCDOT and Fort Bragg once the Project roads meet NCDOT standards through the Project efforts. Thus, the iBRAGG project will provide the needed financial resources to repair the Project roads and serve as a catalyst for NCDOT to assume responsibility for future maintenance and repair activities with a 40 percent reduction in costs.

On behalf of North Carolina's active-duty military service members, veterans, and their families, and as the Secretary for the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; I enthusiastically support FAMPO with their members, North Carolina Department of Transportation and Fort Bragg's application for the Department of Transportation RAISE Grant.

Thank you in advance for your favorable consideration of Fort Bragg and its connected communities for the U.S. Department of Transportation RAISE Grant. If I or my staff may be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,



Walter E. Gaskin  
Secretary  
LtGen, USMC (Ret)