



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

T-7A RECAPITALIZATION AT VANCE AIR FORCE BASE, OKLAHOMA



## Welcome

# Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) T-7A Recapitalization at Vance Air Force Base





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## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- Law that requires federal agencies to **analyze and disclose potential impacts** of proposed actions, reasonable alternatives, and a no action alternative, before action is taken.
- EIS prepared to comply with NEPA when an action may have a significant impact on the environment.
- The goal is to support sound decisions through the assessment of impacts and involve the public in the EIS process.
- The results of this analysis and other relevant factors will be considered before the Air Force decides on this proposal.





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## AETC and Vance AFB Introduction

Vance AFB is home to the 71st Flying Training Wing (FTW) of the Air Education and Training Command (AETC).

- **71 FTW Mission:** “Deliver world-class U.S. pilots, develop resilient Airmen and families, deploy ready Airmen, and demonstrate our ‘Vance Proud’ culture.”
- **71 FTW Pilot Training:** Undergraduate pilot training: T-38C “Talon”.

The T-38C aircraft are approaching the end of their useful life, and student pilots need a more technologically advanced aircraft with which to train.





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## T-7A Strategic Basing Initiative

- The Air Force plans to recapitalize the T-38C fleet with T-7A “Red Hawk” aircraft to provide a training environment suitable for modern aircraft.
- Procure approximately 350 T-7A aircraft and deliver these aircraft to the five T-38C pilot training installations using a geographically phased replacement plan.
  - ❖ Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA)-Randolph, Texas
  - ❖ Columbus AFB, Mississippi
  - ❖ Laughlin AFB, Texas
  - ❖ Vance AFB, Oklahoma
  - ❖ Sheppard AFB, Texas
- T-7A aircraft would provide a training environment suitable for modern aircraft.





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## Why is Vance AFB Fourth?

- The Acting Secretary of the Air Force selected Vance AFB to be the fourth installation to undergo T-7A recapitalization.
- Recapitalizing Vance AFB fourth would:
  - ❖ Result in the least impact on continued pilot production during the transition of aircraft types.
  - ❖ Provide the most efficient cost and student production and management plan.
  - ❖ Align with AETC's student pipeline flow for the Undergraduate Pilot Training and Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals curricula.
- JBSA-Randolph, Columbus, and Laughlin AFB are the first, second, and third installations, and Sheppard AFB would follow as the fifth installation.





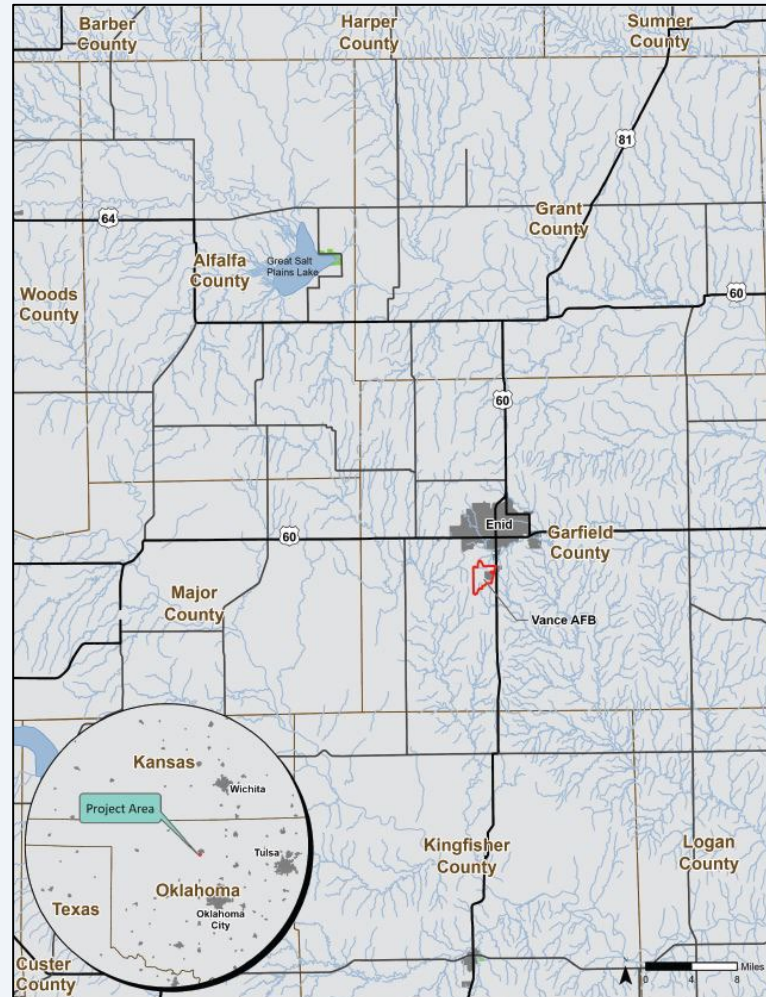


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## T-7A RECAPITALIZATION AT VANCE AIR FORCE BASE, OKLAHOMA

### Project Location





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## Purpose & Need

### Purpose:

- Continue the T-7A strategic basing initiative at Vance AFB.
- Better train pilots to operate modern aircraft.

### Need:

- Current training practices with T-38C aircraft fail to adequately prepare pilots to operate modern aircraft.
- Recapitalizing Vance AFB is needed to:
  - ❖ Allow for enhanced and improved flight and simulator training.
  - ❖ Ensure pilot training requirements are met.





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## Overview of the Proposed Action

Recapitalization entails the following elements:

- Replacement of all 63 T-38C aircraft assigned to Vance AFB with T-7A aircraft.
- Transition of aircraft operations from the T-38C to T-7A.
- Temporary changes to the number of personnel and dependents in the Vance AFB region.
- Construction and upgrade of operations, support, and maintenance facilities to support pilot training and aircraft operations and maintenance.
  - ❖ Small-scale construction, building renovations, reconfigure airfield, etc.
  - ❖ Total ground disturbance would be less than 1 acre.
  - ❖ Begin in 2028 and 2029. Complete by 2032.







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## Overview of Action Alternatives

- The Air Force analyzed the environmental impacts of three action alternatives:
  - ❖ Alternative 1 – up to 68 T-7A aircraft and operations at a level sustaining pilot training
  - ❖ Alternative 2 – up to 68 T-7A aircraft and operations 25 percent greater than Alternative 1
  - ❖ Alternative 3 – up to 99 T-7A aircraft and operations 45 percent greater than Alternative 1
- Aircraft Operation = 1 Takeoff, Landing, or “Touch-and-Go.”
  - ❖ T-38C fleet currently performs 64,700 annual operations.





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## Alternative 1

### Alternative 1 – 68 T-7A Aircraft and Operations at a Level Sustaining Pilot Training

- T-7A aircraft would be delivered to Vance AFB beginning in 2032 and continuing through 2033.
- As T-7A aircraft are delivered and placed into service, all 63 T-38C aircraft would be withdrawn from service.
  - ❖ T-38C withdrawal would begin in 2032 and be complete by the end of 2033.
  - ❖ T-7A operations would begin in 2032 and increase to steady state in 2034.
  - ❖ Annually, the T-7A fleet would perform approximately 5,100 more operations at steady state than the T-38C fleet.
    - Identical number of operations per aircraft.
    - 68 T-7A vs. 63 T-38C equates to the additional operations.
    - At steady state, operations would increase from approximately 64,700 currently with the T-38C to approximately 69,800 with the T-7A.





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## Alternative 2

### Alternative 2 – 68 T-7A Aircraft and T-7A and T-38C Operations 25 Percent Greater than Alternative 1

- Intended to cover a scenario where the Air Force requires a surge or increase in operations above the current plan.
- Like Alternative 1, 68 T-7A aircraft would be delivered and placed into service beginning in 2032, T-38C withdrawal would be complete by the end of 2033, T-7A operations would increase to steady state by 2034, and T-38C operations would conclude by the end of 2033.
- T-7A aircraft would perform 25% more operations than Alternative 1.
  - ❖ At steady state, operations would increase from approximately 64,600 currently with the T-38C to approximately 87,300 with the T-7A.





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## Alternative 3

### Alternative 3 – 99 T-7A Aircraft and T-7A Operations at 45 Percent Greater than Alternative 1

- Intended to provide operational flexibility so that 31 additional T-7A aircraft can be assigned to Vance AFB, if needed.
- An additional 31 T-7A aircraft would be delivered to Vance AFB beginning in 2032, resulting in a total of 99 T-7A aircraft by 2034.
- T-7A operations would increase to steady state by 2035, and T-38C operations would conclude by the end of 2033.
- Annually, the T-7A fleet would perform approximately 36,900 more operations at steady state than the T-38C fleet.
  - ❖ Identical number of operations per aircraft.
  - ❖ At steady state, operations would increase from approximately 64,700 currently with the T-38C to approximately 101,600 with the T-7A.





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## No Action Alternative

- A “No Action Alternative” is considered in the Draft EIS.
- Provides a means to evaluate the impacts of the Proposed Action.
- The Air Force would not implement T-7A recapitalization at Vance AFB.
- No change to number of personnel, number and types of T-38C operations, and no construction or renovation projects undertaken.
- If the No Action Alternative is selected, the Air Force would re-evaluate their T-7A strategic basing decisions and may implement all or a portion of the basing requirements proposed for Vance AFB at an undetermined location.





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## Alternatives Comparison

### Comparison of Alternatives

	Current Conditions & No Action	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternatives 3
Aircraft				
Number of Aircraft	63	68	68	99
Compared to No Action	--	+5	+5	+36
Operations				
Steady State Operations	64,700	69,800	87,300	101,600
Compared to No Action	--	+5,100	+22,600	+36,900
Operational Tempo (ops per aircraft)	1,026	1,026	1,283	1,026







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## Draft EIS Resource Subjects

Resource subjects analyzed in detail for potential environmental impacts are:

- Air Quality
- Noise
- Land Use
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazardous Materials and Waste
- Safety
- Water Resources

Resource subjects determined not to warrant detailed analysis are:

- Airspace
- Geological Resources
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Socioeconomics





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## Air Quality

- Temporary (2028 and 2029) air emissions produced from the use of heavy equipment for construction.
- Operational air emissions would begin in 2030.
- Annual net change of criteria pollutant emissions under Alternative 1 would not exceed insignificance indicators for all criteria pollutants.
- Annual net change in nitrogen oxides air emissions for Alternatives 2 and 3 would exceed insignificance indicators beginning in 2034.
  - ❖ Considering the type and context of emissions, Alternatives 2 and 3 are not expected to contribute to an exceedance of National Ambient Air Quality Standards.





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### Noise

- Noise from aircraft operations would increase areas of incompatible land use on and adjacent to Vance AFB. The acreage and population within the 65 dBA DNL contour would increase incrementally for Alternative 1, 2, and 3 from baseline conditions.
- The baseline condition represents the noise contours developed by the Air Force in a previously prepared aircraft noise study and adopted by local and regional entities into the Vance AFB Joint Land Use Study.
- The No Action noise contours differ from the baseline and better represent the **current noise patterns** due to a change in flight patterns.
  - ❖ Both sets of noise contours are based on the use of T-38C aircraft, whereas the noise contours associated with Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 are based on the projected use of the new T-7A aircraft.





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## Noise (continued)

### Acreage and Population within the 65+ dBA DNL Noise Zones

	Baseline	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternatives 3	No Action
On-Installation					
Aircraft Noise Footprint	1,875 acres	1,812 acres	1,832 acres	1,848 acres	1,722 acres
Population	535	365	378	388	198
Off-Installation					
Aircraft Noise Footprint	8,833 acres	9,754 acres	11,637 acres	12,659 acres	7,173 acres
Population	299	3,276	3,946	4,470	2,101



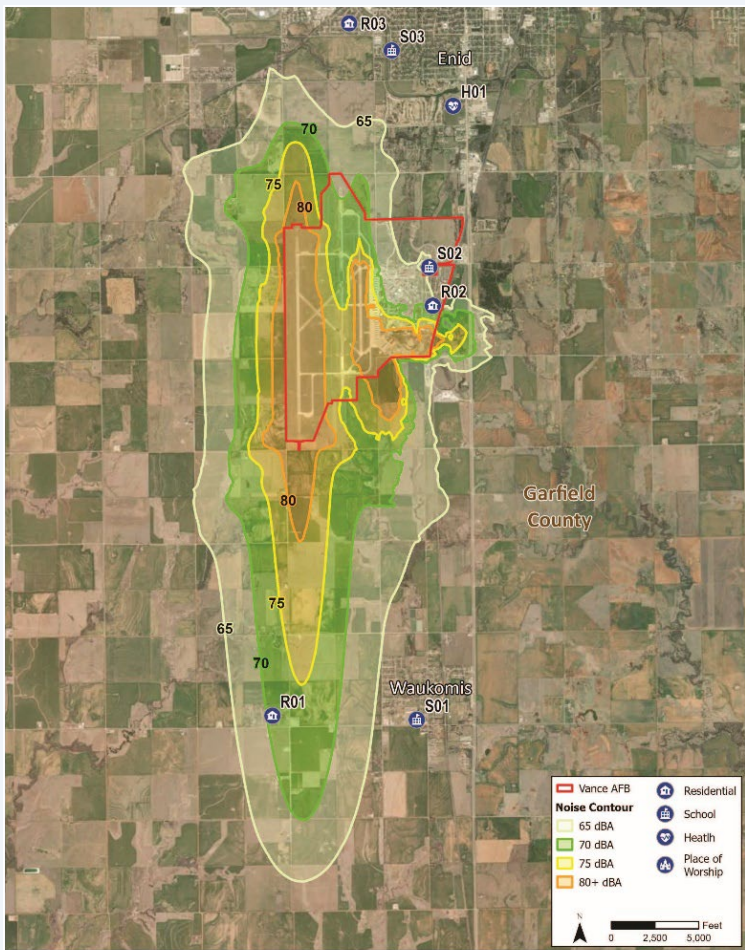


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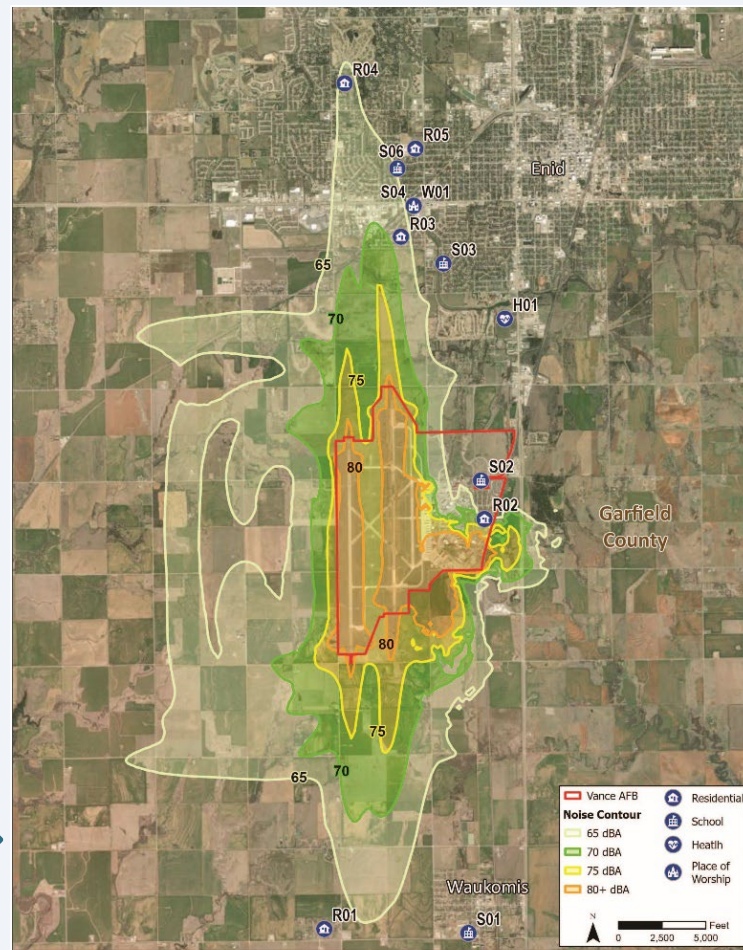


### Noise – Baseline Conditions vs. Alternative 1



Baseline  
Noise  
Footprint

Alternative 1  
Footprint





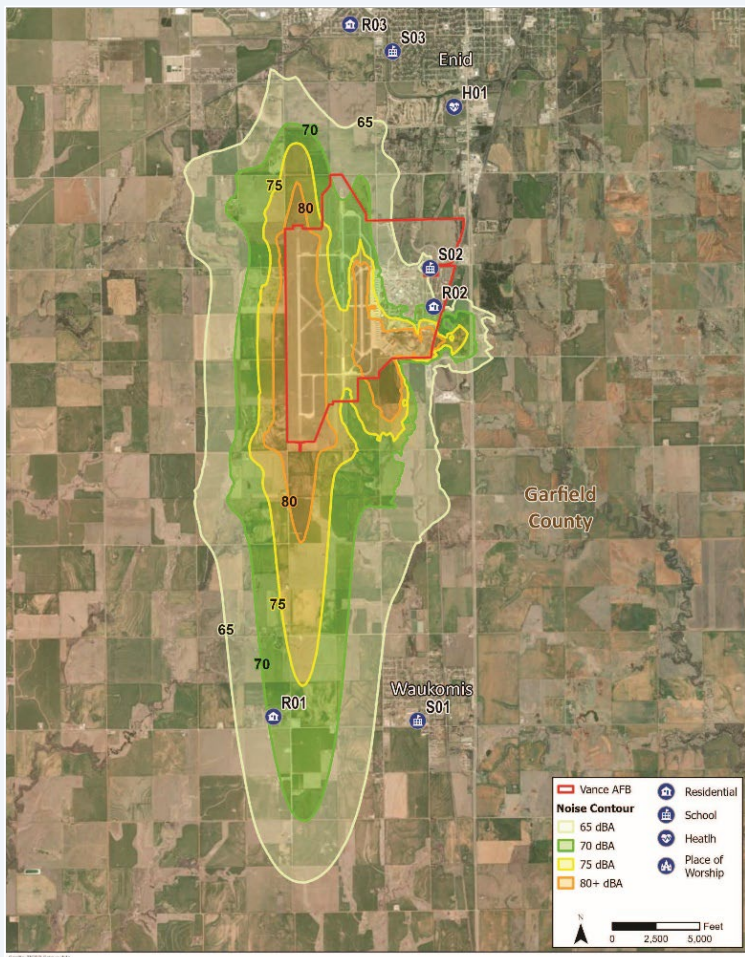


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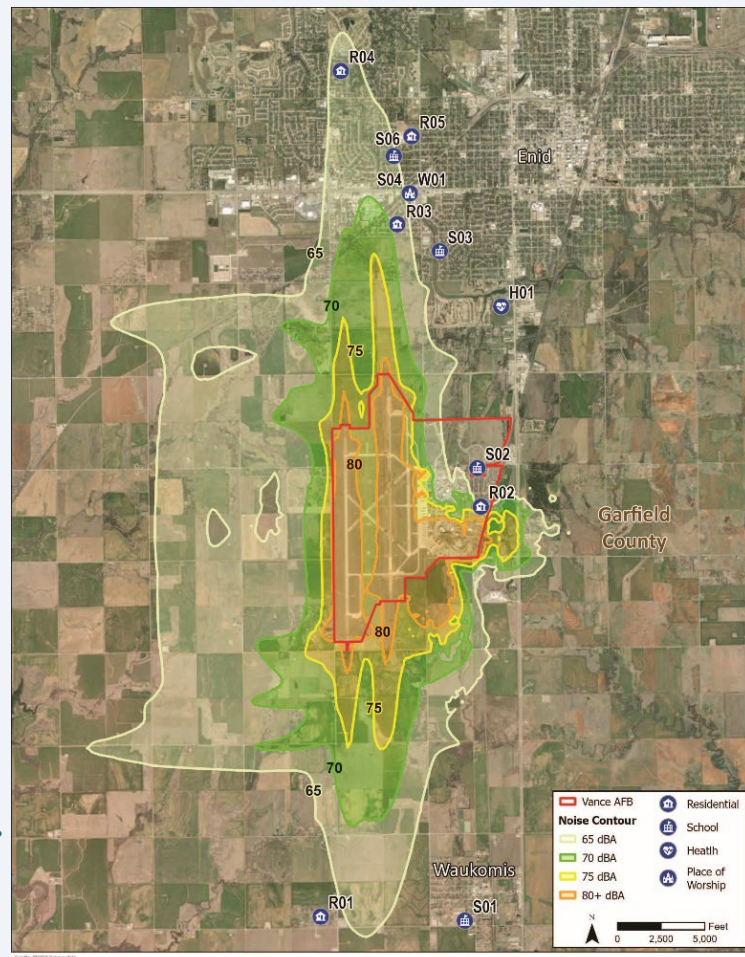


### Noise – Baseline Conditions vs. Alternative 2



Baseline  
Noise  
Footprint

Alternative 2  
Footprint





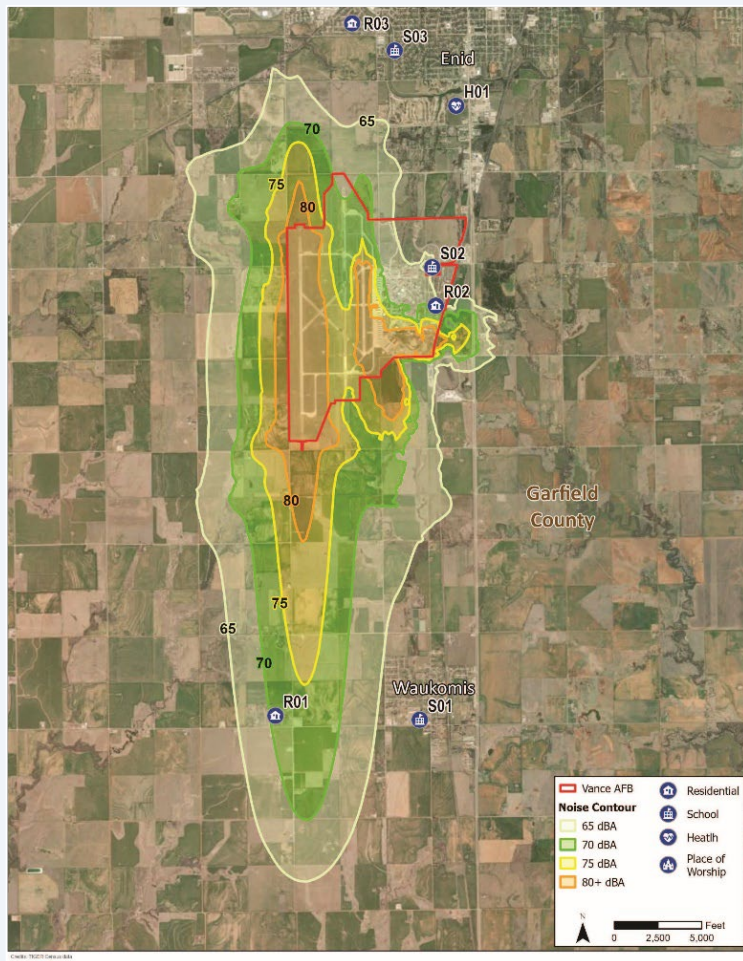


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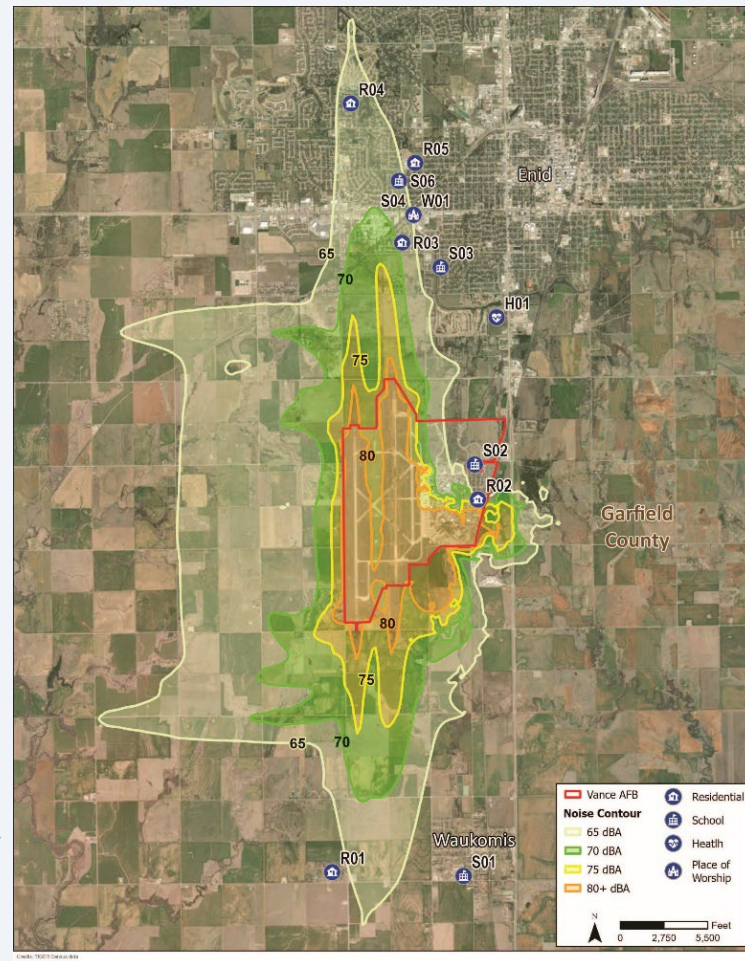
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### Noise – Baseline Conditions vs. Alternative 3



**Baseline  
Noise  
Footprint**



**Alternative 3  
Footprint**





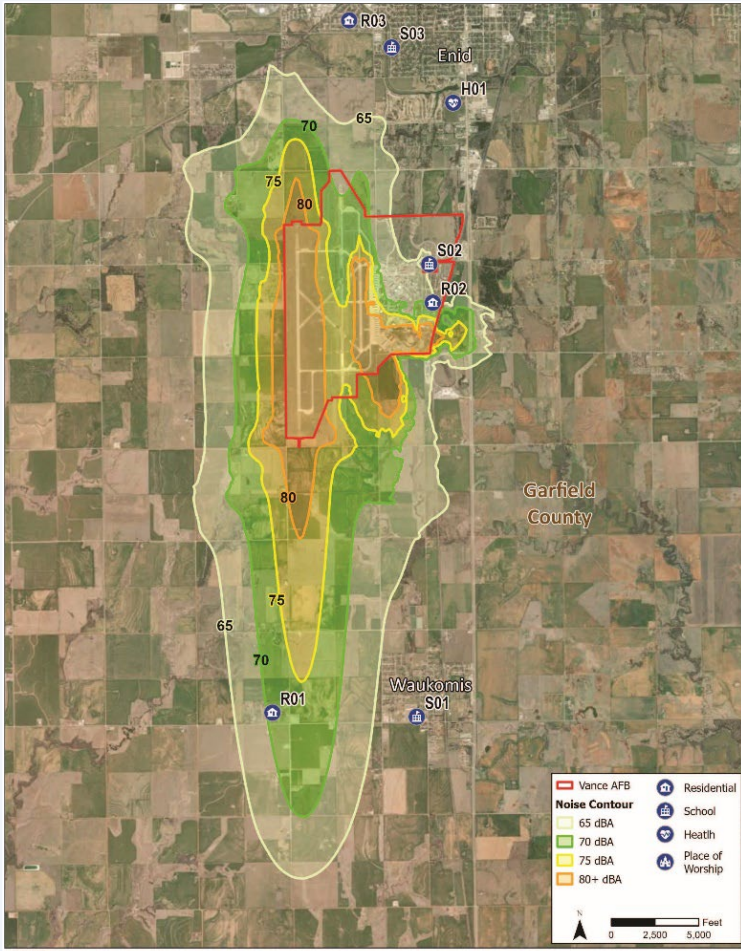


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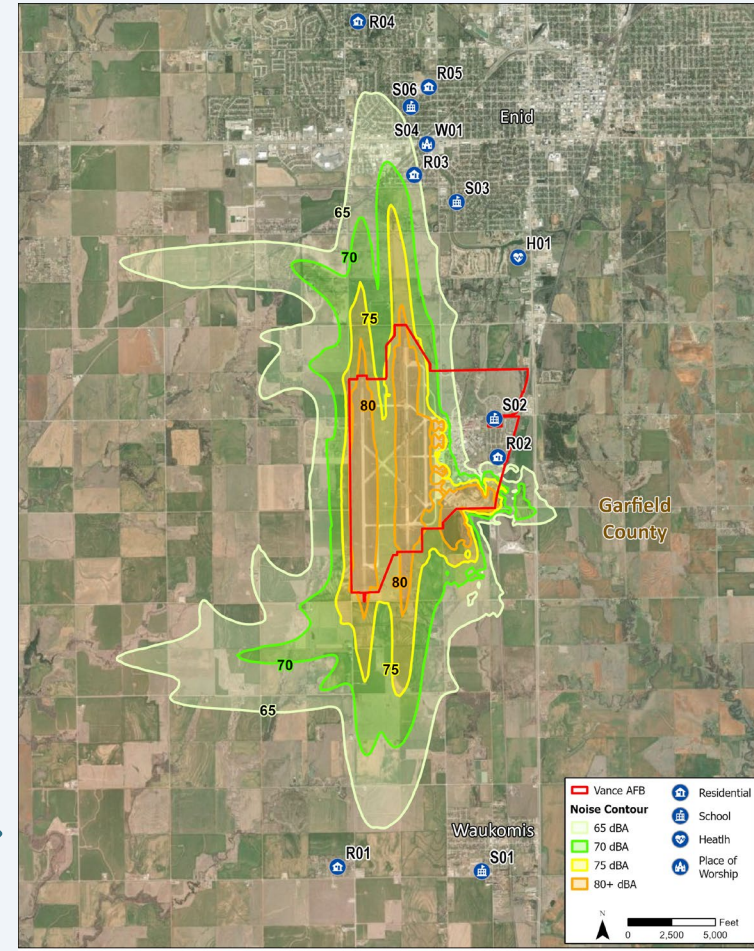


### Noise – Baseline Conditions vs. No Action



Baseline  
Noise  
Footprint

No Action  
Alternative  
Footprint





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## Noise – Conclusions

- Draft EIS contains more detailed analysis.
- Includes analysis of the following for each alternative:
  - ❖ Speech interference
  - ❖ Classroom learning interference
  - ❖ Sleep disturbance
  - ❖ Hearing loss
  - ❖ Damage to structures.
- Addresses noise levels in special use airspace.
- Significant impacts on the noise environment are anticipated from all alternatives.





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### Land Use

- Residential land use is considered incompatible with any aircraft noise zone above 65 dBA DNL. The 65 dBA DNL noise contours encompass portions of the city of Enid that are residential. As a result, there would be an increase in incompatible land uses and the number of individuals living within the noise zones.
- The Air Force would consider the following mitigation measures:
  - ❖ Continue to coordinate with local governments (e.g., Garfield, Grant, and Alfalfa Counties; the cities of Enid and Waukomis; other local communities) to analyze compatible use surrounding Vance AFB.
  - ❖ Prepare an Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) plan update to address any increases of land area within the greater than 65 dBA DNL noise contour for Vance AFB.
  - ❖ Evaluate flight characteristics to determine safest, most efficient, least intrusive operations.
  - ❖ Monitor noise complaint locations and times. Adjust flight tracks as feasible.





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## Biological Resources

- Biological resources evaluates impacts on vegetation, wildlife, and special status species.
  - ❖ Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would have short-term, not significant impacts on vegetation from the temporary or permanent removal of vegetation for construction of new facilities.
    - Majority of construction and renovation would occur in highly urban areas, with minimal existing vegetation.
  - ❖ Wildlife impacts from construction would be not significant.
  - ❖ Long-term, not significant impacts on wildlife from aircraft strikes could occur from aircraft operations. The Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) Plan would be updated and implemented to minimize potential strikes.
  - ❖ Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would have no effect on six federally listed or candidate species with the potential to occur on Vance AFB. The Air Force consulted with USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.





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## Cultural Resources

- Of the buildings proposed for modification, none are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).
- No Native American cemeteries, burials, or sacred sites have been identified during surveys at Vance AFB.
- Some projects would involve ground disturbance.
  - ❖ These projects are not anticipated to impact archaeological resources.
- The Air Force consulted with Oklahoma SHPO and Native American tribes under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.







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## Other Resources

- Other resource subjects that were analyzed in detail include Hazardous Materials and Wastes, Safety, and Water Resources.
- Each was determined to have no significant impacts from Alternatives 1, 2, or 3.
- Further details are found in the Draft EIS.





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## The EIS Timeline

*We are currently at the Draft EIS comment stage.*

- Publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Draft EIS in the *Federal Register* occurred on August 29, 2025.
- Notification letters emailed to interested federal, state, and local parties.
- Draft EIS made available on project website and at Enid Public Library.
- The comment period is 45 days. Please submit comments by October 14, 2025.





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## The EIS Timeline (continued)

- After the public comment period ends, the Air Force will:
  - ❖ Review all comments received and consider them in preparing the Final EIS.
  - ❖ Respond to substantive comments in the Final EIS.

*(Substantive comments offer information regarding the alternatives or are relative to the assessment of impacts or NEPA process.)*
- Final EIS is scheduled to be completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2026.





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## Providing Comments

- **Mail:** Ms. Chinling Chen, AFCEC/CIE  
Attn: Vance AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS  
Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs  
100 H Street East, Suite 4  
Randolph AFB, TX 78150
- **Email:** chinling.chen@us.af.mil
- **Online on the Project Website:** <https://vance.t-7anepadocuments.com>
- **Comment Form:** Available for printing on project website.



***To ensure timely consideration of your comments in the Final EIS, please submit comments by October 14, 2025.***





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# THANK YOU

for participating in the public comment process!

