



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

T-7 RECAPITALIZATION AT VANCE AIR FORCE BASE, OKLAHOMA



## PUBLIC SCOPING FOR T-7A RECAPITALIZATION AT VANCE AIR FORCE BASE, OK



Photo Credit: Boeing T-7A Red Hawk Website, September 2021, <https://www.boeing.com/defense/t-7a/#/gallery>

installation; temporary changes to the number of personnel and dependents in the Vance AFB region; and construction and upgrade of operations, support, and maintenance facilities. The range of alternatives to the Proposed Action are described on the back of this brochure.

### Background

DAF proposes to recapitalize the flight training program at Vance AFB with T-7A aircraft because the T-38C is expected to reach the end of its service life within the next decade. Training with the T-38C does not adequately prepare pilots for the technological advancements of modern fourth and fifth generation aircraft including nighttime flight training. The Secretary of the Air Force has made strategic basing decisions to recapitalize existing T-38C pilot training installations, and Vance AFB would be the fourth of five installations for this beddown action.

### What is the Public Scoping Process?

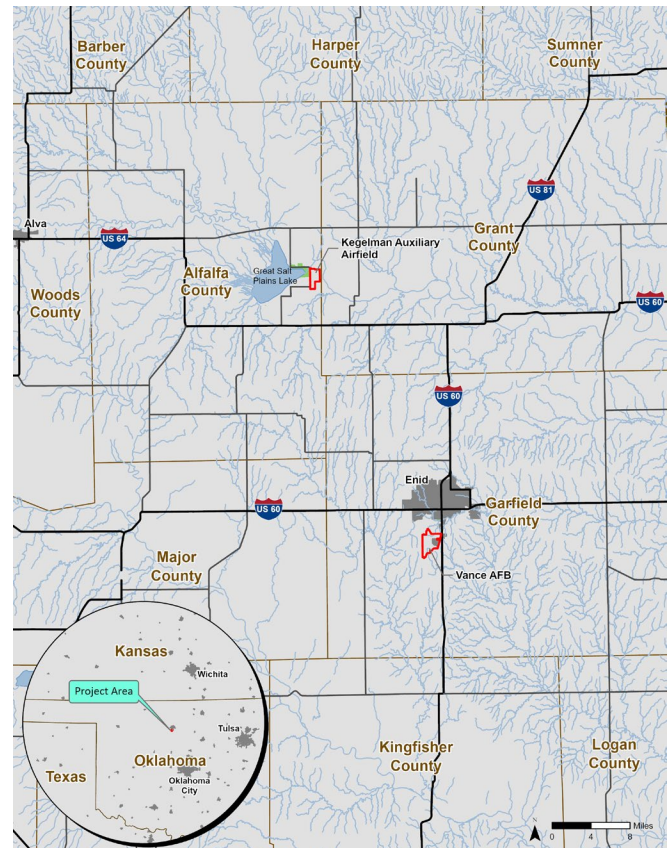
Public scoping is an early and open process, conducted in compliance with NEPA, for identifying issues and alternatives to be addressed in an EIS and determining who is interested in a proposed action. Public outreach is conducted as a part of the scoping process to provide information to interested parties and to receive comments. Comments received during the public scoping process are considered in the preparation of the Draft EIS. A timeline showing the steps of the EIS process is on the back of this brochure.

### Elements common to Alternatives 1, 2, and 3

- Beddown and aircraft operations of the T-7A at Vance AFB
- Timeline to implement the action
- Facility construction and renovation projects
- Temporary increase of personnel and dependents
- Use of existing Special Use Airspace with no changes to current configurations

### Introduction

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was enacted in 1969. Under NEPA, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the most detailed form of environmental analysis. The U.S. Department of the Air Force (DAF) has published a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS, pursuant to NEPA, for the proposed T-7A recapitalization at Vance Air Force Base (AFB). The Proposed Action entails introduction of T-7A Red Hawk aircraft and flight operations at Vance AFB and associated airspace to replace all T-38C Talon aircraft assigned to the



## Alternatives

DAF is considering three alternatives to the Proposed Action (i.e., Alternatives 1, 2, and 3) and the No Action Alternative. These alternatives are described as follows:

### **Alternative 1: Up to 68 T-7A Aircraft and T-7A Operations at a Level Sustaining Pilot Training while Simultaneously Phasing Out the T-38C and Phasing In the T-7A**

Vance AFB would receive up to 68 T-7A aircraft between 2032 and 2033. Pilot training operations would gradually transition from the T-38C to the T-7A during 2032 and 2033, and pilot training operations would be performed at a level to meet DAF's anticipated training needs. Operations are takeoffs, landings, the approach phase of a "touch-and-go", and the takeoff phase of a "touch-and-go". Up to 698 annual nighttime T-7A operations would occur at Vance AFB. Existing military training airspace would be used, and no changes to airspace configurations would be required. All T-7A operations would be sub-sonic.

### **Alternative 2: Up to 68 T-7A Aircraft and T-7A Operations 25 Percent Greater than Alternative 1**

Alternative 2 would also result in up to 68 T-7A aircraft being delivered to Vance AFB; however, T-7A operations would be performed at a level that is approximately 25 percent greater than Alternative 1. Up to 873 annual nighttime T-7A operations would occur at Vance AFB. Alternative 2 covers a potential scenario in which DAF requires a surge or increase in pilot training operations above current plan.

### **Alternative 3: Up to 99 T-7A Aircraft and T-7A Operations 45 Percent Greater than Alternative 1**

Alternative 3 would result in up to 99 T-7A aircraft being delivered to Vance AFB. T-7A annual aircraft operations would be approximately 45 percent greater than Alternative 1 once the aircraft transition is complete. Up to 1,016 annual nighttime T-7A operations would occur at Vance AFB. Alternative 3 is intended to provide DAF with operational flexibility, and inclusion of this alternative in the EIS provides analysis to evaluate future capacity needs.

### **No Action Alternative: Does Not Implement T-7A Recapitalization at Vance AFB**

The No Action Alternative assesses the environmental consequences from taking no action and serves as a baseline to compare the environmental consequences of the Proposed Action. For the No Action Alternative, T-38C aircraft would remain in service with no changes to operations at Vance AFB or airspace areas even though they will reach the end of their service lives within the next decade. No changes to the number of personnel and dependents would occur, and no construction would be undertaken.

## Environmental Impact Analysis and Process

DAF anticipates potential for the following notable environmental impacts from the Proposed Action:

1. Increased air emissions, particularly nitrogen oxides.
2. Increased noise from T-7A aircraft. Increased noise could have a disproportionate impact on environmental justice populations and impact off-installation land use compatibility.

The EIS will model air emissions, noise levels, and the number of disturbance events that would result from implementation of the proposed action and alternatives and compare them to current conditions. DAF will also consult with appropriate resource agencies and Native American tribes to determine the potential for significant impacts. Consultation will be incorporated into the preparation of the EIS and will include, but not be limited to, consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Additional analysis will be provided in the Draft EIS, which is anticipated in early 2025. The Final EIS and a decision on which alternative to implement is expected later in 2025.

## EIS Timeline



Please provide comments on the project website, by email at [chinling.chen@us.af.mil](mailto:chinling.chen@us.af.mil), or via postal mail to Ms. Chinling Chen, AFCEC/CIE; Attn: Vance AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS; Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs; 100 H. East Street, Suite 4; Randolph AFB, TX 78150. The scoping materials are also available in print at the Enid Public Library (120 W Maine Avenue, Enid, Oklahoma) and by request.

<https://vance.t-7anepadocuments.com/>

To ensure DAF has sufficient time to consider public input, please submit all comments by July 8, 2024.