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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
30TH SPACE WING (AFSPC)

NOV 04 2019

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

California State Clearinghouse  
Governor's Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044  
Sacramento CA 95812-3044

NOV 25 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Dear Sir or Madam

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and its implementing regulations, the United States Air Force (USAF) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate potential environmental consequences associated with two independent proposed actions: (1) the beddown of an F-35A Operational Wing at Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB), Florida; and (2) the beddown of an MQ-9 Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Operational Wing at either Tyndall AFB, Florida, or Vandenberg AFB, California.

The proposed F-35A Wing action is to beddown an F-35A Wing at Tyndall AFB. The F-35A Wing would consist of three operational squadrons, each with 24 Primary Aerospace Vehicles Authorized aircraft and two Backup Aircraft Inventory aircraft. The beddown of the F-35A Wing would require construction and/or renovation of facilities to support staff and house 72 F-35A aircraft, including an F-35 Maintenance Squadron Complex, five hangars (maintenance, training, and fuel cell), an F-35 parking apron, an aerospace ground equipment facility, munitions storage, a flight simulator facility, and an aircraft wash rack. The estimated increase in base personnel would be 1,920. F-35A flight operations for proficiency training would occur at the base and use existing airspace and ranges.

The proposed MQ-9 Wing action is to beddown the MQ-9 RPA system employed by the USAF in support of the Department of Defense directive to support initiatives of overseas contingency operations. The beddown of 24 MQ-9 aircraft at either Tyndall AFB or Vandenberg AFB would require construction and/or renovation of facilities to support staff and house MQ-9 aircraft, including a Wing Headquarters, Operations Group, Maintenance Group, dormitory, child development center, fitness center, and inert munitions storage (Attachment 1). The estimated increase in base personnel would be 1,940 at the selected base to fulfill MQ-9 mission requirements. Flight operations for MQ-9 proficiency training would occur at the selected base and in existing airspace and ranges (Attachment 2).

The F-35A Wing beddown alternatives identified for evaluation in the EIS include the proposed beddown of a three-squadron F-35A Wing at Tyndall AFB and an alternative with a fourth squadron of fifth-generation fighter aircraft in addition to the three-squadron F-35A Wing. MQ-9 Wing beddown alternatives identified for evaluation in the EIS include beddown of the MQ-9 Wing at either Tyndall AFB or Vandenberg AFB. Tyndall AFB was preliminarily identified as the preferred alternative for this mission.

The EIS will address potential environmental consequences resulting from implementation of each alternative for each of the proposed actions, as well as the combination of F-35A and MQ-9 actions at Tyndall AFB. As required by NEPA, a No Action Alternative, where the beddown of an F-35A Wing would not occur at Tyndall AFB, will also be addressed, as will the No Action Alternative where the beddown of an MQ-9 Wing would not occur at either location.

The USAF published a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register on November 22, 2019, initiating the public involvement process. The USAF will host an open-house public scoping meeting on December 10, 2019, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at Gulf Coast State College in Panama City, Florida, and on December 12, 2019, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at Allan Hancock College, Lompoc Valley Center, in Lompoc, California. The purpose of the meetings and the scoping period is to solicit comments on the scope of environmental issues to be addressed in the EIS.

We invite your participation at the scoping meetings, but if you cannot attend, you may submit written comments via the project website at [www.F-35WingandMQ-9WingEIS.com](http://www.F-35WingandMQ-9WingEIS.com) or via mail as follows:

U.S. Post Office Deliveries:  
F-35A/MQ-9 EIS Project Manager  
AFCEC/CZN  
2261 Hughes Avenue, Suite 155  
JBSA Lackland TX 78236-9853

FedEx & UPS Deliveries:  
F-35A/MQ-9 EIS Project Manager  
AFCEC/CZN  
3515 S General McMullen, Suite 155  
San Antonio TX 78226-2018

The F-35A Wing beddown alternatives have the potential to affect wetlands at Tyndall AFB, and the MQ-9 Wing beddown alternatives have the potential to affect wetlands at Tyndall AFB and Vandenberg AFB. Consistent with the requirements and objectives of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, this letter initiates early public review of the alternatives that have the potential to affect wetlands and/or floodplains.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Vandenberg AFB's NEPA Point of Contact, Ms. Samantha Kaisersatt, via email at [samantha.kaisersatt@us.af.mil](mailto:samantha.kaisersatt@us.af.mil), or via telephone at (805) 605-0392. Thank you in advance for your participation in the EIS scoping process.

Sincerely



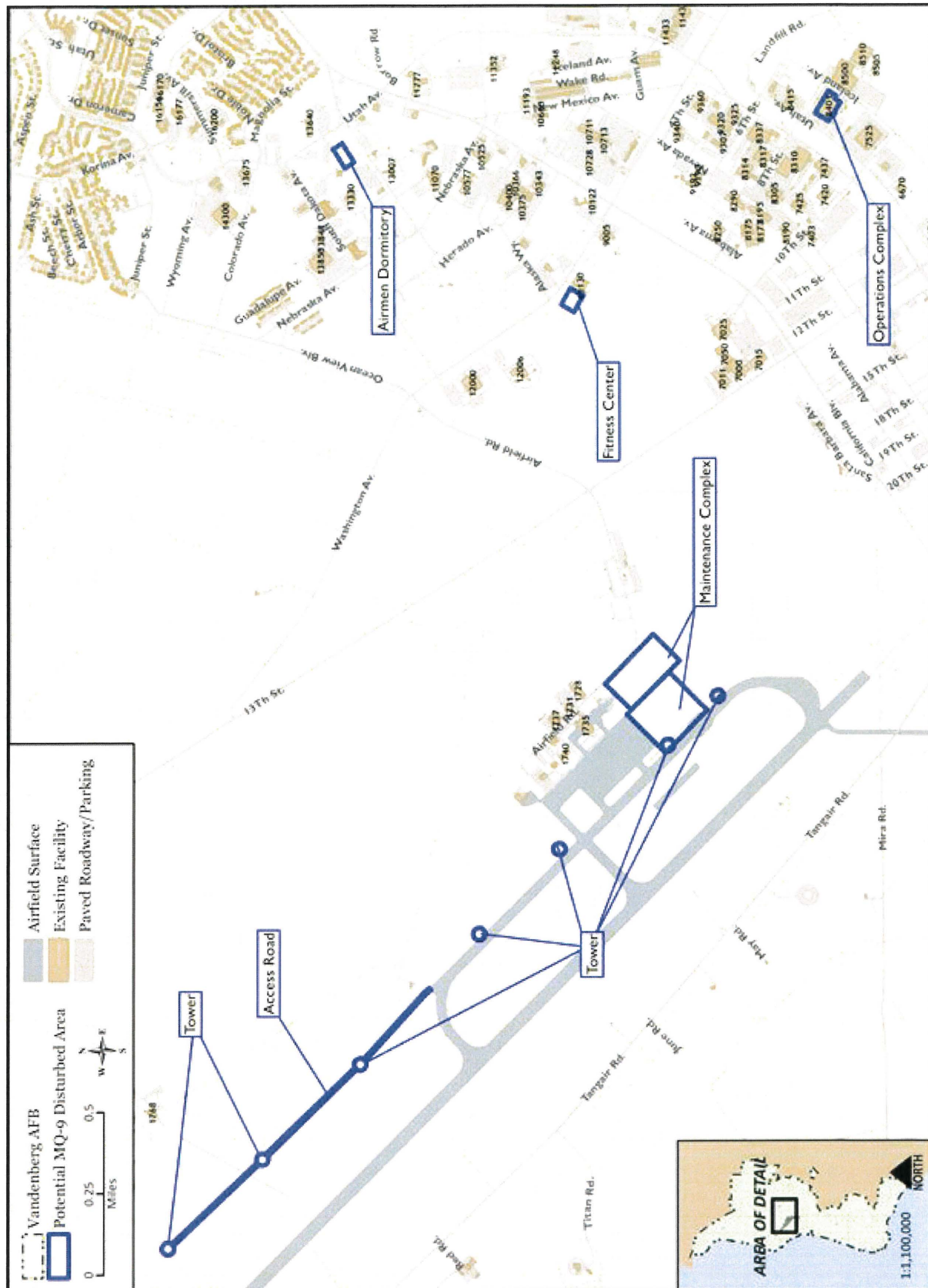
BEATRICE L. KEPHART  
Chief, Installation Management Flight

Attachments:

1. MQ-9 Facilities Projects
2. MQ-9 Base and Training Airspace

Attachment 1. MQ-9 Facilities Projects

Figure 1: Vandenberg AFB Facilities Locations Associated With the Proposed MQ-9 Beddown





## Attachment 2. MQ-9 Base and Training Airspace

Figure 3: Proposed MQ-9 COA Transit Routes to Access Training Range from Vandenberg AFB

