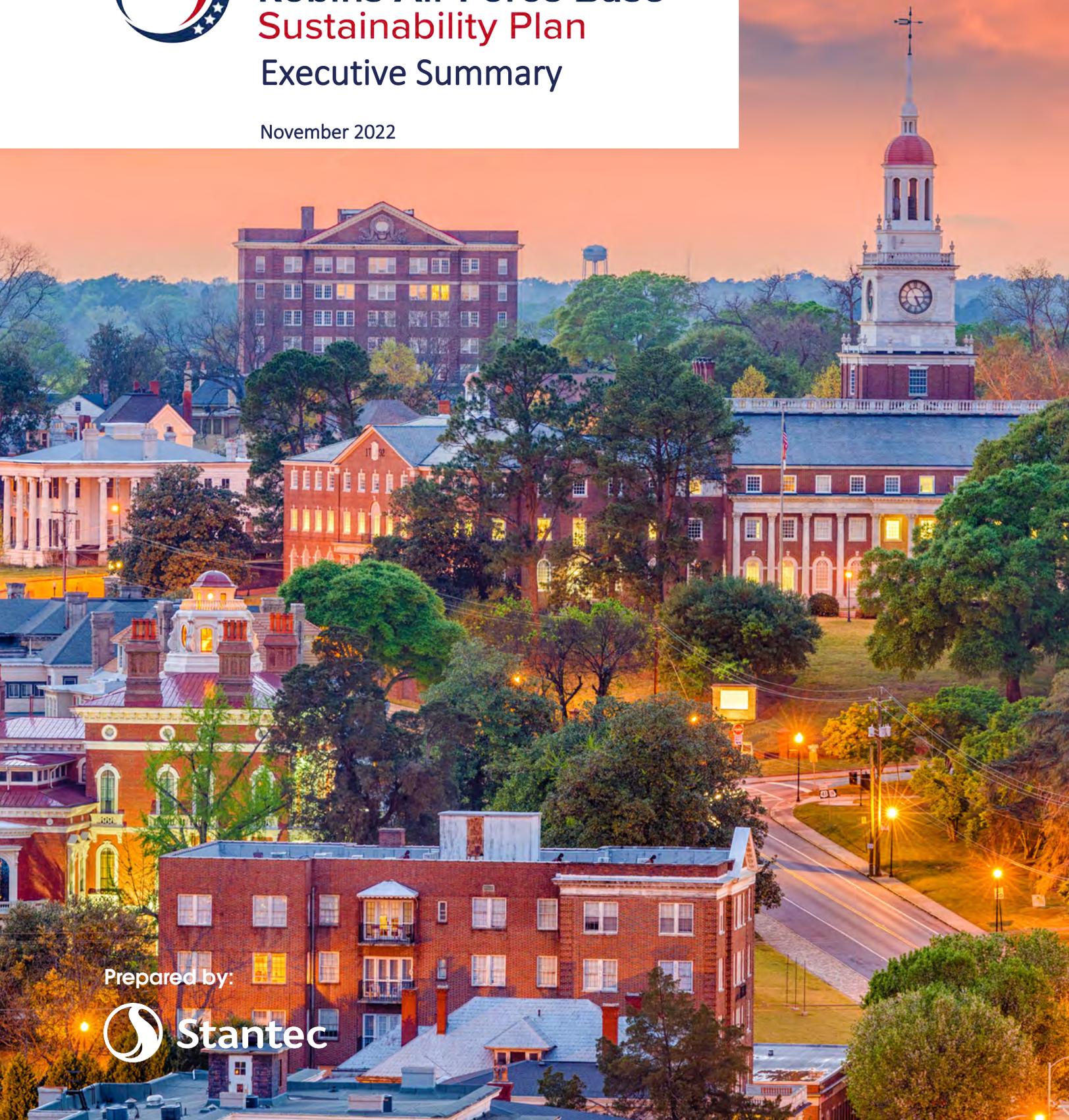




# Middle Georgia – Robins Air Force Base Sustainability Plan Executive Summary

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## Executive Summary

### What is the Middle Georgia – Robins Air Force Base Sustainability Plan?

The Robins Air Force Base Sustainability Plan represents a collaborative study the Middle Georgia Regional Commission conducted in partnership with the Installation, local municipalities, state and federal officials, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Partnership and residents to identify compatible land uses and growth management guidelines to support both continued military operations and community growth and economic development. The Sustainability Plan includes a detailed, action-oriented Implementation Plan to carry out recommendations that address issues related to compatible use, transportation, infrastructure, military operations, economic and community development, environment, and cultural and natural resources.

The purpose of the Sustainability Plan is to encourage the local communities and Robins Air Force Base (AFB) to act as a team to promote the long-term sustainability of Installation through compatible development and collaboration. The Sustainability Plan includes an examination of issues that may pose concerns to the long-term viability of the installation, community growth, and economic development.

The last effort of this kind was the Robins AFB Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) completed in 2004. While the mission footprint for the military operations has not changed in the past 17 years, growth and development throughout the region has led to the need to update the 2004 JLUS to strengthen ongoing communication and coordination between the communities and Installation and encourage stakeholders to work together to prevent or limit issues that may adversely impact future mission expansion or local growth. The Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation provided funding support for the Sustainability Plan with Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC) serving as the project sponsor. However, the plan is created *by* the community and *for* the community.

*From the community perspective, the following are the primary objectives of the Sustainability Plan.*

- ★ Protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents and maintain their quality of life.
- ★ Ensure compatible development in the vicinity of the Installations that will not interfere with continuing existing and possible future operation of the facilities.
- ★ Provide for sustainable growth in an economically, environmentally, and socially conscious manner.
- ★ Maintain the economic vitality of the community.
- ★ Enhance communication between the community and the military.

*From the military perspective, the following are the primary objectives of a Sustainability Plan.*

- ★ Promote the health, safety, and welfare of the military and civilian personnel living and working at or near the Installation.
- ★ Ensure the ability of the Installation to achieve its mission, maintain military readiness, and support national defense objectives.
- ★ Preserve the ability of the Installation to adjust or expand its mission.



It is important to note that this Sustainability Plan is not intended to be a study that rests on the shelf of administrators and offices, but includes a set of recommendations and strategies that are implemented through local jurisdictions to guide community development that is compatible with military training, testing, and operational missions; seek ways to reduce operational impacts on adjacent lands and waterways; and support continued economic development and public health, safety, and general welfare of those living and working near the Installation.

Throughout the process, municipalities, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders provided their input and support. By accepting the Sustainability Plan, they are stating their continued community-based support for future implementation efforts. Typically, implementation measures involve some level of revisions to local policies. The intent is to continually ensure that future public and private development around the Installation is compatible with both the military mission and the needs of the community.

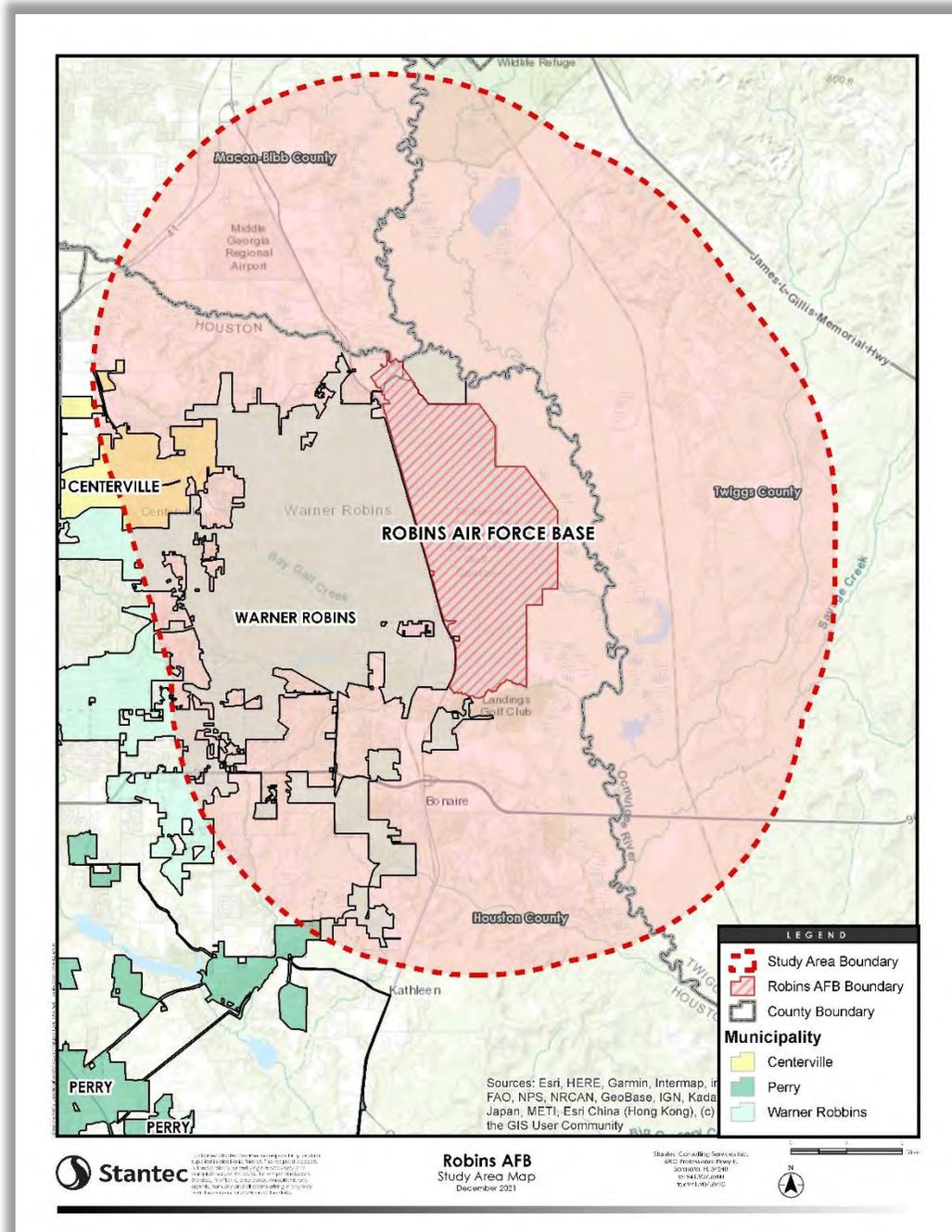
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## **Robins Air Force Base’s Role**

Established in 1941, Robins AFB is located in Houston County and is home to the largest single-site industrial complex within the State of Georgia. The 6,935-acre facility is home to 54 mission partners and has a 23,405 civilian, member, and contractor workforce. It contains one of Georgia's longest runways and averages approximately 23,000 flight operations a year. The Installation is also home to 141 warehouses, 141 shops/hangars, 107 administrative buildings, and 11 other facilities. Robins has an approximate annual impact of \$3.54 billion on the surrounding community. The County is accessible by Interstate 75; Watson Boulevard (247C) provides direct access from the interstate to the Robins AFB gate. Communities surrounding the Installation include the cities of Byron, Centerville, Danville, Fort Valley, Jeffersonville, Perry, and Warner Robins; and the counties of Houston, Macon-Bibb, Peach, and Twiggs.

## Sustainability Plan Study Area

The Sustainability Plan Study Area includes a five-mile radius around the Installation boundary, with an assessment of compatibility of land uses along the Installation’s flight paths and noise contours, capturing most of the off-site impacts from the military operations. The Study Area includes portions of the cities of Centerville, Perry, and Warner Robins; and the counties of Houston, Macon-Bibb, and Twiggs.





## How the Sustainability Plan Was Conducted

The 2022 Sustainability Plan includes information for uses on base and off; a compatibility analysis; a set of recommendations for improving compatibility; and a detailed implementation plan. The plan includes identification of existing and potential threats to the installation related to land use, transportation, infrastructure, operations, economic and community development, the environment, and cultural resources. The analysis was aimed at finding a balance or compromise between military and community needs so that both can grow effectively.

## The Committees

The Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committees guided development of the Sustainability Plan. These committees consisted of community leaders, Robins AFB personnel, federal and state agencies, local governments, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Partnership and other stakeholders, serving as liaisons to their respective stakeholder groups and responsible for relaying information to their organizations.

- ★ **Policy Committee.** The Policy Committee led the direction of the Sustainability Plan. They were responsible for the oversight of the study as well as monitoring the implementation and adoption of policies and strategies. The members include decision makers, executive directors, and elected officials from the affected local governments.
- ★ **Technical Advisory Committees.** The main objective for the Technical Advisory Committees was providing technical expertise and feedback. They assisted with addressing technical issues, providing feedback on drafting the report, and development of the implementation strategies and tools. The Technical Advisory Committees included experts from the affected local governments and organizations as well as Robins AFB representatives and other designated stakeholders.

## Community Involvement

The community played a crucial role in the development of the Sustainability Plan, providing varying perspectives and differing opinions to ensure a well-rounded planning process. To effectively gather input, a variety of public engagement opportunities were provided throughout the process. Engagement opportunities included the following:

- ★ Public Workshops
- ★ Stakeholders Interviews
- ★ Project Handouts
- ★ Project Website
- ★ Surveys

## Sustainability Plan Areas of Study

The Sustainability Plan includes seven primary topics of study: Land Use, Transportation, Airspace, Infrastructure, Security, Economic and Community Impact, and Environment and Cultural Resources. There are chapters devoted to each of these topics. Each chapter includes background information, an analysis and discussion of the issues that affect the Installation within each topic, and a series of recommendations. The recommendations for each topic are gathered in an implementation chapter.

## Results of the Sustainability Plan

A set of recommendations for both the military and local government stakeholders were created to promote compatible development, increase base security, and build relationships among the Installation and the surrounding communities. The proposed recommendations and guidelines will reduce potential conflicts between the Installation and surrounding areas while accommodating new growth and economic development, sustaining economic vitality, protecting public health and safety, and safeguarding the operational missions of the Installation.

## Implementation of the Sustainability Plan

The Sustainability Plan includes an Implementation Plan comprised of 74 recommendations that are the product of consensus among MGRC, the cities of Byron, Centerville, Danville, Fort Valley, Jeffersonville, Perry, and Warner Robins, and the counties of Houston, Macon-Bibb, Peach, and Twiggs. The recommendations provide a practical strategy and a coordinated approach for continued regional planning and military and civilian compatibility.

Each recommendation, organized around each stakeholder’s jurisdiction, incorporates one or more actions to implement that can promote compatible land use, prevent encroachments upon the military mission, mitigate existing incompatibilities, facilitate compatible future development, and provide mechanisms to foster communication and coordination. The recommended strategies function as tools to aid the community in their goal of ensuring the continued sustainability of the military mission at the Installation. Collectively, these strategies represent an assertive and coordinated approach that demonstrates the community’s commitment to that goal.

Implementation of the recommendations will require continued coordination and collaboration among the partners across the region including local jurisdictions, MGRC, 21st Century Partnership, Middle Georgia Innovation Project, Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition, and Central Georgia Joint Development Authority. Middle Georgia is exceptional at coming together to create solutions in support of Robins AFB.

The recommendation strategies included in the Implementation Plan are categorized into groups that provide a general description. They consist of:

- ★ **Communication and Coordination.** Recommendations will provide opportunities and strategies for increased communication or coordination between the Installation, the community, stakeholders, elected officials, civilians, and military families.
- ★ **Education.** Recommendations will help educate the community on facts and details that might help to clarify information or provide new information.
- ★ **Policy.** Policy recommendations include changes to regulatory documents such as the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinances, and/or building codes.
- ★ **Program or Process.** A program or process may need to be established to address a specified area of interest.
- ★ **Study.** Studies or reports may be needed to determine additional information, and conduct additional analyses, and research before the next steps can be determined.



The Implementation Plan will provide a general overview for each municipality and stakeholder to put into place the recommendations set forth within the Sustainability Plan. Please refer to Table 12.1 Implementation Plan Recommendations Summary within Chapter 12.

## Monitoring Plan

The Middle Georgia – Robins Air Force Base Sustainability Plan Implementation Committee members are tasked to oversee implementation of the recommendations included in the Sustainability Plan. The Implementation Committee, composed of members from MGRC, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Partnership, community stakeholders, and Robins AFB, is tasked to ensure implementation stays on track and act as a forum for continued communication and sharing of information and current events to ensure channels remain open as elected leadership and staff change over time.

