



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

T-7A RECAPITALIZATION AT SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS



FACT SHEET

Introduction

The U.S. Department of the Air Force (DAF) proposes to recapitalize the T-38C “Talon” flight training program at Sheppard Air Force Base (AFB) with T-7A “Red Hawk” aircraft. Recapitalization entails replacement of all T-38C aircraft assigned to Sheppard AFB with T-7A aircraft; transition of aircraft operations at Sheppard AFB and associated special use airspace (SUA) from the T-38C to the T-7A; temporary changes to the number of personnel and dependents in the Sheppard AFB region; and construction of and upgrade to operations, support, and maintenance facilities to support pilot training and aircraft operation and maintenance. The number of T-7A aircraft and aircraft operations are evaluated as part of the three action alternatives to the Proposed Action. These three alternatives are described in detail on the back of this sheet.



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

Why Does DAF Need to Perform T-7A Recapitalization at Sheppard AFB?

The current T-38C fleet is expected to reach the end of its service life within the next decade. Training with the T-7A better prepares pilots for the technological advancements of modern fourth and fifth generation aircraft than the T-38C. The Secretary of the Air Force has made strategic basing decisions to recapitalize existing T-38C pilot training installations, and Sheppard AFB would be the fifth of five installations to be analyzed environmentally for possible recapitalization.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) & Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

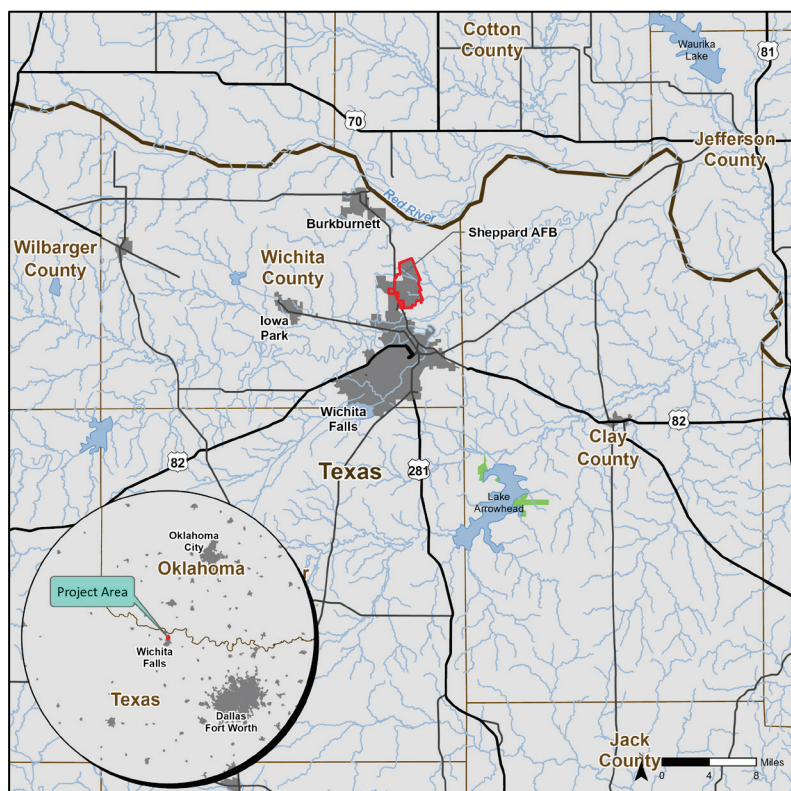
NEPA is a law that requires analysis and public disclosure of a federal action’s effects on the environment. An EIS is the most detailed analysis prescribed by NEPA. DAF is preparing an EIS for T-7A recapitalization at Sheppard AFB.

Public Involvement Process

In accordance with NEPA, DAF made the Draft EIS for T-7A recapitalization at Sheppard AFB available to the public. Involving the public helps to inform interested stakeholders of the Proposed Action, elicit valuable community input, develop trust and credibility, and avoid misunderstandings through a mutual exchange of information. DAF is accepting public comments on the Draft EIS through **January 26, 2026**, to help identify issues that should be addressed in the Final EIS.

Reviewing the Draft EIS

The Draft EIS is available for download on the project website listed below. It can also be reviewed at the Wichita Falls Public Library at 600 11th Street, Wichita Falls, Texas.



Sheppard AFB and Region

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

To ensure DAF has sufficient time to consider public input, please submit all comments by February 2, 2026.

Alternatives

DAF is considering three alternative ways to implement T-7A recapitalization at Sheppard AFB (i.e., Alternatives 1, 2, and 3) and the No Action Alternative. These alternatives have different numbers of T-7A aircraft stationed at Sheppard AFB and different numbers of operations at Sheppard AFB and associated SUA. The alternatives are described as follows:

Alternative 1: Up to 108 T-7A Aircraft and Operations at a Level Sustaining Pilot Training

Sheppard AFB would receive up to 108 T-7A aircraft between 2034 and 2036. Pilot training operations would transition from the T-38C to the T-7A over the 3-year aircraft delivery period. Pilot training operations would be performed at a level to meet DAF's anticipated training needs. Operations are takeoffs, landings, and "touch-and-goes." T-7A pilot training would use the same SUA used currently by the T-38C. No changes to SUA configurations (i.e., size, shape, or locations) are required for T-7A recapitalization. T-7A aircraft would be limited to sub-sonic speeds in all phases of pilot training.

Alternative 2: Up to 108 T-7A Aircraft and Operations 25 Percent Greater than Alternative 1

Alternative 2 would also result in up to 108 T-7A aircraft being delivered to Sheppard AFB between 2034 and 2036. Operations would be performed at a level that is approximately 25 percent greater than Alternative 1. 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 131 T-7A Aircraft and Operations 22 Percent Greater than Alternative 1

Alternative 3 would result in up to 131 T-7A aircraft being delivered to Sheppard AFB between 2034 and 2037. Annual T-7A aircraft operations would be approximately 22 percent greater than Alternative 1 when the aircraft transition is complete. 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 Sheppard AFB

The No Action Alternative assesses the environmental consequences from taking no action and compares 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 Sheppard AFB or SUA 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 or renovation would be undertaken.

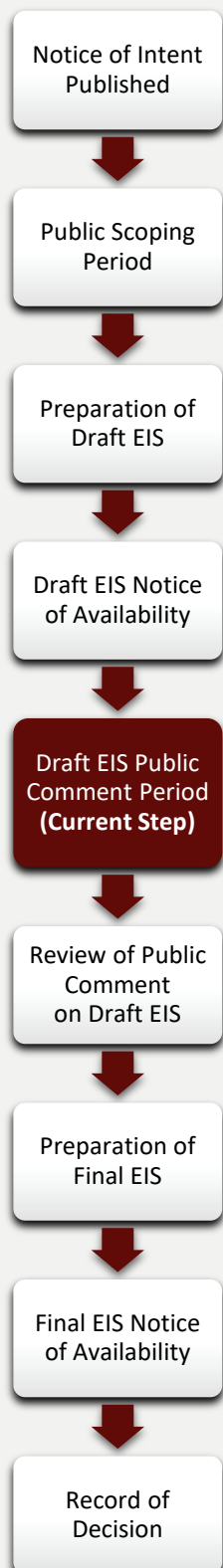
Environmental Impact Analysis Findings

DAF found the following notable environmental impacts from the Proposed Action:

1. Increases in criteria pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions would occur. Nitrogen oxides are the air pollutant of greatest concern. Emissions are not expected to contribute to an exceedance of National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
2. Noise from aircraft operations would increase on- and off-installation acreage and population exposed to aircraft noise. DAF would continue to evaluate flight characteristics for T-7A training to determine the safest, most efficient, and least intrusive operations.
3. Off-installation areas of incompatible land use would increase. Newly exposed areas encompass numerous land uses to include Open/Recreation/Agriculture/Low-Density Residential.
4. Slight increase in potential for bird/wildlife aircraft strike hazards.

The Draft EIS contains a detailed description of all environmental impacts that would result.

EIS Timeline



Please provide comments on the Draft EIS in English on the project website, by email at chinling.chen@us.af.mil, or via postal mail to Ms. Chinling Chen, AFCEC/CIE; Attn: Sheppard AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS; Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs; 100 H Street East, Suite 4; Randolph AFB, TX 78150. If you have questions, please call (940) 676-2732.

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

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