

Report offers solutions to housing crunch

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July 25, 2009 - 5:12 PM

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Editor's note: This is the fourth installment of a series looking at the draft Regional Growth Management Plan recently released by the Military Growth Task Force. To view other articles in this series, click [here](#).

There are many issues facing housing in Onslow County, according to a recent report by the [Military Growth Task Force](#).

The draft Regional Growth Management Plan, which was released this month, identifies both needs and solutions for area housing issues.

According to the report, housing issues include:

- Infrastructure and development activity are not planned concurrently.
- Single-family housing has established a sprawling development pattern.
- Road and infrastructure maintenance has been deferred.
- The types of residential development does not generate a large enough tax base to pay for maintenance and extension of infrastructure and services.
- Large amounts of flood prone areas and wetlands limit location of development.
- Finding affordable rental housing is becoming more problematic for civilians.

There were 2,017 homes for sale in Jacksonville and Onslow County on Friday, said Mike Burke, a broker associate with Century 21 Champion Real Estate. The average price of the homes was \$194,000.

"Until the military sees an increase in their (housing allowance), it puts them at an active disadvantage in purchasing a home in the Onslow County area. We have an over abundance of homes in the \$200,000-plus price range, some of which have been on the market for well over a year, completely done. Unfortunately ... we're not seeing that market move in the grand scheme of things," Burke said.

Homes in the \$200,000-plus price range are more affordable for senior staff commissioned officers, he said, while homes in the \$125,000 to \$155,000 price range are affordable for those with ranks of E-1 to E-5.

"Those homes, if they are nice and they are decent, they're snatched up within days of appearing on the market. We do not have an abundance of homes in the affordability range for those E-1 through E-5, junior E-6s," Burke said.

The Regional Growth Management Plan identifies and assesses needs that have emerged as a result of the new military growth or been made worse by military growth in the eastern region of North Carolina, and identifies ways to address the issues and challenges, Interim Executive Director Jay Bender said.

The [Military Growth Task Force](#) was formed in order to help eastern North Carolina plan for military growth connected to the 202 K Plus-Up, a five-year plan to increase the number of active-duty Marines to 202,000 by 2011.

About 9,000 of the Marine Corps' expected 11,477 Marines and sailors have already arrived at Camp Lejeune, New River Air Station and Cherry Point Air Station.

To comment on the report, send letters to 1099 Gum Branch Road, Jacksonville, NC 28540 or e-mail bender@nceast.org.

The report can be viewed online at jdnews.com.