

The NEPA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) provides for the consideration of environmental issues in Federal agency planning and decision making. NEPA requires that major Federal actions be examined for both individual and cumulative environmental impacts. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is a concise public document that

- Briefly provides sufficient evidence for determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI);
- Aids compliance with NEPA when no EIS is necessary;
- Facilitates preparation of an EIS when one is necessary; and
- Informs decision makers and the public of the potential environmental impacts of reasonable alternatives.

Although the FAA published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for this proposed project, the proposed action changed from what was published in the NOI. The FAA reconsidered the scope of the analysis required to support the proposed action and alternatives, and determined that an EA would more appropriately address the environmental consequences. See below for a timeline of the entire environmental review process for this project, including past and future actions.

Oklahoma Spaceport EA Process

The NOI announced the FAA's intent to prepare an EIS, initiated public scoping and the NEPA process, and invited comments on the scope of the EIS.

Notice of Intent

October 23, 2002
(67 FR 65169)

Scoping comments were solicited from the public and other agencies. Two public scoping meetings were held in November 2002, in addition to agency consultation.

Scoping Comment Period

October 23 – December 2, 2002

Based on changes to the scope of the actions being analyzed, the FAA announced a notice to retract the NOI to prepare an EIS. The notice explained that an EA would be prepared instead.

Notice to Retract

October 7, 2005
(70 FR 58784)

The FAA issued the Notice of Availability of the Draft EA and provided copies of the document to interested parties, including local libraries.

Draft Environmental Assessment

February 3, 2006
(71 FR 5901)

A public hearing is held and comments on the Draft EA are solicited from Federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, the public, and other interested parties.

Draft EA Comment Period and Public Hearing

February 3 – March 13, 2006

The Final EA will make corrections to the Draft EA and will include responses to comments raised during the Draft EA comment period.

Final Environmental Assessment

June 2006
(tentative)

Once the Final EA is published, the FAA will determine if an EIS needs to be prepared or if a FONSI can be issued.

Determination – EIS or FONSI

June 2006
(tentative)