

Draft Finding of No Significant Impact for F-16 Mission Conversion at Fort Wayne Air National Guard Base

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) and the Indiana Air National Guard (ANG) have prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to consider the potential consequences to the human and natural environment associated with the proposed aircraft mission conversion from A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft to F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft, and the related changes in infrastructure to accommodate the new F-16 mission. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is a cooperating agency.

NGB has prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500–1508, revised 2020), and the Department of the Air Force's and FAA's NEPA-implementing and airspace regulations. The decision in this FONSI is based on the information in the EA, which is herewith incorporated by reference.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to facilitate an aircraft conversion for the 122d Fighter Wing (122 FW) from A-10 aircraft to F-16 aircraft. The action is needed to accommodate a 122 FW mission transition from an A-10 unit to an F-16 unit, as permitted by Section 134, part (f) Special Rule of the National Defense Authorization Act FY17, House Resolution (H.R.) 4909 (Report No. 114-537, Public Law 114-328). The Proposed Action is also needed to support the primary federal mission of the 122 FW.

Description of the Proposed Action

NGB proposes the full replacement of the 21 A-10 mission aircraft at Fort Wayne ANGB with one F-16 fighter squadron of 24 Primary Aircraft Authorization. This would include minimal operational changes at the airfield and operational changes within existing Special Use Airspace (SUA); an increase of approximately 100 personnel; and the construction and structural improvement projects necessary to facilitate the full mission conversion requirements. The F-16 mission would utilize existing operations and training airspace. The mission transition is planned for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.

In support of the proposed F-16 conversion, the following 17 construction, renovation, and demolition projects would occur to satisfy mission requirements from the change in A-10 to F-16 aircraft between 2022 and 2031:

- Project 1, Renovate Secure Office Space
- Project 2, Install F 16 Aircraft Arresting System
- Project 3, Construct Munitions Maintenance/Storage Complex
- Project 4, Repair Aircraft Parking Apron
- Project 5, Repair Squadron Operations Facility
- Project 6, Repair Bldg. 756
- Project 7, Repair Small Arms Range
- Project 8, Renovate Hangar and Repair Fire Suppression
- Project 9, Construct Hydrazine Storage
- Project 10, Construct Addition to Weapons Release Facility
- Project 11, Construct Mission Training Center
- Project 12, Modernize Corrosion Control
- Project 13, Repair Fire Suppression Facility

- Project 14, Construct Aerospace Ground Equipment Low-Pressure Fill Stand
- Project 15, Construct Fitness Center
- Project 16, Repair Bravo Arm/De-arm Pad
- Project 17, Demolish Bldg. 758

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would result in no change to the 122 FW mission. The No Action Alternative does not fulfill the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action; however, it was carried forward for detailed analysis in accordance with 32 CFR 989.8.

Summary of Environmental Consequences

All potentially relevant environmental resource areas were considered for analysis in the EA. In compliance with CEQ regulations for streamlining EAs (40 CFR 1501(f)), those resources with impacts expected to be negligible or nonexistent were eliminated from further consideration. These resources and rationale for eliminating from detailed evaluation are summarized in the table below. A summary of the environmental consequences from the Proposed Action on resource areas potentially subject to impacts are subsequently summarized.

Resource Area	Rationale for not Evaluating in Detail
Coastal Resources	No part of the Proposed Action would occur within established coastal zones and would have no effect on coastal resources.
Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act	Construction projects proposed under the Proposed Action would occur entirely within Fort Wayne ANGB and Fort Wayne International Airport boundaries would not affect Section 4(f) properties.
Land Use	Renovation and construction projects proposed would occur on Fort Wayne ANGB or Fort Wayne International Airport property and would be consistent with existing land use and zoning.
Geological Resources	Ground-disturbing activities under the Proposed Action are limited to areas that have been previously disturbed or modified, or landscapes that are regularly maintained and no effect on geological resources would be anticipated.
Infrastructure and Transportation	Proposed construction would tie into existing utility systems on the installation and existing utility systems have adequate capacity to accommodate the proposed new construction. With existing average annual traffic in the vicinity of the installation, the proposed additional personnel would not cause a noticeable change in traffic levels or access on the public road system.
Visual Resources	Proposed construction and renovation projects would not involve intrusions that would affect the visual character of Fort Wayne ANGB or Fort Wayne International Airport and would have a negligible effect on visual resources. Changes in the aircraft flying over public lands would not occur at a lower altitude than the existing conditions and would not result in undesirable visual intrusions to the public.

Resource Area	Rationale for not Evaluating in Detail
Socioeconomics	The Proposed Action would not result in noticeable changes to the human environment under the SUA, and negligible-to-minor short-term benefits within the Fort Wayne region related to temporary construction-related employment and expenditures.
Environmental Justice	Population demographics in the areas that would experience impacts from the Proposed Action were considered, and there would not be anticipated impacts that would disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations.
Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks	Children are not present on Fort Wayne ANGB and would not be affected by the proposed construction projects under the Proposed Action. Noise impacts to the areas near the installation and the anticipated F-16 noise contours would be minor and would not create significant health and safety risks to children.

Safety/Aircraft Safety

The F-16 aircraft would not cause any substantial changes to ground or flight safety procedures at Fort Wayne ANGB. The additional 100 personnel under the Proposed Action would provide the necessary manpower adjustments, and the proposed facility construction and improvements would support the mission of the F-16 aircraft. The additional personnel and facility projects would provide adequate capacity for the 122 FW to perform routine functions safely under this alternative. The Proposed Action would result in minor, beneficial impacts and minor, adverse impacts on safety and aircraft safety. Impacts on safety/aircraft safety would be less than significant.

Airspace Management

The additional 368 operations with the F-16 aircraft under the Proposed Action would be slightly less than a one percent increase as compared to the 2019 operations at Fort Wayne International Airport (FWA) and well within the capacity that the Air Traffic Control (ATC) could accommodate. In addition, the current aircraft instrument approaches that the 122 FW use were established when the F-16s were previously based at FWA; as a result, the current flight procedures are not expected to change.

Under the Proposed Action, the 122 FW would continue to use the same SUA. No changes to the configurations of the SUA used by the 122 FW would occur, and the controlling and using agencies would remain the same. Minor changes to airspace management includes higher altitude training with the F-16 aircraft, which would result in an increase in Air Traffic Control Assigned Area (ATCAA) use. Impacts from these changes would be less than significant.

Air Quality

The Proposed Action would result in short-term, minor air emissions during construction-related activities. Long-term, minor air emissions would result from changes in aircraft and aircraft operations (some criteria pollutants would increase while others would decrease), increases in personnel, and increased facility space. Implementation of the Proposed Action would have less than significant impacts on air quality.

Climate Change

The Proposed Action would result in short- and long term generation of greenhouse gas emissions, namely carbon dioxide, from the combustion of fossil fuels during construction activities and aircraft operations. The Proposed Action would have proportionately minor contributions to local and regional greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change impacts felt locally would not be expected to have a substantial impact on the Proposed Action. Implementation of the Proposed Action would have less than significant impacts on climate change.

Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use

Noise modeling was conducted for aircraft activities within the airfield and SUA and within RAs from aircraft weapon training. Airfield noise levels in and around FWA would increase, while weapons noise at Camp Atterbury and Jefferson Proving Ground would decrease. Noise below SUA would remain relatively unchanged. The Proposed Action would be consistent with existing and adjacent land uses around FWA, SUA areas, and areas where aircraft weapons systems are fired. Additional commercial areas and industrial areas would be exposed to greater noise levels under the Proposed Action, but these would not result in incompatible land uses. Impacts on noise and compatible land use from the Proposed Action would be less than significant.

Water Resources

None of the proposed construction activities would affect the wetlands or surface water features within the study area. Proposed construction activities are not located near observed surface waters including both jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional wetlands. Site-specific plans detailing erosion and sedimentation controls and best management practices during construction would minimize potential for indirect, short-term, construction-related impacts on water resources. Therefore, the Proposed Action would have less than significant impacts on water resources.

Biological Resources

Ground-disturbing activities associated with construction, renovation, and demolition are limited to areas that have been previously disturbed, modified with impervious surfaces, or landscapes that are regularly maintained. FWA has a Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) Plan and has taken steps to make the airport less desirable for wildlife and bird use. By design, the study area provides very poor wildlife habitat, and construction activities are not anticipated to adversely affect wildlife or migratory birds. The SUA utilized by the F-16s would be the same as what supports the current A-10 training. No adverse effect on threatened and endangered species are expected. Impacts on biological resources would be less than significant.

Historic Properties

There are no historic properties or unevaluated resources located within or near the Area of Potential Effect (APE); therefore, there would be no effect to historic properties. Additionally, no resources of cultural or spiritual significance were identified by Native American governments consulted during the preparation of this EA. Impacts would be less than significant.

Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention

No active Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) sites are present on Fort Wayne ANGB, and construction activities under the Proposed Action would not be located within any of the closed ERP sites. The quantity of hazardous wastes generated under the Proposed Action would be expected to remain similar to current levels. One construction project and two renovation projects would occur

on land that has detected levels of PFAS; if materials generated during construction would contain levels of PFAS above regulatory limits, a Media Management Plan would be developed to minimize exposure. A new hydrazine storage facility would be constructed under the Proposed Action to provide the specific storage needs for H-70. A Hydrazine Response Plan would establish response procedures in the event of hydrazine-related incidents to provide for safe coordination of emergency response. Impacts on hazardous materials, solid waste, and pollution prevention would be less than significant.

Other Proposed Actions with Close Causal Relationships

Other projects that are reasonably foreseeable and identified as having close causal relationships to the Proposed Action were considered in the EA, and collective effects from the Proposed Action when considered with these projects would be less than significant.

Finding

Based on the analysis presented in the EA, NGB finds that implementation of the Proposed Action would have no significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment. Accordingly, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required to implement this action. This decision is made after consideration of agency and public comments received during Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning and a 30-day comment period of the Draft EA.

Name

Date