

Draft
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
FOR
AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ADDRESSING SHORT-TERM
CONSTRUCTION AT SCHENECTADY AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE,
SCOTIA, NEW YORK

Introduction

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA), which is enclosed with this letter and incorporated by reference, to consider the potential consequences to the human and natural environment associated with infrastructure improvement projects at the Schenectady Air National Guard Base (ANGB), Scotia, New York. The 109th Airlift Wing (109 AW) at Schenectady ANGB proposes to implement 19 infrastructure improvement projects, including eight construction projects, seven renovation projects, and four demolition projects. This EA identifies applicable management actions and best management practices (BMPs) that would avoid or minimize impacts relevant to the implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives (to include the No Action Alternative).

Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action

Section 1.1 of the EA provides the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide the 109 AW with new and properly upgraded, sized, and configured facilities that are required to effectively accomplish its mission at Schenectady ANGB and meet United States (U.S.) Department of Defense (DoD) anti-terrorism/force protection (AT/FP) standards. The Proposed Action is needed because existing installation facilities and infrastructure are not appropriately sized for their usage with some being overcapacity; mission functions are spread across multiple facilities; and some facilities do not meet AT/FP concerns.

Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action. The Proposed Action, defined in Section 2 of the EA, includes construction, renovation, and demolition projects that would accommodate existing and future mission activities at Schenectady ANGB. Many existing facilities on the installation do not adequately support current or future mission requirements and/or are not adequately sized. Under the Proposed Action, the NGB would implement 19 development projects, which include demolition activities to provide adequate space needed to fulfill mission requirements, consolidation of job functions, and improved workflow. For planning and operational efficiency, the proposed projects would need to be developed in phases between 2025 and 2030 (with some projects possibly extending to 2034).

All proposed construction would be designed in accordance with the DoD UFC 1-200-01, *General Building Requirements* and UFC 1-200-02, *High Performance and Sustainable Building Requirements*. In addition, DoD and DAF AT/FP standards were considered in siting and planning all construction and renovation projects to enhance and ensure security on the

installation, which would include secure fencing, sufficient lighting, and entry control access. AT/FP standards are outlined in DoD Instruction 2000.16, *DoD Antiterrorism (AT) Standards*; Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 10-2, *Readiness*; Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-245 (ANG Supplement) *Antiterrorism*; AFI 10-701, *Operations Security (OPSEC)*; and UFC 4-010-01, *DoD Minimum Anti-Terrorism Standards for Buildings*, which outline various planning, construction, and operational standards that address potential terrorist threats.

Under the Proposed Action, the installation development would result in a net increase of up to 44,580 SF (1.05 acres) of developed area on the installation. This change would represent a less than one percent increase in the overall developed area at Schenectady ANGB. Proposed improvements would maximize, to the extent possible, existing developed and paved areas to minimize addition of impervious surfaces and to minimize encroachment on the facilities. Analysis in the EA uses the largest possible construction footprint for each proposed project to conservatively evaluate environmental effects.

Alternatives Considered. Due to spatial and resource constraints (including potential presence of protected species) at Schenectady ANGB, siting of most projects was limited to the sites identified in the EA. Potential alternatives for individual projects were considered but dismissed and not carried forward for full environmental analysis in the EA in accordance with the three selection standards discussed in Section 2.1.2 of the EA.

No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative was also carried forward for analysis in the EA and served as a baseline against which the impacts of the Proposed Action and other potential action alternatives could be evaluated. The No Action Alternative assumes the Proposed Action would not occur and would maintain the current state of facilities that do not meet life safety requirements to be inhabited; lack of sufficient and right-sized facility work, storage, and parking capacities to support personnel and the ongoing mission activities; and insufficient compliance with DoD's AT/FP security requirements.

Environmental Analysis

The analysis of environmental effects provided in Section 3 of the EA focused on the following environmental resources: safety, air quality, noise, land use, geological resources, water resources, biological resources, transportation and circulation, visual resources, cultural resources, environmental justice, and hazardous materials and wastes, toxic substances and other contaminants. A summary of the environmental consequences is provided in Section 4 of the EA. A cumulative effects assessment was also conducted. The analysis in the EA for each of the environmental resource areas identified less than significant adverse effects under the Proposed Action.

Mitigation. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to avoid or minimize effects on resources and to conform to existing policies and construction guidelines to the extent practicable. Additionally, the Schenectady ANGB will obtain all necessary permits and construction site approvals prior to implementation of this action.

Public Review and Comment

Based on the description of the Proposed Action as set forth in the EA, all activities were found to comply with the criteria or standards of environmental quality and were coordinated with the appropriate federal, state, and local agencies. There was coordination with agencies throughout the EA development process, and agency comments were incorporated into the analysis of potential environmental impacts performed as part of the EA. The draft EA was made available for public review and comment from August 1, 2024 to September 1, 2024 at the locations listed in the Draft EA public Notice of Availability. <<Insert ##>> comments were received, and information was incorporated into the analysis, as appropriate.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based on the information and analysis presented in the EA and based on review of the public and agency comments submitted during the 30-day public comment period, I conclude that the environmental effects of approving the proposed installation improvement projects at Schenectady ANGB would not be significant, that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is unnecessary, and that concluding the NEPA effort with a FONSI is appropriate.

NGB SIGNATURE BLOCK

Date

Enclosure: *Environmental Assessment (EA) Addressing Real Estate Action and Short-term Construction at Schenectady Air National Guard Base, Scotia, New York*