



# Base Realignment and Closure

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## City celebrates opening of 'Gateway to Fort Sam Houston'

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Commuters traveling to and from Fort Sam Houston have the opportunity to witness one of the many improvements made for the community – the new Walters Street Bridge.

As sounds of horns and vehicle engines zipped underneath, U.S. Army North and Fort Sam Houston military and civilian personnel, along with city and state government representatives, gathered over Interstate Highway 35 to officially open the “New Gateway to Fort Sam Houston” May 25, during the Texas Department of Transportation’s Walters Street Bridge Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

“Today’s event highlights the incredible support that Texas and San Antonio provide our military,” said Maj. Gen. Perry Wiggins, deputy commanding general, Army North and Fort Sam Houston. “This bridge has another feature; it symbolizes a connection between this community and its military members that is unmatched anywhere in the world. Located close to where the general and 34th President (Dwight D. Eisenhower) once served.”

Since spring 2008, residents and commuters have witnessed the TxDOT’s \$23 million construction transform the bridge, originally built in 1962, into a representation of the historic Fort Sam Houston Quadrangle clock tower, said Fred Underwood, commissioner, Texas Highway Commission. It also pays tribute to Dwight D. Eisenhower for authorizing the Interstate Highway System in 1956.

“This turned out to be fantastic,” said Gina Gallegos, area engineer, Texas Department of Transportation. “We have received many calls from people about this bridge and construction to compliment on the structure and the progress, and we thank everyone for their patience during the construction.”

The project included widening the bridge 37 feet to include turnarounds for both directions of travel as well as a pedestrian and bicycle lanes and sidewalks. It also widened the IH35 frontage road lanes to allow for better traffic flow to and from the Fort Sam Houston area.

“With its modern traffic design and professional architecture, Fort Sam Houston and the city of San Antonio will be able to look [at their accomplishment] with pride,” said Sen. Jeff Wentworth, Texas State Senate, 25<sup>th</sup> District.

“This is no miracle that this is possible. It is because of the hard work and dedication of the workers of the Department of Transportation to continue to enhance the city of San Antonio and the state of Texas.”

Plans are also in the works by the City of San Antonio and Fort Sam Houston to build a six lane throughway from the Walter’s Street Bridge to the Post’s main gate. This \$13 million

construction project is aimed at enhancing the surrounding area and providing economic benefits and quality of life improvements for the residents, said Rep. Ruth McClendon, state representative, District 120.

“Interstate 35 is one of the busiest roads in America,” said Tommy Adkisson, Bexar County Precinct 4 commissioner. “This bridge is a tribute to all our brave military servicemen and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice to our nation.”

With the hard work by the TxDOT and cooperation of city and state officials, the new bridge has become another symbol of the relationship between the military and community members.

“On behalf of the service members and military Families past, present and future that have called or will call this city home, thank you to the city of San Antonio and the Department of Transportation for a project that truly is worthy of the history and legacy of Fort Sam Houston and your U.S. military,” said Wiggins.