

Defense Access Road (DAR) Program – Eligibility Guidance

Guidance for Urban/Metropolitan Area Installation/Bases



November 2013

Purpose for Additional DAR Program Guidance

Department of Defense (DOD) military installations, due to personnel changes or lack of regulatory knowledge, may not be aware of how they can utilize the DAR Program to address transportation challenges. High-level congressional and Office of the Secretary of Defense interest in the DAR Program indicted additional guidance for urban defense facilities related to the DAR Program was warranted. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the DAR Program, especially for urban installations that may have a valid DAR requirement which impacts the mission.

What is the DAR Program?

The DAR Program is the method for the DOD to pay for public highway improvements required because of sudden/unusual, DOD-generated traffic impacts. State/local highway authorities are responsible for developing and maintaining public highways to all permanent traffic generators, including defense installations. When improvements are not anticipated or programmed in regular local roadway improvement programs and highway officials are unable to fund needed improvements, the DAR Program may be considered. A sudden increase in defense traffic may include situations such as a dynamic increase in mission-related activities like a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) or other restationing action.

Eligibility Criteria for the Program

The DAR Program is authorized by Title 23, United States Code, Section 210 (23 USC 210). Under this authority, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation is authorized to expend funds appropriated for defense access roads (Title 10, military construction funds). Roadways may become eligible for defense funding under the authority of the DAR Program when the required improvements are a result of:

- a. Defense doubling of public highway traffic [in a short period of time] due to establishment of a new installation, or expansion/movement of personnel to an installation.

- b. New access road or gate/entrance requirement.
- c. New mission requiring heavy and damaging vehicle traffic on low-grade roads.
- d. Closing public highways permanently due to military necessity.

How are DAR Program Projects Funded?

There is no separate source of funding for the DAR Program. Funding for certified projects is programmed and budgeted by the Service Department as part of the installation's regular Military Construction (MILCON) budget process. Installation requests for DAR certification should be submitted through their respective Service installation management command.

Management of DAR Program

Commander, Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), is responsible for DAR Program execution for the United States Transportation Command/DOD and certifies roads as important to national defense on behalf of the Secretary of Defense. SDDC Transportation Engineering Agency administers the DAR Program for DOD and determines eligibility.

The DAR Program is co-administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the Department of Transportation. Projects are constructed by public highway authorities through the FHWA's normal Federal-aid highway procedures, using Service MILCON funds transferred to FHWA.

The DAR Program Process

The DAR Program process starts with the installation commander. The installation commander knows what new or changed missions and resulting development is projected for the installation and best understands the concerns of the surrounding community. Installation personnel develop planning and implementation documents, and appropriate environmental impact documents to address requirements associated with mission growth. If, as part of the process, public transportation deficiencies are identified, the installation commander is responsible for bringing these to the attention of the owning transportation authorities. If the owning transportation authorities cannot or will not correct the problems to meet the defense requirements, the installation commander should determine how the suspected transportation deficiency impacts the defense mission. If the installation commander determines the installation cannot tolerate the transportation deficiency, or it creates a safety or security situation, then a DAR Needs Report should be prepared.

The DAR Needs Report includes the following data and descriptions:

- installation population
- existing road (if there is one)
- existing and projected traffic data
- defense generated development and population growth; related roadway impacts
- possible transportation improvements needed; along with timeframe and gross cost estimate for improvements

The installation commander is responsible for submitting the report through the military chain of command. Through this process, the parent military Service validates the requirements and makes an initial determination whether to support funding the necessary public highway improvements through the DAR Program as a MILCON requirement. As appropriate, the military Service provides the DAR Needs Report and other related information to SDDC. SDDC determines if the new defense-generated impacts potentially meet DAR eligibility criteria.

If SDDC determines the defense-generated impact has the potential for being eligible for the DAR Program, SDDC formally requests FHWA to conduct an engineering evaluation with participants from the State Department of Transportation (DOT), local highway officials (as appropriate), the installation, and SDDC. The engineering evaluation: refines the identification

and quantification of the defense-generated traffic impacts and identifies solutions; details the procedures to execute a highway improvement project; provides cost estimates and schedules to execute the project; identifies the civil transportation agency to administer the project; and identifies available and potential funding sources. DOD looks to the State DOT or FHWA to identify cost effective, efficient, and safe transportation (highway and transit) solutions to mitigate defense-generated impacts. The FHWA evaluation report is forwarded to SDDC for review and analysis to determine DAR eligibility.

Occasionally, the FHWA evaluation report recommends transportation improvements in excess of that required for the defense-generated impact. In those instances, SDDC attempts to negotiate a defense share and adjustments to civil transportation programs to meet the defense impacts and have other identified improvements funded through civil programs. Based on the FHWA evaluation report and DAR Program negotiations, Commander SDDC will determine DAR Program eligibility and certify the road segment as important to national defense, per 23 USC 210, so defense funds can be expended on certified roadway segments.

The military Services are responsible for programming and budgeting funds in their MILCON Programs for eligible DAR projects. For projects necessary to complete a BRAC-directed action, BRAC funds are a possible source of funding. If the project is approved, funds for DAR projects are forwarded from the Service to FHWA. FHWA is responsible for ensuring the proper execution of DAR projects through Federal-aid Highway program procedures by State or other owning highway authorities. This could include preliminary engineering, inserting the project in the State Transportation Improvement program, environmental documentation, final design, right-of-way acquisition, utility adjustments, and construction. SDDC ensures DAR projects meet the defense requirements by reviewing project documents and authorizing FHWA's expenditure of the DAR funds. Public highway improvement projects can take from 2 years to over 10 years before opening to the public, depending on their size and complexity, and availability of funds. After construction is complete and work is accepted by the owning civil highway authorities and FHWA, the road becomes the responsibility of the owning highway authority.

History

The DAR Program originates from Public Law 295, the "Defense Highway Act of 1941." This law was enacted by the 77th Congress shortly before the outbreak of hostility against the United States in World War II. It provided for the immediate construction of roads urgently needed for the national defense. The DAR Program was primarily created to deal with critical facility expansion that State DOT officials could not accommodate within the federal or State funded transportation improvement programs.

The typical expansion was initially in undeveloped rural locations; however, over time the DAR Program has evolved to handle new developments in all locations including urbanized areas. Prior to the 1980s, the initial DAR Program guidance restricted the use of defense funding to rural roadways. The DAR Program was restricted from considering any roadways on the primary or secondary road system, which is now called the National Highway System. As the transportation system evolved, so too did the DAR Program, which can now evaluate any/all roadways that may meet the DAR eligibility criteria.

Background on Urban Projects

Since 2008, the DOD has been reporting to Congress on various aspects of the DAR Program including whether DOD should modify the DAR eligibility criteria. The 2011 National Academy of Sciences Special Report 302 "Federal Funding of Transportation Improvements in BRAC Cases" recommended that the DOD change its DAR eligibility criteria to specifically address urban areas since they concluded doubling of traffic was unachievable in high volume locations.

Additionally, the Fiscal Year 2013 Senate Military Construction, Veterans, and Related Agencies appropriations report requested details on DOD's "plan to improve and expand the DAR Program" using the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences Report. Given the concerns and need to update Congress on the plan for the DAR Program, SDDC completed an analysis of DAR projects funded or certified since 2005 to determine utilization of program authority in urban metropolitan areas.

The concerns highlighted by the 2011 Special Report specifically focused on the doubling of traffic criterion and inferred that urban areas could never meet that standard due to the high pre-existing volumes within the urban transportation system. The one item that was overlooked in the 2011 report was that most traffic problems, even in urban areas, are related to the intersection operations where there is competing traffic from multiple sources. When the system is analyzed based on an intersection by intersection basis, which is similar to the Level of Service calculations detailed in the highway capacity manual produced by the Transportation Research Board, it is possible to more accurately identify the root cause of congestion. SDDC works closely with the FHWA when evaluating potential DAR projects; the individual traffic movements at intersections are analyzed and the doubling criteria is logically evaluated based on concentrated traffic impact of specific movements leading towards the defense facility.

The most prominent example that demonstrates the sufficiency of the current eligibility criteria is the DAR project supporting the BRAC-related relocation of several thousand employees to the Mark Center in Alexandria, Virginia. Traffic studies determined this action impacted traffic in the area by doubling traffic at multiple intersections. The system of intersections leading from Interstate 395 to the development site was certified as important to national defense due to doubling of traffic. DOD funded multiple intersection improvements needed to mitigate the impacts.

Another project which shows that both the doubling of traffic and new access road criteria can be used in urban areas is the DAR project in support of the BRAC action at Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), Florida. A new cantonment area was constructed to support the 7th Special Forces Group relocation to Eglin AFB. The increase in military personnel resulted in a doubling of traffic at the intersection of a new access road and an existing State highway. The intersection was certified as important to national defense and DOD funded the required improvement.

Both of these examples show the capability of the criteria when applied to urban areas. This approach has been used extensively to support implementation of the BRAC 2005 recommendations.

Two Examples of Urban DAR Projects

Example 1 - Mark Center, Fort Belvoir, VA

The 2005 BRAC process directed the relocation of more than 19,000 employees to Fort Belvoir, VA from other locations. During the Fort Belvoir BRAC implementation planning, the Army determined that the infrastructure on post and in the vicinity of Fort Belvoir was unable to support an increase of this size. This determination resulted in the Army seeking a Fort Belvoir satellite location to locate approximately 6,400 of the 19,000 employees included under the Fort Belvoir BRAC.

The Army conducted a competitive site search in Northern Virginia to determine a location for the 6400 employees. On September 29, 2008, the Army announced the selection of the Mark Center site as the site which best met its specifications for the BRAC 133 office complex.

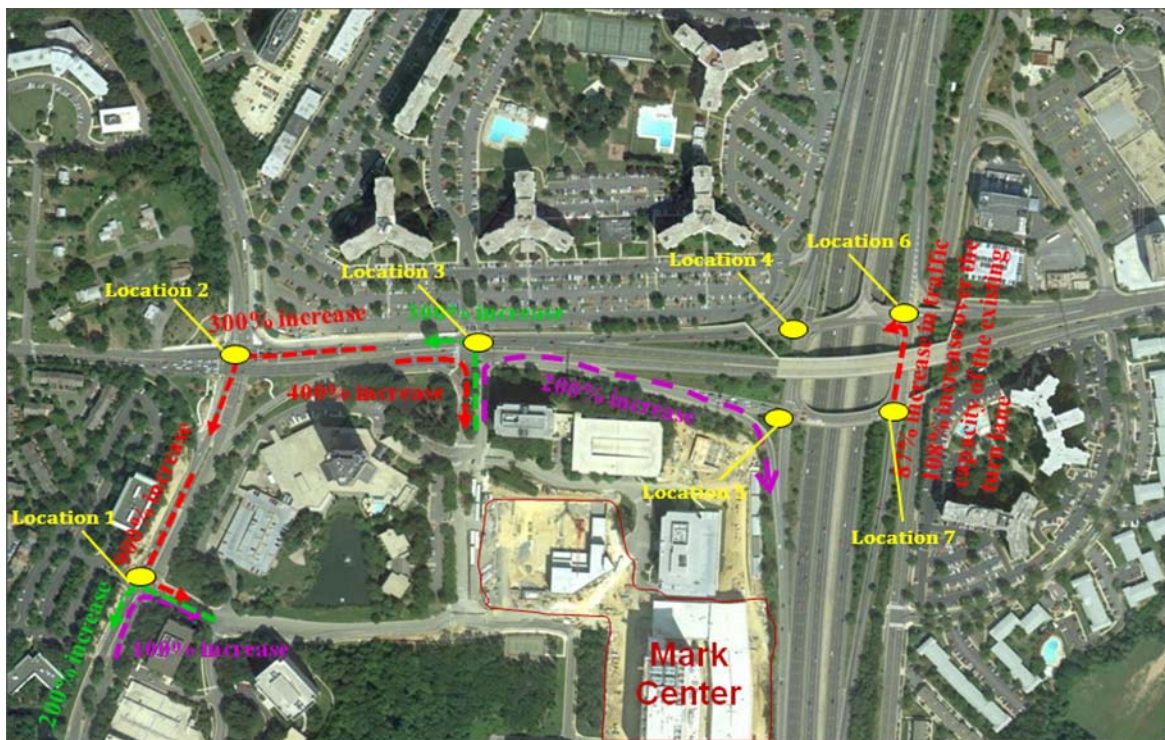
During construction of the Mark Center development, the Virginia Department of Transportation worked collaboratively with DOD to prepare a transportation plan that projected

traffic demands of the new facilities. The transportation plan detailed significant impacts that would result in failing traffic operations for intersections that provide

the main access from the interstate system. The plan also recommended a set of transportation improvements (\$20M for intersection upgrades at seven locations). The Army submitted this information in a DAR Needs Report to SDDC on December 15, 2010. SDDC worked with the FHWA to evaluate the transportation network for the Mark Center area and determined that the recommended projects met the certification requirements and the intersections were certified important to national defense on February 10, 2011.

The map below shows the transportation network for the Mark Center development. Each of seven locations identified on the map needed some level of intersection upgrade to maintain acceptable operating conditions. The improvements all met the doubling of traffic criterion and were necessary for the system of intersections to provide adequate access to the defense facility.

Map – Mark Center Development



Example 2 – Eglin AFB, FL

In 2005, BRAC recommended the relocation of approximately 2,600 military personnel of the Army

7th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, NC to Eglin AFB, FL. An area west of Eglin Auxiliary Field 3 (Duke Field) was selected as the new cantonment area. The cantonment area access road, 77th Special Forces Way, was proposed to be located at the intersection of State Route 85 (SR85) and West McWhorter Avenue.

SR85 is a 4-lane divided highway with posted speeds of 65 mph which created safety concerns regarding at-grade connections to 77th Special Forces Way. The State of Florida provided traffic projections for the SR85 and McWhorter Ave intersection based on an at-grade intersection that showed the roadway would operate at failing traffic conditions. Considering the unique mission requirements of the 7th Special Forces Group, it was determined that grade separation of the roadways was a preferred alternative.

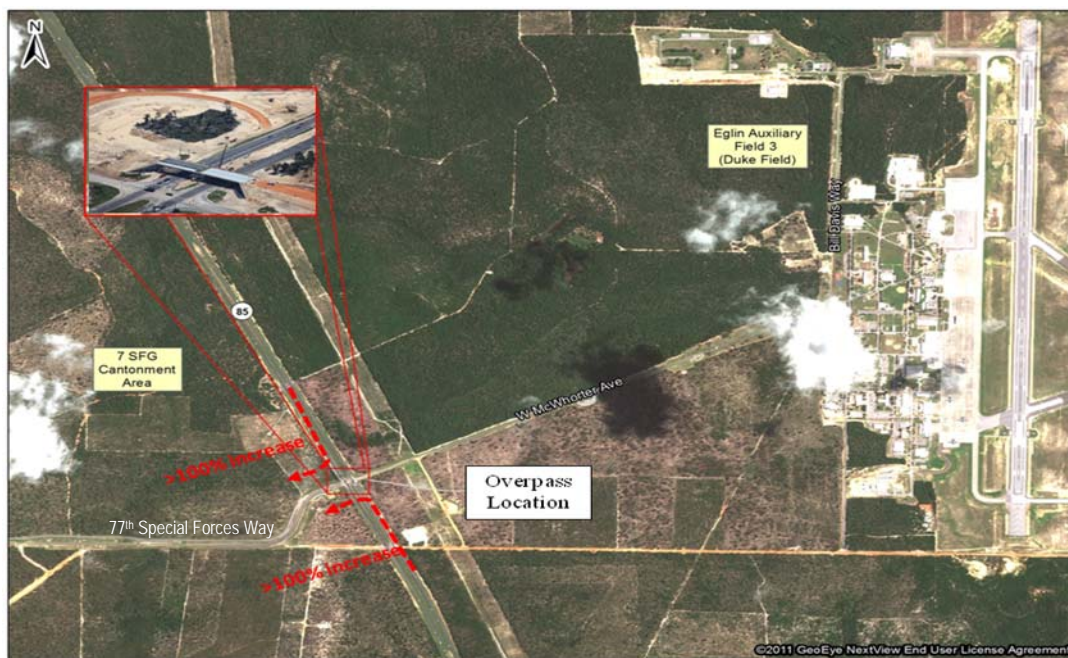
A detailed assessment of the problem led to a recommendation for a highway overpass over SR85 to provide safe access to the cantonment area, Duke Field, and training areas at Eglin AFB. Additionally, the overpass establishes a direct link

between the cantonment area and Duke Field/training areas without needing to drive on other public roadways. The improvement greatly improves safety by eliminating the need of heavy/oversize military equipment traversing the public roadway system for normal training or deployment needs.

The Air Force submitted this information in a DAR Needs Report to SDDC on June 30, 2009. SDDC worked with the FHWA to evaluate the transportation network for the new Eglin AFB cantonment area and determined that the recommended projects met the certification requirements. SDDC certified the intersection of SR85 and McWhorter Ave important to national defense on November 03, 2009.

The map below shows the transportation network for the Eglin AFB development. The overpass creates a grade separation between the two roadways and will maintain acceptable operating conditions on the State Route. The access road improvement met the doubling of traffic criterion and provides new access to the defense facility.

Map – Eglin AFB Development



Information for Urban Installations/Bases

Urban transportation planning is a complex and challenging process, especially when a defense facility is involved. The Installation Master Planning Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC 2-100-01) directs that

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each installation operate an installation planning board. The installation planning board will coordinate with local agencies and planning commissions of neighboring cities, counties, and States for mutual development concerns, encroachment issues impacting range operations and training, and environmental issues for the defense facilities. While public transportation is not a responsibility of the DOD, coordination in regard to master planning and metropolitan planning is a necessity to make sure that congestion does not impact the quality of life for the military and civilian commuters in urban metropolitan areas.

When growth impacts are identified, the installation should coordinate projected travel demands with the metropolitan planning organizations and develop alternatives to deal with any problems. Installations in metropolitan areas have unique congestion issues that require methodical traffic engineering assessments to determine the impact and mitigating actions for the roadway system. In many cases, working with the State and local planning agencies early can help reduce travel demand by promoting higher occupancy vehicle goals, flexible work hours, and looking at integrated busing alternatives. Best practices during the latest BRAC action included working directly with State and local entities to incorporate minor intersection upgrades at public system tie-ins near gate complexes that many times create bottlenecks.

On 23 June 1982, the Comptroller General of the United States published decision B-203214 which allowed DOD to pay for signalization or minor upgrades at public highway intersections. The basic premise of the decision is that DOD is authorized to make improvements to public roadways adjacent to our facilities when DOD is the primary beneficiary. The use of appropriated defense funds for closely-related projects (such as widening the roadway, addition or extension of turn lanes, or addition of a crosswalk for federal employees) may be similarly authorized under this rationale. If any installation or base has a similar need, they can contact the DAR Program office. Contact details are provided at the end of this document.

Additionally, knowing the appropriate BRAC regional coordinators at the State and local level allowed many challenges to be presented and discussed in greater detail. In some cases, this allowed communities to pursue non-DOD discretionary funding sources available from federal and State programs. The regional efforts normally started with close coordination with metropolitan planning organizations and staff at the State DOTs. The ability to coordinate the installation master plans with the local transportation improvement plans benefits all stakeholders.

A waiver or exception to the DAR Program eligibility criteria may be approved by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD AT&L). To request consideration of a waiver, installations must provide a formal request, including supporting documentation, through their chain of command. The request should be transmitted to USD AT&L through the Commander SDDC via the DAR Program office. Upon receipt of the request, installation staff will be contacted to discuss the submission in detail and an analysis will be conducted.

Regulatory Documents:

- ✓ 23 USC 210, Highways – Defense Access Roads
- ✓ CFR 660.500, Highways – Subpart E – Defense Access Roads
- ✓ DODD 4510.11, Department of Defense Transportation Engineering
- ✓ AR 55–80, OPNAVINST 11210.2, AFMAN 32-1017, MCO 11210.2D, DLAR 4500.19, DOD Transportation Engineering Program
- ✓ UFC 2-100-01, Unified Facilities Criteria – Installation Master Planning

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