

FINAL
DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES
FOR THE
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ADDRESSING THE
ZIA PARK AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN
AT
KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, NEW MEXICO



Prepared For:

Department of the Air Force

February 2022

Letters or other written comments provided may be published in the Final Environmental Assessment (EA). As required by law, substantive comments will be addressed in the Final EA and made available to the public. Any personal information provided will be kept confidential. Private addresses will be compiled to develop a mailing list for those requesting copies of the Final EA. However, only the names of the individuals making comments and their specific comments will be disclosed. Personal home addresses and phone numbers will not be published in the Final EA.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABW	Air Base Wing
ADEA	Area Development Environmental Assessment
ADP	Area Development Plan
AFB	Air Force Base
AFGSC	Air Force Global Strike Command
CAA	Clean Air Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CWA	Clean Water Act
DFAC	Dining Facility
DOD	Department of Defense
DOPAA	Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECF	Entry Control Facility
EIAP	Environmental Impact Analysis Process
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
IDP	Installation Development Plan
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NM	New Mexico
NOA	Notice of Availability
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RTI	Regional Training Institute
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
USAF	United States Air Force
USC	United States Code
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

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COVER SHEET

Draft

Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives For the Environmental Assessment Addressing the Zia Park Area Development Plan at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico

Responsible Agencies: United States Air Force (USAF), Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC), 377th Air Base Wing (ABW)

Affected Location: Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB), New Mexico

Report Designation: Draft Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives for an Environmental Assessment

Abstract: The United States Air Force (USAF) has identified categories of construction projects suitable for consideration in the Zia Park area of Kirtland AFB over the next 20 years. Zia Park is a former housing area encompassing approximately 300 acres of land central to the primary cantonment area of the installation. The intent of the ongoing process of area development is to provide improvements necessary to support the mission of the USAF and its mission partners. This Area Development Environmental Assessment (ADEA) is being prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of these proposed projects.

The project categories being considered in this ADEA were identified in the Kirtland AFB Zia Park Area Development Plan (ADP) (USAF, 2018) and are congruent with the Kirtland AFB Installation Development Plan (IDP) (USAF, 2016). These plans identify short- (1-5 years), mid- (5-10 years), and long- (10-20 years) range project requirements for the improvement of the physical infrastructure and functionality of the area, including current and future mission, facilities and infrastructure requirements; development constraints and opportunities; and land use relationships.

Under the No Action Alternative, the USAF would take no action; no construction activities would occur, and Zia Park would remain undeveloped. Kirtland AFB would continue to use existing facilities that would not meet the future needs of the USAF.

The Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives will become Sections 1 and 2 of the Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment will analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative and aid in determining whether a Finding of No Significant Impact can be prepared or if an Environmental Impact Statement is required.

Written comments and inquiries regarding this document should be directed by mail to the Kirtland AFB National Environmental Policy Act Program Manager, 377 MSG/CEIC, 2050 Wyoming Boulevard SE, Suite 116, Kirtland AFB, New Mexico 87117-5270, or by email to KirtlandNEPA@us.af.mil.

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Final

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AND ALTERNATIVES**

**FOR THE
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
ADDRESSING THE
ZIA PARK AREA DEVELOPMENT PLAN
AT
KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, NEW MEXICO**



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico

FEBRUARY 2022

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1.0 Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action

1.1 Introduction

Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB) is located southeast of the city of Albuquerque in New Mexico and occupies 51,585 acres of land, 44,052 acres of which are under United States Air Force (USAF) control (see **Figure 1-1**). It is a center for research, development, and testing of nonconventional weapons, space and missile technology, and laser warfare, and is host to more than 100 Air Force and non-Air Force mission partners.

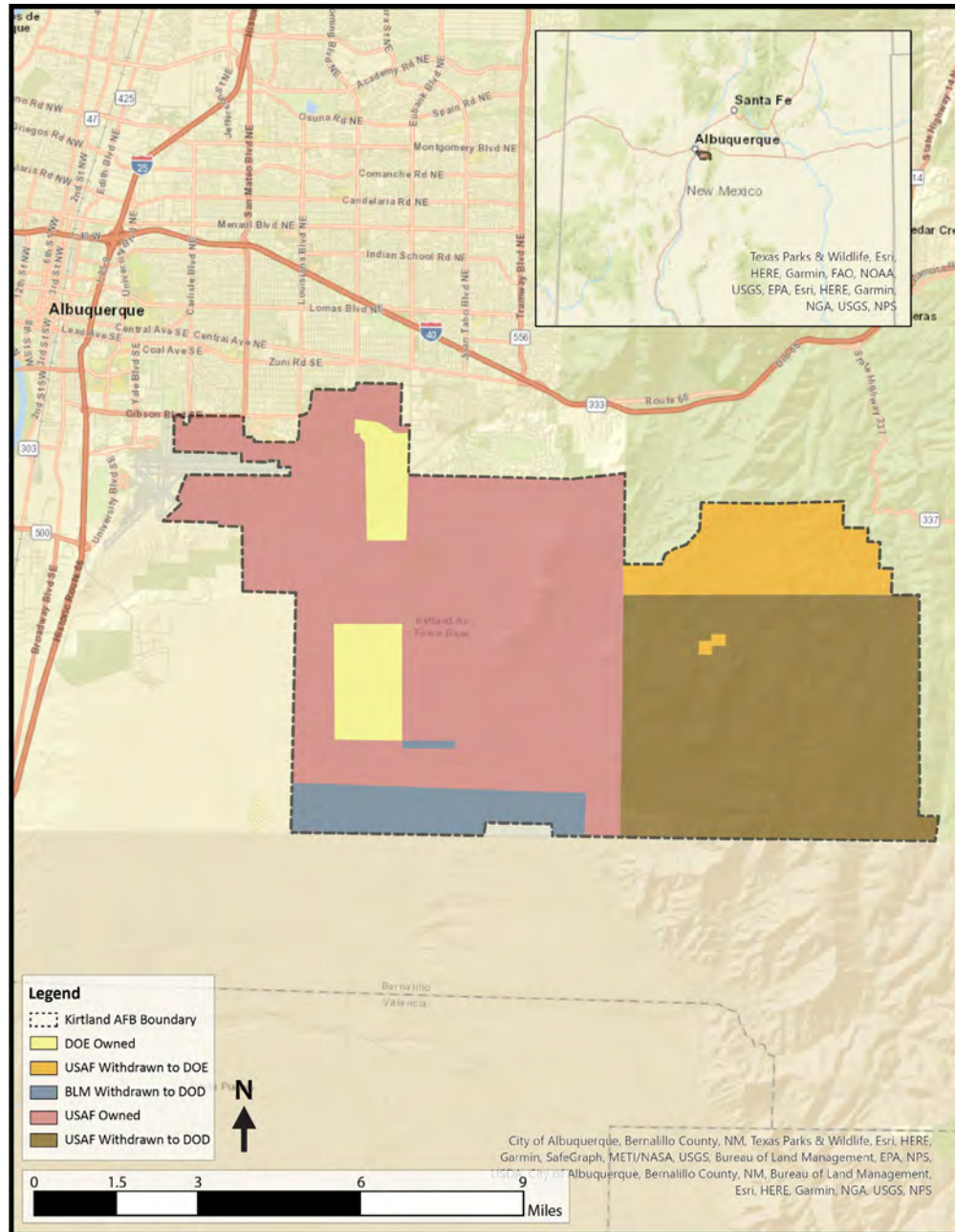


Figure 1-1: Kirtland AFB Vicinity Map with Land Ownership and Withdrawn Areas

Zia Park is a former housing area encompassing approximately 300 acres of land central to the primary cantonment area of the installation. It is bounded by Gibson Boulevard, Albuquerque Public School's Wherry Elementary School, and the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority's Regional Drainage Facility to the north, Pennsylvania Street to the east, Hardin Boulevard to the south, and both Randolph Avenue and Louisiana Boulevard to the west. It is bisected by Ridgecrest Drive, one of the few road connections linking the east and west sides of the installation (see **Figure 1-2**). The Zia Park area is currently vacant except for the 351 Special



Figure 1-2: Boundaries and Existing Facilities at Zia Park

Warfare Training Wing Campus located in the southeast quadrant.

The USAF has identified categories of construction projects suitable for consideration in the Zia Park area of Kirtland AFB over the next 20 years. The intent of the ongoing process of area development is to provide improvements necessary to support the mission of the USAF and its mission partners. This Area Development Environmental Assessment (ADEA) is being prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of these proposed projects.

The project categories being considered in this ADEA were identified in the Kirtland AFB Zia Park Area Development Plan (ADP) (USAF, 2018) and are congruent with the Kirtland AFB Installation Development Plan (IDP) (USAF, 2016). These plans identify short- (1-5 years), mid- (5-10 years), and long- (10-20 years) range project requirements for the improvement of the physical infrastructure and functionality of the area, including current and future missions, facilities and infrastructure requirements; development constraints and opportunities; and land use relationships. Goals of the ADP include pursuing redevelopment opportunities, force protection, striving toward state-of-the-art facilities, promoting quality of life for users, supporting mission partner success, strengthening community partnerships, striving toward multimodal transportation, pursuing energy surety options, and protecting and preserving environmental resources.

1.2 Purpose of the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to implement several types of construction projects over the next 20+ years, as described in the Kirtland AFB Zia Park Area Development Plan, to meet the current and future needs of Kirtland AFB.

1.3 Need for The Proposed Action

The need for Zia Park area development at Kirtland AFB is to provide and maintain facilities and infrastructure that meet the requirements of the 377 ABW and its mission partners. This can be accomplished by consolidating and co-locating community facilities, as well as connecting the east and west sides of the installation, in a manner that:

- Supports the Air Force mission requirements and quality of life of units and Airmen hosted by the installation;
- Meets applicable Department of Defense (DOD) installation master planning criteria, consistent with United Facilities Criteria 2-100-01, *Installation Master Planning*, Air Force Instruction 32-1015 *Integrated Installation Planning*, and Air Force Policy Directive 32-10 *Installations and Facilities*;
- Meets all applicable DOD, federal, state, and local laws and regulations such as, but not limited to, the Endangered Species Act (ESA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Clean Water Act (CWA), Clean Air Act (CAA), Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). More detailed information regarding resource specific laws and regulations are provided in the resource sections located in Chapter 3.

Per the Kirtland AFB IDP, the Zia Park area consists of the Community District and the Enterprise District. Future planning in these districts allow for the following land uses:

- Administrative: headquarters, offices, operations, research, testing, warehouses, training, and education;

- Infrastructure Improvements: an entry control facility (ECF), roadway extensions, roadway realignments, and utility infrastructure facilities, corridors and updates;
- Medical: base ambulatory surgery center, clinic, dental services, flight medicine, pharmacy;
- Community Services: fitness center, child development center, recreation and community center, youth center, and military dining facility (DFAC);
- Attached and Detached Residential/Lodging: multistory dormitories, unaccompanied housing, single-family homes, and townhomes;
- Outdoor Recreation and Open Space.

These will become the project categories under consideration for construction in this ADEA.

1.4 Decision to be Made

The ADEA evaluates whether the Proposed Action would result in significant impacts on the human environment. If significant impacts are identified, the USAF would undertake mitigation to reduce impacts to below the level of significance, undertake the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement addressing the Proposed Action, or abandon the Proposed Action. If no significant impacts are identified, the USAF will utilize the ADEA to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with the Proposed Action. The ADEA is a planning and decision-making tool that will be used to guide implementation of the Proposed Action in a manner that complies with all applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations and is consistent with Air Force standards for environmental stewardship. It is prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code 4331 et seq.), the regulations of the President's Council on Environmental Quality that implement NEPA procedures (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and the Air Force Environmental Impact Assessment Process (EIAP) Regulations (32 CFR Part 989).

1.5 Intergovernmental Coordination / Consultations

1.5.1 Interagency Coordination and Consultations

Executive Order (EO) 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*, as amended by EO 12416, requires federal agencies to provide opportunities for consultation by elected officials of state and local governments that would be directly affected by a federal proposal. In compliance with NEPA, the USAF will notify relevant stakeholders about the Proposed Action and alternatives (see **Appendix A** for all stakeholder coordination materials). The notification process will provide these stakeholders the opportunity to cooperate with the USAF and provide comments on the Proposed Action and alternatives.

Per the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA and implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), Section 7 of the ESA and implementing regulations (50 CFR Part 17), including the MBTA, findings of effect and a request for concurrence will be transmitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). A brief summary of comments received is shown below. All correspondence with the SHPO and USFWS is included in **Appendix A**. Correspondence regarding the findings and concurrence and resolution of any adverse effect will be included in **Appendix A**.

1.5.2 Government to Government Coordination and Consultations

EO 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, directs federal agencies to coordinate and consult with Native American tribal governments whose interests may be directly and substantially affected by activities on federally administered lands. To comply with legal mandates, federally-recognized tribes that are historically affiliated with the geographic region will be invited to consult on all proposed undertakings that have a potential to affect properties of cultural, historical, or religious significance to the tribes (see **Appendix A** for all tribal coordination materials). Scoping letters will be provided to Native American tribes whose ancestors were historically affiliated with the land underlying Kirtland AFB, inviting them to consult on the proposed undertakings outlined within this ADEA.

1.6 Public and Agency Review of Draft ADEA

A Notice of Availability (NOA) will be published in *The Albuquerque Journal* announcing the availability of the Draft ADEA. Letters will be provided to relevant federal, state, and local agencies and Native American tribal governments informing them that the Draft ADEA is available for review. The publication of the NOA will initiate a 30-day comment period. A copy of the Draft ADEA will be made available for review at the San Pedro Public Library at 5600 Trumbull Avenue SE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108. A copy of the Draft ADEA will also be made available for review online at <http://www.kirtland.af.mil> under the Environment Information tab. At the closing of the public review period, applicable comments from the general public and interagency and intergovernmental coordination/consultation will be incorporated into the analysis of potential environmental impacts and included in **Appendix A** of the Final ADEA.

2.0 Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1 Proposed Action

The USAF is proposing to redevelop an underutilized portion of the installation by considering short-, mid-, and long-range project requirements that improve the physical infrastructure and function of the area while including current and future mission needs of the USAF and its mission partners, facilities and infrastructure requirements, development constraints and opportunities, and land use relationships (see **Table 2-1**). Repurposing the Zia Park area would allow the USAF to consolidate and co-locate community facilities and connect the east and west sides of the installation. A conceptual image is included as **Figure 2-1**.

Table 2-1: Proposed Zia Park Developments

Project Categories	Design Parameters	Planning Range ¹
Administrative: headquarters, offices, operations, research, testing, warehouses, training, and education	Up to 40 acres of land with up to 480,000 square feet (sf) of facilities, parking lots, and impervious surface; facilities could be up to 5 stories tall	Short-, mid-, and long- term projects
Infrastructure Improvements: ECF, roadway extensions, roadway realignments, and utility infrastructure facilities, corridors, and updates	Up to 5 acres of land with up to 11,000 linear feet (lf) of impervious surface; any infrastructure facilities could be up to 5,000 sf and 1 story tall; roadways could be up to a divided four-lane road with a landscaped median, dedicated bicycle lanes, correctly sized pedestrian sidewalks, and traffic circles	Short-, mid-, and long- term projects
Medical: base hospital, clinic, dental services, flight medicine, pharmacy (drive-up)	Up to 10 acres of land with up to 200,000 sf of facilities, parking lots, and impervious surface; facilities could be up to 5 stories tall	Long-term projects
Community Services: fitness center including outdoor fields and pool, child development center, recreation and community center, youth center, and DFAC	Up to 10 acres of land with up to 200,000 sf of facilities, parking lots, and impervious surface; facilities could be up to 2 stories tall	Short- and mid-term projects
Attached and Detached Residential/Lodging: multistory dormitories, single-family homes, townhomes, unaccompanied housing	Up to 10 acres of land with up to 200,000 sf of facilities, parking lots, and impervious surface; facilities between 1 and 5 stories tall	Short- and mid-term projects
Outdoor Recreation and Open Space	Up to 10 acres of land for common areas, recreation areas near dormitories, or outdoor dining areas. Construction may include pavilions, basketball courts, etc.	Short-, mid-, and long-term projects
Demolition of Existing Facilities: Existing facilities to be demolished would be outside of the Zia Park area and would be in accordance with USAF Policy for new construction.	Demolitions could include: Building 585 west side gym (16,370 sf); Building 20228 east side gym (43,155 sf), Building 20221 dormitory (75,756 sf), Building 20350 DFAC (27,023 sf), and Building 1914 Maxwell child development center (26,382 sf).	Short-, mid-, and long-term projects

1. Short-Term = 1-5 years; Mid-Term = 5-10 years; Long-Term = 10-20 years



Note: This is a conceptual drawing only and actual design and placement of facilities may change.

Figure 2-1: Zia Park Conceptual Design Drawing

It is important to note that the proposed projects are funding-dependent and could proceed in any order, and a change in the decision to implement one element would not preclude the rest of the project, or any portion of it, from moving forward. Should the Proposed Action be implemented, the specific design, location, and number of facilities constructed may vary from what is shown in **Figure 2-1** based on the needs of Kirtland AFB and the design parameters shown in **Table 2-1**. All proposed construction projects from the Zia Park ADP will be evaluated in this EA even if not shown in **Figure 2-1**. This ADEA reduces duplication of effort by analyzing

general aspects of proposed construction and demolition projects in the ADP and establishing a framework for environmental impact analysis of future site-specific actions. The impacts of future site-specific actions would be addressed in subsequent AF Form 813 EIAP reviews per the USAF's implementing NEPA regulations (32 CFR Part 989).

2.2 Selection Standards

Selection standards were developed to assist the USAF in determining reasonable alternatives and the basis for eliminating any of them. The following selection standards were used to determine the feasibility of each alternative and to determine which of the alternatives would be the best fit to meet the needs of the project:

- The site should be able to create a strong east/west transportation connection through the center of the base capable of linking flightline operation facilities and Air Force Research Laboratory facilities on the east side of the installation to facilities on the west and southwest sides of the installation. This cohesive transportation corridor also increases functionality by creating a walkable campus;
- The site should be able to consolidate current off-base resources back onto the main base in a centralized location, capable of providing convenient customer access and co-located with other community functions. Some of the facilities currently located off-base being considered for relocation include the 377 Medical Group's medical and dental clinics, located within the Veterans Affairs Medical Center Campus, and a child development center, located within Maxwell Housing;
- The site should be able to enhance the quality of life of personnel living and working on the installation by co-locating community functions, such as a new, state-of-the-art physical fitness center, the incorporation of sidewalks for recreational walking and physical training, bicycle paths, and other outdoor recreation amenities. These facilities would be open to use by both military and civilian personnel;
- The site should contain enough land to accommodate future mission beddowns and expansions and be able to promote mixed use areas for campus developments and facility sharing between various DOD users. Some new mission beddowns include the relocation of the New Mexico Army National Guard's 515 Regional Training Institute (RTI) from Santa Fe to Kirtland AFB. Facilities to be shared could include a DFAC, dormitories, unaccompanied housing, and a physical fitness center;
- The site should not be located in a wetland or floodplain;
- The site should not have limiting topographic features or stormwater drainage.

2.3 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the USAF would not redevelop the Zia Park area and none of the proposed construction projects as outlined under the Proposed Action would occur. The installation would also continue to remain unconnected and divided. The No Action Alternative would maintain the current land uses and activities at the site, and the land would remain underutilized.

The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action as described in **Sections 1.2 and 1.3**; however, the USAF EIAP (32 CFR § 989.8[d]) requires consideration of the No Action Alternative. Therefore, this alternative will be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EA.

2.4 Alternative Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

The following alternative was eliminated from further consideration based upon the selection standards stated in **Section 2.2** and other reasons as explained below.

2.4.1 Maxwell Housing

Maxwell housing is an 86-acre site located approximately two miles northwest of the Zia Park area across Gibson Boulevard, a principal roadway in southeast Albuquerque. This site is currently developed and includes a 224-unit privatized housing area, a child development center, an emergency operations center complex, and its own ECF. While this site has been identified in the Kirtland IDP as suitable for redevelopment, it is geographically separated from the main installation and does not allow for a strong east/west transportation connection nor a central co-location of community service facilities. The cost to demolish the existing structures in Maxwell housing could also prove to be prohibitive when compared to using the vacant Zia Park area. Therefore, this alternative would not meet the purpose or need of the Proposed Action and will not be carried forward for analysis in the ADEA.

2.5 Comparative Summary of Impacts

The table below presents a summary of the impacts anticipated under the Proposed Action, Alternatives, and No Action Alternative.

Table 2-2: Summary of Potential Impacts

Affected Resource	Alternative 1 – Preferred Action	No Action Alternative
Airspace Management		
Noise		
Land Use		
Visual Resources		
Air Quality		
Geology and Soils		
Water Resources		
Biological Resources		
Cultural Resources		
Infrastructure		
Hazardous Materials and Wastes		
Safety		
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice		

[[Preparer’s Note: This will all be TBD until the analysis is complete. Resource areas will be analyzed and could be eliminated from detailed analysis in the Preliminary Draft EA. Summary of potential impacts will be complete in the Preliminary Draft EA.]]