

13 December 2012

Capt. Melissa Hill
673rd Security Forces Squadron Operations Officer
Bldg 8517 Rickenbacker Ave
JBER, AK 99506

Dear Capt. Hull,

I am happy to report that I have completed my research on the feasibility of opening the Muldoon gate 24/7. I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to complete this research and for taking the time to review the study.

I researched the issue broadly by looking at military families and their surrounding communities and then used questionnaires to find out more information.

After carefully reviewing the resulting data, I am recommending that the Muldoon gate hours remain as they are. The gate hours, which have been expanded many times over the years, seem to be meeting current needs.

Once again I appreciate the opportunity to research this important topic and I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Shana Roberson

Opening the Muldoon Gate 24/7: A Feasibility Report

Shana Roberson

University of Alaska Anchorage

13 December 2012

Abstract

The Muldoon gate on Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson is not currently open 24/7, limiting access to certain facilities both on and off base. UAA students responded to survey questions pertaining to these facilities to determine the demand for 24/7 gate access. Further research looked into the habits and needs of military families and the surrounding community. Research found that it is not feasible to open the Muldoon gate 24/7 and also that the Muldoon gate is currently open enough to address those relationships and needs. Future research topics on the subject were also developed as a result of this study.

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Introduction

On October 1, 2012 I was granted approval to study the feasibility of opening the Muldoon gate on Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson 24/7. According to the Department of Defense's (DoD) military installations website, on any given day in Anchorage, nearly 50,000 people could access JBER. That number breaks down specifically to 15,288 active duty service members, 2,384 National Guard members, and 961 Reserve members, 5,893 retirees, 18,884 family members, 2,462 civilians that work on base, and a varying number of other service industry (taxi cab, pizza delivery or construction trucks) folks. Furthermore, over 3,800 military families live on JBER. There are six gates by which these people are able to access the base. One of those gates, the Muldoon gate, has had its hours expanded three times in the last four years. This history indicates a growing need for access to the base both due to new businesses in the Tikatnu Commons as well as the location of on-base amenities located within one mile of the gate.

The Muldoon gate at JBER is closed at inconvenient times blocking convenient access to on base amenities as well as the dozens of new businesses housed in the Tikatnu Commons, a shopping center located adjacent to the gate. The best way to solve this problem is to keep the Muldoon gate open 24 hours a day. If accepted, this study will look at the feasibility of doing so. The purpose of this proposal is to detail the advantages of expanding the current Muldoon gate hours to 24 hours a day.

Living on or having convenient access to a military base provides a certain level of familiarity and security for military families who are continually moving to new places. That

security and familiarity are represented in the numerous on base amenities located within one mile of the Muldoon gate: hundreds of residential units, a hospital and emergency room, a gas station, a grocery store, a general goods store and many restaurants. Research shows that over half of active duty military members are married and many have children (Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, 2010). That research points to the good that convenient access to the amenities at the Tikatnu Commons offers: a movie theater, hair salon, home improvement store, clothing stores, general goods store, Alaska Department of Transportation office and several communication services stores.

Further research into the military spouse finds that they tend to work more in part time positions due to numerous relocations (RAND 2003). Research also shows that due to frequent and disruptive moves, military deployments (and the child care problems they create) and employer bias make employment difficult for military spouses (Castaneda, Harrell 2007). The businesses in the Tikanttu Commons offer numerous military friendly part time employment opportunities with easy access. Furthermore, research indicates that limited employment access might decrease military retention rates and, overall, contribute to lower income levels for military spouses (RAND 2003).

There are three gates on the Elmendorf side of JBER. Only one of these gates, the Boniface gate, is open 24 hours a day. That the Boniface gate was the sole 24 hour accessible gate used to make sense. However, recent developments have changed this logic. For example, on base amenities like the base hospital and commissary (grocery store) used to be closer to the Boniface gate but they are now located within one mile of the Muldoon gate. Additionally, a large portion of the on-base population lives north of JBER, making the Muldoon gate the most

convenient entrance and exit. Furthermore, what once was just a plot of land outside the Muldoon gate is now one of the most popular shopping centers in the town of Anchorage. Except for a few small scattered businesses, the Boniface gate has no such commercial activity. The combination of the tremendous popularity of the new shopping center and the fact that over 150 new homes have been built within a mile of the Muldoon gate in the last year alone gives credence to the wisdom of opening the Muldoon gate 24 hours a day.

In November 2008 Mark Meyer, the Elmendorf chief of Plans and Programs for the 3rd Security Forces Squadron was discussing the expansion of Muldoon gate hours with the Alaska Post, Ft. Wainwright's newsletter. Meyer said, "If the need is there, we will expand the hours." In fact, the Muldoon gate hours have been expanded three times in the last four years. This gives evidence for both the need as well as the willingness of those in charge to meet that need. Currently, the Muldoon gate is only closed for five hours a night during the week and nine hours a night during the weekend. To expand the gate's hours to 24 hours a day, only one additional shift manned by two personnel would need to be added a day.

When these facts are added to secondary research, the need for this study is clear. Secondary research indicates quality of life is important for military member retention. That quality of life includes military spouse employment availability as well as entertainment opportunities to cope with stress created by being a military family member. Other research suggests that the relationships between the military community and local businesses are important, which is relevant to the access of the Muldoon gate. The remaining sections of this report will detail specific methods, results, conclusions, and my recommendations.

Methods

The following list describes the methods of research I used:

- I used the UAA/APU Consortium Library to find peer-reviewed journal articles about military families, their employment, their community involvement, and the relationship between the military community and surrounding benefits.
- I used the references list from a few carefully chosen articles to delve further into the secondary research under the same topics.
- I reviewed the on-base amenities located close to the Muldoon gate and the types of businesses located in the Tikatnu Commons to include their hours of operation.
- I noted the changes in amenity locations on base recently.
- I contacted the on-base housing office to find the number of housing units within one mile of the Muldoon gate (nearly 1,000 homes).
- I contacted the on-base security office to find gate hours for all three Elmendorf gates.
- I researched online the history of the Muldoon gate hours.
- I designed a questionnaire to collect information on how people felt about opening the Muldoon gate 24/7.
- I distributed the questionnaire to 20 fellow UAA English 212 students and received 16 responses.
- I analyzed the responses and created graphics using the data gathered.

I used the following criteria to analyze the data in order to make a recommendation:

- Is there a demand to open the Muldoon gate 24 hours a day?
- Would opening the Muldoon gate 24 hours a day increase employment and entertainment opportunities for military families and civilians?

Results

Investigating the Demand for Opening the Muldoon Gate 24/7

A survey was administered to evaluate the need for opening the Muldoon gate 24/7 and specifically what aspects would contribute most to that need. Respondents were asked to evaluate important factors associated with the gate being open 24/7 such as hospital and residence access. The most important question asked of respondents was an overall question asking whether they thought the Muldoon gate should remain open 24/7 on JBER. The respondents were split nearly in half with only 55 percent responding that yes, the gate should be open 24/7 and 45 percent saying no, the gate should not be open 24/7. This question was directly related to the first and most important evaluation criteria: Is there a demand to open the Muldoon gate 24/7? This data shows that there may not be a demand for the gate to be open any additional hours than it currently is. Therefore, it may not be feasible to open the gate 24/7.

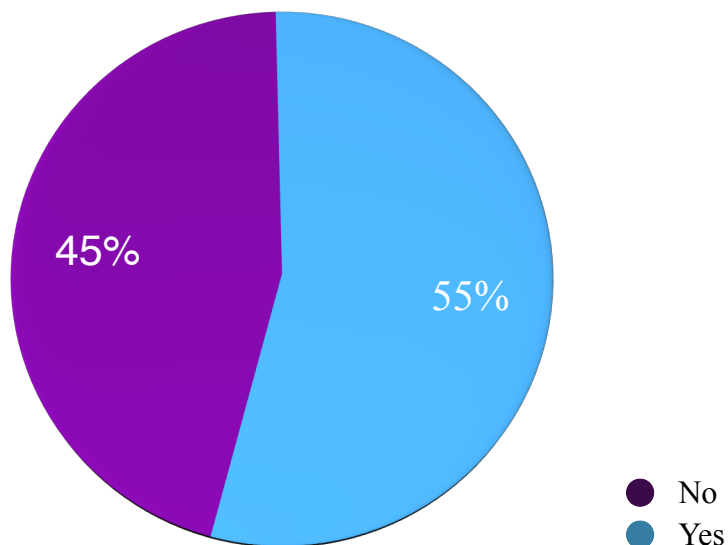


Figure 1. Should the Muldoon Gate be Opened 24/7 Question Results. Respondents did not break heavily in either direction in answering whether the Muldoon gate should be open 24/7, signaling that there may not be a demand for the Muldoon gate to be opened 24/7.

When asked more specifically about opening the Muldoon gate 24/7 based on certain factors, respondents were more contrasted in their answers. For example, when asked if the Muldoon gate should be opened 24/7 because of its proximity to the on-base hospital and emergency room, respondents overwhelmingly responded yes (82 percent versus 18 percent who answered no). In contrast, when respondents were asked if the gate should be opened 24/7 for miscellaneous conveniences like “pizza delivery” or “cab drivers,” responses were resoundingly no. Other factors like access to on-base residences and on-base employment were split more evenly. Overall, when asked if the gate should be open 24/7 based on these factors, the percentages were 57 percent “yes” and 43 percent “no.” This is in slight contrast to the direct question described in Figure 1. These answers speak to (but not definitively) evaluation criteria number two (Would opening the Muldoon gate 24 hours a day increase employment and entertainment opportunities for military families?) by highlighting what factors are important and what benefits might present themselves with regard to 24/7 access to the Muldoon gate.

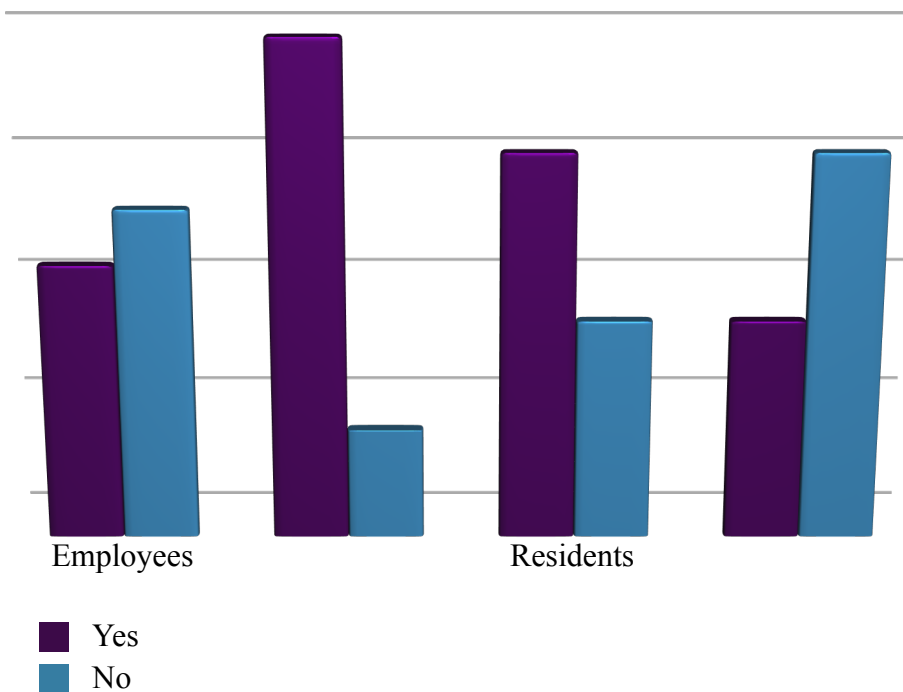


Figure 2. Factors in Considering Opening the Muldoon Gate 24/7. Respondents were clearly in favor of opening the Muldoon gate 24/7 when it was related to access to health services and on-base residence. Respondents were not in favor of doing so for other factors like on-base employee access or pizza delivery access.

As presented earlier, a majority of military members are married. That number increases dramatically when only considering military members who live on base. These numbers are important to consider when looking at the next set of data. Survey respondents were more likely to answer no about opening the Muldoon gate 24/7 for any reason if they were or had been married. The reason behind this phenomena is undetermined, although it does seem that they did not perceive any measurable benefits to opening the Muldoon gate 24/7. One married respondent said, “There are no negative affects effects,” and another said, “does not affect me at all.” This cross tabulation of the data suggests that the very demographic opening the Muldoon gate 24/7

would potentially benefit the most is the most likely to not demand it. This data speaks directly to evaluation criteria one and two by reflecting specifically on married respondents' demand for easy access to certain factors.

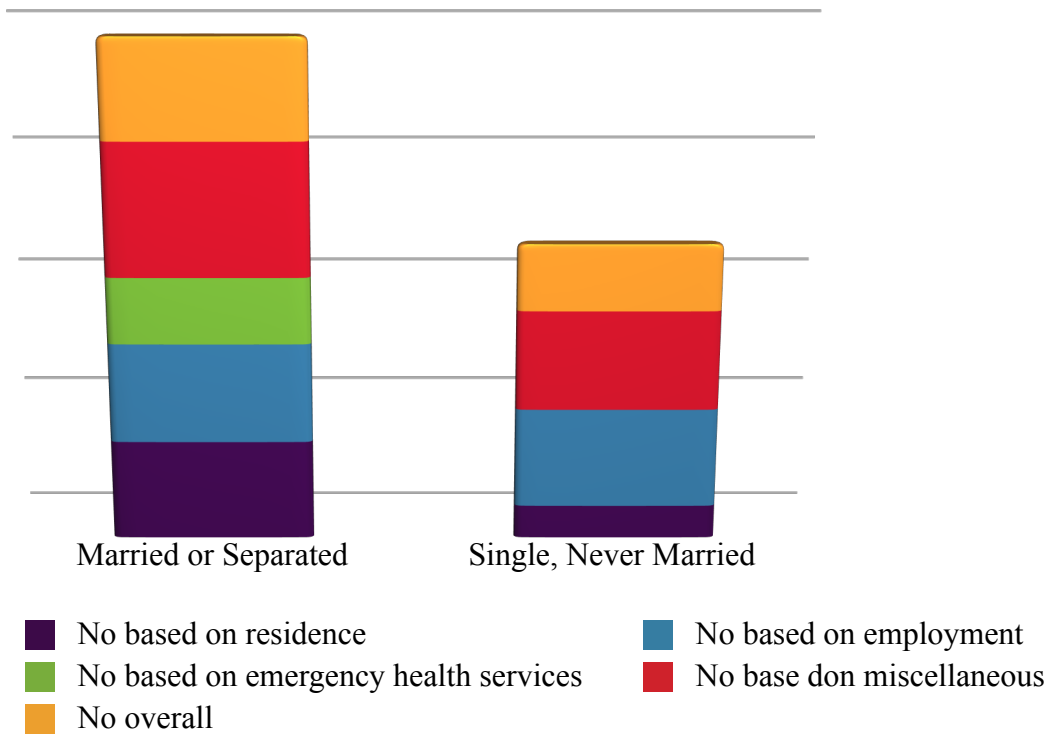


Figure 3. How Married Respondents Answered 24/7 Access Questions Compared to Single Respondents. Married respondents were 25 percent more likely to answer no than were there single counterparts.

In this final questionnaire analysis, short answer responses about perceived benefits of easy access to things like jobs, homes, emergency health services, and entertainment were reviewed. Seventeen percent of respondents independently offered reduced traffic at another gate as a benefit. Moreover, traffic was not mentioned in the survey. This is important in the analysis because it prompts a potential benefit of this project, more than a criterion criteria this feasibility

study did not focus on. The reduced traffic flow would be an interesting and beneficial data set to research in a future feasibility study.

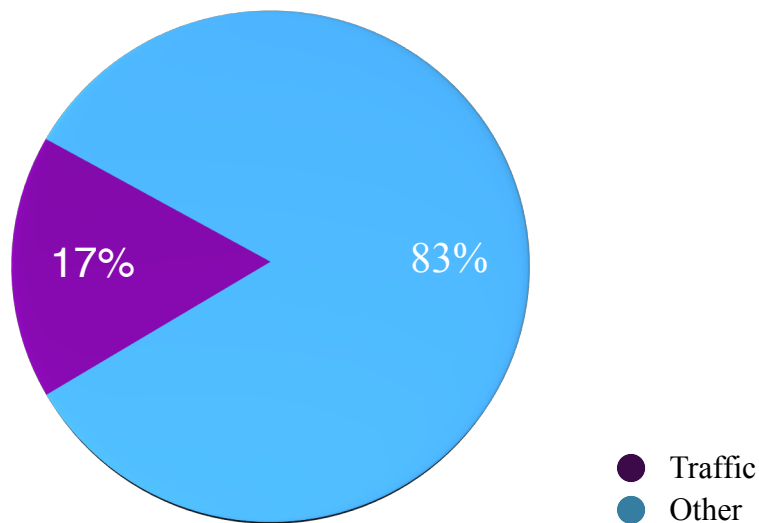


Figure 4. Traffic as a Perceived Benefit of Easy Access. Traffic was listed 17 percent of the time when a short answer was given in the survey.

Investigating Employment and Entertainment Opportunities Outside the Muldoon Gate

Most businesses and on-base facilities adjacent to the Muldoon gate have hours that are similar to the Muldoon gate hours, with few exceptions. A few notable exceptions are the movie theater, which is open later than the gate, and the on base gas station and emergency room, which are both open 24 hours a day. The chart below details a few examples, both for a typical weekday and a typical weekend day.

	Gate	Kohl's	Target	Regal Cinemas	Olive Garden	JBER Base Exchange
Monday	0500-2400	0800-2200	0800-2300	1000-0100 (-1 hour)	1100-2200	0900-2100
Saturday	0900-2400	0700-2400 (-2 hours)	0800-2300 (-1 hour)	1000-0200 (-2 hours)	1100-2300	0900-2100

Figure 5. Muldoon gate and local business hours. The chart details the operating hours of the Muldoon gate and four local off-base business and one on-base business.

Conclusions

Results of the research indicate the following conclusions:

- There is not an overwhelming demand to expand the Muldoon gate hours.
- Married respondents, who are closer demographically to those living on base, were even more opposed to opening the Muldoon gate 24/7.
- Reduced traffic is a perceived benefit of opening the Muldoon gate 24/7.
- A majority of businesses and facilities adjacent to the Muldoon gate are already operating under similar hours as the Muldoon gate.
- It is not feasible to open the Muldoon gate 24/7.

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Recommendations

Based upon thorough review and analysis of the data, it is recommended that JBER:

- Keep the Muldoon gate open at its current operating hours.
- Continue to monitor demand for expanding those hours.
- Continue to develop and monitor the quality of life for military members and their families.
- Conduct future research how expanding the Muldoon gate hours could affect traffic flow.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

My questionnaire (Appendix A) was distributed to 16 of my fellow University of Alaska Anchorage college students who were enrolled in the Fall 2012 English 212 online Technical Writing course as instructed by Krista Soria. The purpose of the survey was to collect information on how people felt about opening the Muldoon gate 24/7.

1. Are you male or female?

Male | Female

2. What is your marital status?

Single, Never Married

Married | Separated | Divorced | Widowed

3. Do you think residents who live on base should have 24/7 access to the Muldoon gate on JBER-Elmendorf?

Yes | No

4. Do you think employees who work on base should have 24/7 access to the Muldoon gate on JBER-Elmendorf?

Yes | No

5. The Muldoon gate is immediately adjacent to the hospital on JBER-Elmendorf. Do you think that gate should be open 24/7 in order for military families to have quicker access to emergency health services?

Yes | No

6. Do you think other individuals (cab drivers, pizza delivery, visitors) who access JBER-Elmendorf should have 24/7 access to the Muldoon gate on JBER-Elmendorf?

Yes | No

7. Do you think the Muldoon gate should be open 24/7 on JBER-Elmendorf?

Yes | No

8. Please rank the following factors in the order of importance as to why the Muldoon gate should be opened 24/7.

Hospital access | Residence access | Work access | Entertainment access | On-base amenities access

9. What perceived benefits in terms of health care, jobs, shopping, entertainment, etc. might there be if the Muldoon gate is opened 24/7? _____

10. How does easy access to and from your residence, work, school, emergency healthcare, entertainment (i.e. movie theaters), dining, or shopping services affect you professionally? _____

11. How does easy access to and from your residence, work, school, emergency healthcare, entertainment (i.e. movie theaters), dining, or shopping services affect you personally? _____