



NOTICE OF INTENT AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE



YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC SCOPING!

Environmental Impact Statement addressing T-7A Recapitalization at Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma

The U.S. Department of the Air Force (DAF) is conducting public scoping for its proposal to recapitalize the T-38C Talon flight training program at Vance Air Force Base (AFB) with T-7A Red Hawk aircraft. This proposal is the Proposed Action and supports the Secretary of the Air Force's strategic basing decisions to recapitalize existing T-38C pilot training installations. Vance AFB would be the fourth installation to be analyzed for possible recapitalization. The purpose of this proposal is to continue the T-7A recapitalization program by recapitalizing Vance AFB to prepare pilots to operate the more technologically advanced T-7A aircraft. Recapitalization is needed because the current training practices with the older T-38C aircraft do not adequately prepare pilots for the technological advancements of fourth and fifth generation aircraft.

Recapitalization entails introduction of T-7A aircraft and flight operations at Vance AFB and to replace all T-38C aircraft assigned to the 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. DAF is considering three alternative approaches to implement the Proposed Action as well as the No Action Alternative. For Alternative 1, Vance AFB would receive up to 68 T-7A aircraft and perform sufficient operations for sustaining pilot training while simultaneously phasing out the T-38C aircraft and phasing in the T-7A aircraft. Alternative 2 also would result in up to 68 T-7A aircraft being delivered to Vance AFB; however, T-7A operations would be performed at a level approximately 25 percent greater than Alternative 1 to cover a potential scenario in which DAF requires a surge or increase in pilot training operations above current plan. For Alternative 3, Vance AFB would receive up to 99 T-7A aircraft. T-7A and perform annual operations approximately 45 percent greater than Alternative 1 once the aircraft transition is complete. Alternative 3 is intended to provide DAF with operational flexibility, and inclusion of this alternative in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provides analysis to evaluate future capacity needs. The No Action Alternative would not implement T-7A recapitalization at Vance AFB.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, DAF is preparing an EIS, which will assess the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and its alternatives for T-7A recapitalization at Vance AFB. 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.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS. DAF encourages interested local, state, and federal elected officials and agencies, as well as interested members of the public and others, to participate in public scoping for the proposal and assist DAF in identifying issues to evaluate in the EIS. Two in-person public scoping meetings will be held. DAF will hold public scoping meetings on June 25 and June 26, 2024 to provide the public with the opportunity to learn more about this proposal. The location of both meetings will be at the Autry Technology Center (1201 W Willow Road, Enid, Oklahoma) and information provided at the meetings will be available on the project website (<https://vance.t-7anepadocuments.com>). The public scoping meetings will open at 4:00 and end at 7:00 p.m. Central Time. Attendees will have the opportunity to provide written comments at these meetings.

The project website provides posters, an informational brochure, other meeting materials, and a capability for the public to provide public scoping comments. Scoping materials are also available in print at the Enid Public Library (120 W Maine Avenue, Enid, Oklahoma). Requests for printed scoping materials may be made to Ms. Chinling Chen at the addresses below. For printed material requests, the standard U.S. Postal Service shipping timeline will apply.

PUBLIC COMMENT. DAF welcomes comments, suggestions, and relevant information on the proposal. Please submit comments by visiting <https://vance.t-7anepadocuments.com/>, emailing chinling.chen@us.af.mil, or sending via postal mail to Ms. Chinling Chen, AFCEC/CIE; Attn: Vance AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS; Headquarters AETC Public Affairs; 100 H East Street, Suite 4; Randolph AFB, TX 78150.

To ensure DAF has sufficient time to consider public input in the Draft EIS, please submit comments no later than July 8, 2024.

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