



# Public Scoping

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



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

### T-7A RECAPITALIZATION AT LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS

# WELCOME

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- Welcome to the virtual public scoping meeting for the T-7A Recapitalization at Laughlin AFB Environmental Impact Statement, also known as an EIS.
- All project-related information is available on the project website at <https://laughlin.t-7anepadocuments.com/>.
- A printed copy of the public scoping materials being presented can be requested through the project website or by postal mail:

Mr. Nolan Swick, AFCEC/CZN  
Attn: Laughlin AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS  
Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs  
100 H. East Street, Suite 4  
Randolph AFB, TX 78150

- Spanish translation available.
- The closed captions button is in bottom left corner of your screen.

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# WEBEX PLATFORM

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- This evening's meeting is being recorded and will be available on the project website.
- Difficulty with your internet connection? Connect via telephone:  
**Telephone Number: 469-210-7159** (possible long-distance call)  
**Access Code: 2496 910 3882**
- We recommend closing all apps and programs and limit other streaming and downloads during this evening's meeting.
- All participants are muted, and video feeds are turned off. Only the host can unmute you. Please raise your hand or contact the meeting host via private chat, or press \*9 if you have called in, if you wish to be unmuted.

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# OVERVIEW

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- The National Environmental Policy Act
- Public Scoping
- Background & Purpose and Need
- Elements of Laughlin AFB T-7A Recapitalization
- Construction and Personnel & Dependents
- Alternatives Selection Criteria
- Proposed Action (Alternatives 1, 2, & 3) & No Action
- Topics for the EIS and Anticipated Impacts
- Comments Submission



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# THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 was enacted to address concerns about federal actions and their effects on the environment.

- Under NEPA, the analysis of environmental consequences is presented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which accomplishes the following objectives:
  - Identify and describe the affected environment.
  - Evaluate the potential environmental consequences of reasonable alternatives.
  - Identify environmental permits and specific mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, or reduce adverse environmental impacts, if required.
- The NEPA process concludes with a Record of Decision (ROD) that identifies which alternative is selected and outlines any mitigation measures that are required.
- The U.S. Department of the Air Force (DAF) has issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in accordance with NEPA.

## Steps in the EIS Process



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# PUBLIC SCOPING

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## What is Public Scoping?

- An early and open process for identifying issues and alternatives to be addressed in an EIS.
- Conducted in compliance with NEPA.

## Purpose of Public Scoping:

- Provide the public with information about a proposed action, alternatives, and topics that will be analyzed in the EIS.
- Conduct public outreach and receive public input on the information to be presented in the EIS.



# AFTER PUBLIC SCOPING

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After the public scoping period has ended, DAF will:

- Incorporate public input into the proposal and develop the Draft EIS, which is expected to be completed in late 2023.
- Make the Draft EIS available to the public for review for a minimum of 45 days.
- Incorporate applicable input on the Draft EIS into the development of the Final EIS, which is anticipated in early 2024; a Record of Decision could be signed no sooner than 30 days after the Final EIS is released.

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# REMOTE PUBLIC SCOPING

For this EIS, public scoping is being accomplished remotely. During remote scoping, all scoping materials will be available to the public for online browsing or download from the project website <https://laughlin.t-7anepadocuments.com/> or as hardcopies at the Val Verde County Library (300 Spring Street, Del Rio, Texas). To request hardcopies, please use one of the methods outlined below. For printed material requests, the standard U.S. Postal Service shipping timeline will apply. Please consider the environment before requesting printed material.

Scoping comments can be submitted using one of the following methods:

- **Postal Mail:**

Mr. Nolan Swick, AFCEC/CZN

Attn: Laughlin AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS

Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

100 H. East Street, Suite 4

Randolph AFB, TX 78150

- **Email:** [nolan.swick@us.af.mil](mailto:nolan.swick@us.af.mil); Attn: Laughlin AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS
- **Project Website:** <https://laughlin.t-7anepadocuments.com/>



## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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# BACKGROUND

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**DAF proposes to recapitalize the T-38C Talon flight training program at Laughlin Air Force Base (AFB) with T-7A Red Hawk 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 Laughlin AFB would be the third of five T-38C installations to be environmentally analyzed for possible recapitalization.

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# PURPOSE AND NEED

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this proposal is to continue the T-7A recapitalization program by recapitalizing Laughlin AFB to prepare pilots to operate more technologically advanced modern aircraft.

**Need:** 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.



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# ELEMENTS OF LAUGHLIN AFB T-7A RECAPITALIZATION

- Acquisition of T-7A aircraft to replace the 63 T-38C aircraft assigned to Laughlin AFB.
- Transition of operations at Laughlin AFB and associated airspace from the T-38C to T-7A.
- Introduction of nighttime (between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.) T-7A flight operations.
- Changes to the number of personnel and dependents in the Laughlin AFB region.
- Construction and upgrade of specific facilities to support the pilot training and operations and maintenance of aircraft.

**Number of aircraft, aircraft operations, and nighttime operations are evaluated as alternatives to the Proposed Action.**

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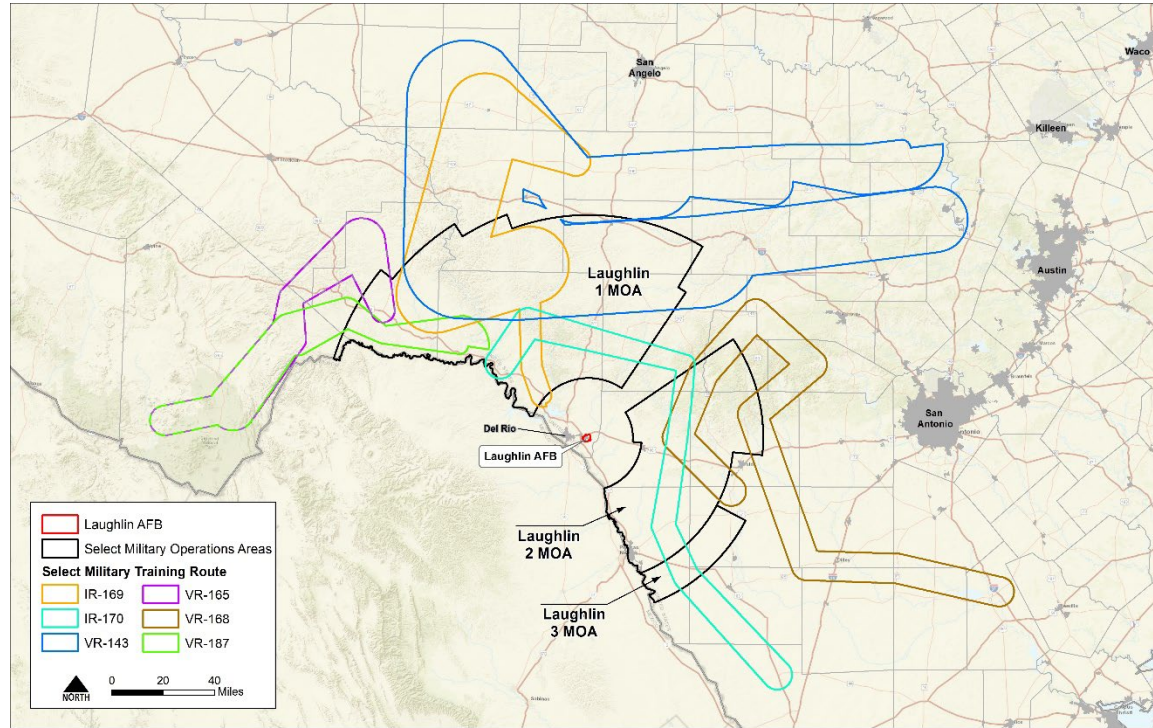
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# REGION OF IMPACT

- Laughlin AFB.
- Existing military training airspace areas:
  - Military Operations Areas: Laughlin 1, Laughlin 2, and Laughlin 3.
  - Military Training Routes: IR-169, IR-170, VR-143, VR-165, VR-168, and VR-187.



Region of Impact



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# CONSTRUCTION

- Ground Based Training System (GBTS) Facility
- Unit Maintenance Trainer (UMT) Facility
- Hush House and Road Alteration
- 48 T-7A Shelters
- Addition to Egress Shop
- Jet Blast Deflectors
- Six facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization projects.



Locations of Major Construction Projects 13



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# PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS

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- Increase of 190 personnel and 361 dependents for 551 additional persons during the aircraft transition (2030 and 2031).
- Decrease of 60 personnel and 114 dependents for 174 fewer persons after 2031 (compared to current levels).



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# ALTERNATIVES SELECTION CRITERIA

The Secretary's preference for Laughlin AFB to be the third installation to undergo possible T-7A recapitalization was based on factors such as least impact on continued pilot production during the transition of aircraft types, most efficient cost and student production/management plan, and alignment with AETC's student pipeline flow for curricula.

Alternatives for T-7A recapitalization at Laughlin AFB have been evaluated against the following selection standards:

1. An alternative must not result in major operational constraints to existing missions. Operational constraints would occur if a currently ongoing operation, activity, or mission were limited by proposed activities.
2. An alternative must be adaptable and compatible with current infrastructure capabilities.
3. An alternative should minimize the need for new construction and land disturbance versus renovation or reuse of existing facilities.

**DAF is considering three reasonable action alternatives (Alternatives 1, 2, and 3) and the No Action Alternative.** The three action alternatives meet the selection standards and will be analyzed in the Draft EIS.



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# ALTERNATIVE 1

## 63 T-7A Aircraft and T-7A Operations at Level Sustaining Pilot Training while Simultaneously Phasing Out the T-38C and Phasing In the T-7A

- 4-year aircraft delivery/withdrawal period between 2030 and 2033 (see next slide).
- Pilot training operations performed at level to meet 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 490 annual nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) T-7A operations (see slide after next).
- Use existing T-38C military training airspace areas.
- No changes to airspace configurations.
- Sub-sonic operations only.

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# T-38C AND T-7A AIRCRAFT CHANGES FOR ALTERNATIVES 1 AND 2

| Aircraft Type  | 2022 Baseline | 2030      | 2031      | 2032      | 2033      | 2034 and Thereafter |
|--|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| <b>Annual Aircraft Withdrawn from/ Delivered to Laughlin AFB</b> |               |           |           |           |           |                     |
| T-38C (withdrawn)  | N/A           | 32        | 31        | 0         | 0         | 0                   |
| T-7A (delivered)   | N/A           | 27        | 34        | 0         | 2         | 0                   |
| <b>Total T-38C/T-7A Aircraft at Laughlin AFB</b>                 |               |           |           |           |           |                     |
| T-38C  | 63            | 31        | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0                   |
| T-7A   | 0             | 27        | 61        | 61        | 63        | 63                  |
| <b>Total Aircraft</b>  | <b>63</b>     | <b>58</b> | <b>61</b> | <b>61</b> | <b>63</b> | <b>63</b>           |

Key: N/A = not applicable



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# T-38C AND T-7A AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE 1

| Aircraft Type  | 2022 Baseline  | 2030          | 2031 and 2032 | 2033 and Thereafter |
|--|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <b>Operations at Laughlin AFB</b>                                    |                |               |               |                     |
| Annual Aircraft Operations (Daytime)                                 |                |               |               |                     |
| T-38C  | 100,000        | 49,206        | 0             | 0                   |
| T-7A   | 0              | 41,781        | 94,395        | 97,490              |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100,000</b> | <b>90,987</b> | <b>94,395</b> | <b>97,490</b>       |
| Annual Aircraft Operations (Nighttime) <sup>1</sup>                  |                |               |               |                     |
| T-38C  | 0              | 0             | 0             | 0                   |
| T-7A   | 0              | 210           | 474           | 490                 |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>0</b>       | <b>210</b>    | <b>474</b>    | <b>490</b>          |
| <b>Operations within Airspace Training Areas (MOAs and MTRs)</b>     |                |               |               |                     |
| Annual Aircraft Operations within the Training Airspace <sup>2</sup> |                |               |               |                     |
| T-38C  | 4,920          | 2,421         | 0             | 0                   |
| T-7A   | 0              | 2,213         | 5,000         | 5,164               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>4,920</b>   | <b>4,634</b>  | <b>5,000</b>  | <b>5,164</b>        |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Denotes number of operations between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

<sup>2</sup> Denotes total aircraft operations within all MOAs and MTRs. Each MOA and MTR will experience varying levels of aircraft operations within the total shown.



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# ALTERNATIVE 2

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## 63 T-7A Aircraft and T-7A Operations 25 Percent Greater than the Proposed Action

- Covers potential scenario in which DAF requires a surge or increase in pilot training operations above current plan.
- Identical to Alternative 1 except:
  - Operations are 25 percent greater with up to 613 annual nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) T-7A operations (see slide after next).



# ALTERNATIVE 3

## 79 T-7A Aircraft and T-7A Operations 25 Percent Greater than the Proposed Action

- Covers potential scenario in which another military installation is unable to accept delivery of all their T-7A aircraft and some of those aircraft need to be permanently reassigned to Laughlin AFB.
- Identical to Alternatives 1 and 2 except:
  - 16 additional T-7A aircraft are delivered in 2030.
  - 60 T-7A shelters are installed.
- Operations are identical to Alternative 2.



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# T-38C AND T-7A AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS FOR ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3

| Aircraft Type  | 2022 Baseline  | 2030           | 2031 and 2032  | 2033 and Thereafter |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Operations at Laughlin AFB</b>                                    |                |                |                |                     |
| Annual Aircraft Operations (Daytime)                                 |                |                |                |                     |
| T-38C  | 100,000        | 49,206         | 0              | 0                   |
| T-7A   | 0              | 52,226         | 117,994        | 121,863             |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100,000</b> | <b>101,432</b> | <b>117,994</b> | <b>121,863</b>      |
| Annual Aircraft Operations (Nighttime) <sup>1</sup>                  |                |                |                |                     |
| T-38C  | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0                   |
| T-7A   | 0              | 263            | 593            | 613                 |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>0</b>       | <b>263</b>     | <b>593</b>     | <b>613</b>          |
| <b>Operations within Airspace Training Areas (MOAs and MTRs)</b>     |                |                |                |                     |
| Annual Aircraft Operations within the Training Airspace <sup>2</sup> |                |                |                |                     |
| T-38C  | 4,920          | 2,421          | 0              | 0                   |
| T-7A   | 0              | 2,766          | 6,249          | 6,454               |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>4,920</b>   | <b>5,187</b>   | <b>6,249</b>   | <b>6,454</b>        |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Denotes number of operations between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.

<sup>2</sup> Denotes total aircraft operations within all MOAs and MTRs. Each MOA and MTR will experience varying levels of aircraft operations within the total shown.



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### T-7A RECAPITALIZATION AT LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS



# NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

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## Does Not Implement T-7A Recapitalization at Laughlin AFB

- Assess environmental consequences from taking no action.
- Serves as baseline.
- T-38Cs remain in service with no changes to operations at Laughlin AFB or airspace areas even though they will reach the end of their service lives within the next decade.
- No changes in the number of personnel and dependents.
- No construction undertaken.



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# TOPICS TO BE ANALYZED IN THE EIS

## Air Quality

- Air emissions
- Climate change

## Biological Resources

- Vegetation and wildlife
- Threatened and endangered species

## Cultural Resources

- Archaeological resources
- Architectural & visual resources
- Native American resources

## Noise

- Aircraft noise
- Construction noise

## Social Resources

- Environmental justice
- Land use
- Safety
- Socioeconomics

## Water Resources

- Water quality (surface water, groundwater, & stormwater)
- Wetlands and floodplains

## Other Considerations

- Airspace
- Geology and soils
- Hazardous materials and waste
- Infrastructure and transportation



## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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# SUMMARY OF ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

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

- Increased air emissions, particularly nitrogen oxides.
- Increased noise from aircraft operations because the T-7A is inherently louder than the T-38C and the addition of nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) operations may be bothersome to some residents. Increased noise could have a disproportionate impact on certain populations and impact off-installation land use compatibility.
- Increased potential for bird/wildlife aircraft strike hazards.
- Construction may have a minor impact on downstream water quality.

The EIS will model air emissions, noise levels, and the number of sleep and school disturbance events and compare to current conditions. DAF will also consult with appropriate resource agencies and Native American tribes to determine the potential for significant impacts. Additional analysis will be provided in the Draft EIS.



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# COMMENT SUBMISSION

Comments, suggestions, and relevant information are welcomed on the Laughlin AFB T-7A Recapitalization proposal. Please submit comments using one of the following methods:

- **Postal Mail:** Mr. Nolan Swick, AFCEC/CZN; Attn: Laughlin AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS; Headquarters Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs; 100 H. East Street, Suite 4; Randolph AFB, TX 78150
- **Email:** [nolan.swick@us.af.mil](mailto:nolan.swick@us.af.mil); Attn: Laughlin AFB T-7A Recapitalization EIS
- **Project Website:** <https://laughlin.t-7anepadocuments.com/>

DAF also welcomes comments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 800).

*To ensure DAF has sufficient time to consider public input, please submit all comments by February 17, 2023.*



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# Q&A SESSION

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- We can only answer questions directly related to the T-7A recapitalization proposal.
- We are early in the scoping process. Some questions may require additional research, analysis, or coordination to answer.
- Questions submitted during this Q&A session are not formal comments for the record. If you wish to make a formal comment for the record, please send your comment by postal mail, email, or the project website.
- Spanish translation available.
- Participants are muted. Only the meeting administrator can unmute you.
- **Please raise your hand or contact the meeting administrator via private chat if you wish to be unmuted. If you have called in by telephone, press \*9 to request to be unmuted.**

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Thank you for your participation!

