

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**  
**FOR**  
**THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW FIRE STATION AND AIR PASSENGER TERMINAL AT**  
**HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE, MASSACHUSETTS**

Pursuant to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title 42 United States Code (USC) Sections 4321 to 4347, implemented by Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations, Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §1500-1508, and 32 CFR §989, Environmental Impact Analysis Process, the Department of the Air Force (DAF) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and assess the potential environmental consequences associated with constructing a new fire station and passenger (PAX) terminal at Hanscom Air Force Base (AFB), Middlesex County, Massachusetts.

**PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION (EA §§ 1.3, Page 1-3)**

The Proposed Action is needed to construct a properly sized and configured installation fire station to provide fire protection and firefighting services for the installation. The new station will house all firefighting equipment and crews, a central fire alarm system, command and control, and 24-hour crew quarters. In addition, the purpose is to provide a properly sized and configured PAX, housing safety office, air passenger terminal, and Distinguished Visitor (DV) lounge.

A new fire station at Hanscom AFB is needed to support all Fire and Emergency Services for the base because of the current fire station building's insufficient and undersized spaces, the fire station's mission is impacted by lost time retrieving supplies and equipment from different areas of the base, and extra training sessions impacting schedules due to small training space and dislocated administration offices due to the lack of space in the administration section of the fire station. A new PAX is needed to upgrade from the current outdated building and support air passenger services and operations more efficiently.

**PROPOSED ACTION (EA § 2.1, Page 2-1)**

Hanscom AFB is proposing to construct a new 26,371 square foot (sf) single-story fire station and a separate new 5,150 sf single-story PAX.

**SELECTION STANDARDS (EA § 2.2, Pages 2-1 to 2-4)**

NEPA and CEQ regulations mandate the consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Proposed Action. "Reasonable alternatives" are those that could also effectively meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action. Per the requirements of 32 CFR Part 989, the DAF's EIAP regulations, selection standards are used to identify alternatives for meeting the purpose and need for the DAF action.

The proposed action alternatives must meet the following selection standards: meet capacity requirements; meet operation and safety standards; and be located centrally to be able to quickly respond to emergencies. Alternative 1 was determined to be the only reasonable alternative(s) that meets the selection standards presented in Table 2-1 on page 2-5 and described in EA § 2.2.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE(S) (EA § 2.3, Pages 2-4 to 2-5)**

All reasonable alternatives were considered during the development of this Project. Construction of a new fire station and PAX in the proposed locations is the only viable option to meet this requirement as well as provide the fire station and PAX with sufficient capacity and location to meet mission operating needs and standards. **Table 2-1** evaluates the different criteria against the alternatives considered. To be considered a reasonable alternative, the alternative must meet all three selection standard criteria.

The EA considers all potential impacts of Alternative 1 (the Preferred Alternative) and the No-Action Alternative. The EA also considers cumulative environmental impacts with other proposed projects in the Region of Influence (ROI).

#### **ALTERNATIVE 1 (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE) – (EA § 2.3.1, Page 2-4)**

Alternative 1 involves the construction of a new fire station and PAX at new locations and subsequent demolition of the existing fire station/PAX building. The Proposed Action will construct a new 26,371 sf fire station at the former gas station site along Barksdale Street. The proposed construction consists of concrete foundation and reinforced floor slabs, steel framing and masonry walls, heating ventilating & air conditioning (HVAC), a central fire alarm system, a combined Emergency Communications Center with Fire and Security Forces Dispatch, efficient roofing, generator, utility tie-ins, site improvements, vehicular and apparatus paving, landscaping, and all other work necessary to make this a complete and usable facility. Alternative 1 also includes the construction of a new 5,150 sf PAX building which houses safety offices and DV lounge near the existing location.

#### **NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE (EA § 2.3.2, Page 2-5)**

Under the No Action Alternative, Hanscom AFB would not construct a new fire station and PAX nor renovate the existing building. Firefighting operations and terminal services would continue to operate from their existing building. The No Action Alternative is considered the baseline from which all other environmental analyses are compared.

#### **ALTERNATIVES ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION (EA § 2.4, Page 2-5)**

One alternative was initially considered during the environmental impact analysis process and eliminated from further consideration because they did not meet all the criteria for the selection standards presented in Table 2-1 on page 2-3.

##### **Alternative 2 – Renovate Fire Station and Air Passenger Terminal at Existing Location.**

Alternative 2 includes the demolition of the existing fire station and PAX building and the construction of a new fire station and PAX at their current location.

#### **SCOPE OF ANALYSIS (EA § 3.0, Page 3-1)**

Regardless of the alternative selected, the following resources would not be affected by the Proposed Action and are not discussed in detail in the EA: Air installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ)

#### **AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (EA § 3.0, Pages 3-1 to 3-30)**

The Environmental Assessment, incorporated by reference into this finding, analyzes the potential environmental consequences of activities associated with implementing the Preferred Alternative

(Alternative 1). The EA considers all potential impacts of the Preferred Alternative and the No Action Alternative. The EA also considers cumulative environmental impacts with other projects in the Region of Influence. The analyses of the affected environment and environmental consequences of implementing the Preferred Alternative presented in the EA concluded that by implementing environmental protection measures, the DAF would be in compliance with all terms and conditions and reporting requirements stipulated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Programmatic Agreement (PA) between Hanscom AFB and the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the management of historic properties at Hanscom AFB.

The DAF has concluded that implementation of the Preferred Alternative would have no adverse impacts on the following resources:

### **AIR QUALITY (EA § 3.2.1, Pages 3-1 to 3-7)**

The potential impacts to air quality as a result of implementing the Preferred Alternative are associated with emissions related to excavation and paving activities. The Air Force Conformity Applicability Model (ACAM) was performed in accordance with the Air Force Manual 32-7002, Clean Air Act (CAA Section 176(c)), Air Quality Compliance And Resource Management; the Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP, 32 CFR 989); and the General Conformity Rule (GCR, 40 CFR 93 Subpart B) to assess potential air quality impact(s) associated with the Preferred Alternative.

The results of the analysis show that for all planned construction activities between the years 2024 and 2026, emissions of all NAAQS would be well below the threshold, at de minimis levels, indicating that the General Conformity Rule does not apply. These results are consistent with the ACAM analysis (see Appendix D) that was done for the Preferred Alternative. Therefore, although some increase in air pollutant emissions is expected during C&D activities, they would not be significant and would be temporary. Best management practices (BMP) would be applied during C&D activities, to the maximum extent possible. As a result, no adverse impacts on air quality are expected from the Preferred Alternative.

### **LAND USE (EA 3.2.2, Pages 3-7 to 3-8)**

The Proposed Action is compatible with current land use plans. Practicable BMPs would be adopted to minimize impacts on land use, including restoring disturbed areas to existing conditions to extent practicable. No adverse land use impact is anticipated from the implementation of the Proposed Action.

### **WATER RESOURCES (EA § 3.2.3, Pages 3-7 to 3-11)**

No surface water features, wetlands, or floodplains are present within the footprints of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative fire station site is an active Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) site 22 and is currently undergoing restoration/cleanup activities under the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP). Five petroleum-related releases from former gasoline underground storage tanks (USTs) have led to the existence of groundwater contamination at this site, found and reported in

1981, 1990, 1991, 1992, and 2001. Currently, monitoring wells are sampled annually for volatile petroleum hydrocarbons.

All construction activities associated with the Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) sites will be coordinated with the Hanscom AFB environmental office to ensure no adverse impacts on or from these sites would occur. Under the Preferred Alternative, Hanscom AFB does not anticipate any impacts on groundwater.

#### **SOIL AND GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES (EA § 3.2.4, Pages 3-11 and 3-12)**

No grading and topography changes are expected from the construction of the new fire station and PAX buildings. The Preferred Alternative's impact on surface topography and geology would be minimal given the sites have been previously disturbed and are mostly flat. Minimal and temporary impacts to soil are anticipated by C&D activities associated with the Proposed Action. Sediment control measures would be adjusted to meet field conditions during C&D activities. These measures would be taken prior to and immediately after disturbance of surface material. No short or long-term adverse impacts on the geology of the area are anticipated with the implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

#### **CULTURAL RESOURCES (EA § 3.2.5, Pages 3-12 to 3-14)**

None of the undertakings pursued under this EA would be located within an archaeologically sensitive area or the AFCRL Historic District. On [DATE], in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA (5 United States Code 306018) and its implementing regulation at 36 CFR Part 800, DAF sent a consultation letter to the MA State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) stating that it has determined that there is a historic property present within the Proposed Action sites; however, no adverse effects to historic properties are anticipated.

#### **NOISE (EA § 3.2.6, Page 3-14)**

No adverse impacts are anticipated from the Proposed Action. The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to have temporary, minor noise impacts associated with excavation and re-paving activities. Appropriate measures will be applied to minimize potential noise impacts. After implementation of the Preferred Alternative, noise levels are expected to be consistent with current background levels at Hanscom AFB.

#### **BIOLOGICAL/NATURAL RESOURCES (EA § 3.2.7, Pages 3-14 and 3-16)**

The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to result in temporary, minor impacts on the natural vegetation from excavation activities and on wildlife from noise generated by excavation and re-paving activities. The Preferred Alternative sites are previously disturbed and improved with landscaped areas, parking lots, and paved sidewalks. Appropriate measures will be taken to limit impact and restore work areas to existing conditions.

Every undertaking is required to undergo a separate consultation with USFWS to ensure that any effects

on protected species are considered. A “No Effect” determination valid for 5 years was put in effect for undertakings conducted in Hanscom AFB between October 2, 2018 and March 31, 2029, unless subsequently rescinded based on newly acquired science or information. Updated bat surveys

were conducted at the main base in 2023 and finding concluded that the NLEB was not present. The existing “No Effect” determination has been extended through March 2029. The determinations and extensions are provided as Appendix C.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE (EA § 3.2.8, Pages 3-16 to 3-24)**

The Preferred Alternative would support the goals of the DoD, DAF, and Hanscom AFB by improving installation facilities and services.

Overall, no adverse impacts to infrastructure on and off-base are expected. The Preferred Alternative would not result in a change in the number of personnel working on the base or utilizing its facilities; therefore, no additional trips on the base’s roadway network are anticipated.

The Proposed Action would occur solely within the main base; therefore, any potential traffic impacts from the Preferred Alternative would be limited to the base. Any impacts are anticipated to be temporary and minor. Any work requiring road or lane closures will require a Traffic Management Plan submitted to Hanscom AFB CE Office for review and approval. Hanscom AFB CE Office will provide notification to all Hanscom occupants 14 days prior to any road or lane closure.

Appropriate methodologies that ensure public safety and protect nearby tenants will be employed. Techniques such as barricades, flaggers, and signage will be used as necessary to isolate construction areas from pedestrian traffic adjacent to the work sites. Sidewalk areas and walkways near C&D activities will be well marked and lit to protect pedestrians and ensure their safety. C&D activities will be designed to meet all OSHA safety standards for specific site construction activities.

### **OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (EA § 3.2.9, Pages 3-24 and 3-25)**

Occupational safety and health procedures would be implemented as part of C&D activities to ensure the safety and health of individuals at the worksite. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would not result in direct or indirect impact on the safety and health of DAF employees and others at the site. The Preferred Alternative would be completed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local, and applicable DAF regulatory safety standards. Contractors would be trained to identify and avoid safety hazards, such as those common to working around/with heavy equipment and electrically powered hand tools.

### **SOLID WASTE AND HAZARDOUS WASTES (EA § 3.2.10, Pages 3-29 to 3-31)**

The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to produce solid waste during C&D activities. However, it is not anticipated to result in adverse impacts on solid waste and hazardous materials management. Short-term, minor impacts are anticipated from fugitive dust generated C&D activities from the implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

Overall, solid waste management would follow Hanscom AFB recycling policies and MassDEP solid waste policies and guidance to minimize the amount of solid waste disposed without beneficial reuse during construction activities. Contractors hired to execute projects would be responsible for solid and hazardous materials management in accordance with Hanscom AFB's HMMP, ISWMP, and Hazardous Materials Operations Plan.

### **SOCIOECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EA § 3.2.11, Pages 3-31 and 3-32)**

Under the Preferred Alternative, no adverse impacts on socioeconomics and environmental justice would occur. No increase in Hanscom employees is anticipated. The Proposed Action only proposes infrastructure improvements. Temporary disruption of traffic and increases in noise are anticipated from C&D activities. However, these effects would be short-term, mostly affecting Hanscom AFB residents than off-installation residents.

The Preferred Alternative would result in long-term benefits including improving the operations of the fire department.

### **PUBLIC REVIEW / INTERAGENCY COORDINATION (EA §§ 1.9, Page 1-9)**

A notice of availability was published in the Lexington Minuteman and Concord Journal on **DATE**, inviting the public to review the Draft EA and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for a 30-day comment period. In addition, DAF issued a press release on **DATE** announcing the availability of the Draft EA and FONSI. Copies were posted to the HAFB public facing website (<https://www.hanscom.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/379486/civil-engineering>) for download and review. The public comment period closed on **DATE** and **XX** comments were received.

### **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

Based on my review of the facts and analyses contained in the New Fire Station and Passenger Terminal EA conducted under the provisions of NEPA, CEQ Regulations, and 32 CFR §989, I conclude that the Preferred Alternative would not have a significant environmental impact, either by itself or cumulatively with other known projects. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The signing of this Finding of No Significant Impact completes the environmental impact analysis process.

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