

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Location

Griffiss International Airport
Rome, New York

Proposed Federal Action

The proposed federal action is the federal financial assistance to enable the removal of all obstructions on airport property and critical obstructions off airport property, as well as the purchase of avigation easements on four parcels off-airport property, at Griffiss International Airport (RME).

Project Description

The proposed action involves removal of 50 acres of tree canopy on airport property, removal of 13 acres of tree canopy areas off airport property, and purchase of avigation easements on four parcel off-airport.

Background

In December 2013, the sponsor conducted an aeronautical survey to determine if any obstructions penetrated the aeronautical surfaces surrounding the airport. Obstructions were identified and indicated on drawings within the Master Plan Update completed in February 2016. In addition, FAA Flight Procedures identified obstructions that penetrated the Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) surfaces surrounding the airport. If these obstructions are not removed, FAA regulations would require:

- the modification of existing precision instrument approach procedures on Runway 33, which would result in higher visibility minimums, a realignment of the final approach course, raising the glidepath angle, and increasing the threshold crossing height,
- and the implementation of a displaced threshold on Runway 33, which would reduce the runway length available for landing

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to comply with federal regulations, design standards, and grant assurances with respect to obstructions to airspace. The need stems from the modifications to the approach procedures and runway threshold that would required by these obstructions remaining in place. This situation would adversely affect aircraft operations and safety.

Alternatives

In addition to the no action alternative, the following alternatives were considered:

- Alternative 2: Remove All Obstructions - removing all obstructions on airport property, along with TERPS obstructions, RESS obstructions, and the Part 77 50:1 approach and

transitional surface obstructions for Runway 33. This alternative would result in improved approach minimums.

- Alternative 3: Reduced Part 77 Obstruction Removal - removing all obstructions on airport property, along with TERPS obstructions, RESS obstructions, and the Part 77 34:1 approach and transitional surface obstructions for Runway 33. This alternative would result in improved approach minimums.
- Alternative 4: Remove Critical Obstructions – removing all obstructions on airport property, and those obstructions off airport that would negatively affect existing approach procedures or runway length. This alternative would maintain existing approach minimums and runway length.

Based on an alternatives analysis that included factors such as cost, feasibility, and the potential for impacts to environmental resources, the preferred alternative is Alternative 4. This alternative meets the purpose and need by removing obstructions to the current approach and runway length standards, with a lower overall cost, affects to fewer off-airport properties, and less potential impact to wildlife and biotic communities. This alternative, along with the No Action Alternative, was carried forward for analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA), and Alternatives 2 and 3 were dismissed from consideration.

Discussion

The attached January 2020 EA addresses the effects of the proposed action on the quality of the human and natural environment, and is made a part of this Finding. The following impact analysis highlights the more thorough analysis presented in the document.

Air Quality & Climate Change

Oneida County is listed as in attainment for all criteria pollutants. Based on the results of an emissions inventory, criteria pollutant emissions for the project are less than *de minimis* thresholds. A General Conformity and NAAQS analysis would not be required for the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative would increase greenhouse gas emissions due to construction activities, however significant adverse impacts were not identified.

Biological Resources & Threatened and Endangered Species

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) list of federally endangered, threatened and candidate species for Oneida County included the following threatened species: northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). USFWS consultation was completed under the 4(d) rule for the northern long-eared bat, as correspondence with Natural Heritage did not indicate the presence of an occupied maternity roost tree or hibernaculum near the project area. Significant impacts to other wildlife and biotic communities were not identified, however, mitigation measures will be employed to minimize impacts to wildlife habitat and other biotic communities.

Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, & Pollution Prevention

Analysis within the EA indicated the preferred alternative has a potential to encounter petroleum products or hazardous substances during construction relating to previously identified hazardous materials sites on airport property. Soil sampling connected with this project indicated some contaminants are present in the soil, however, concentrations are below NYSDEC residential use

soil cleanup objectives. General Best Management Practices will be followed, along with mitigation measures for each of the individual sites, to ensure no significant impacts.

Light Emissions and Visual Resources

With the Preferred Alternative, approximately 50 acres of trees on airport property and 13 acres of trees off airport property will be removed. No impacts are anticipated, as no residential properties will be affected. Tree screens will remain between any residential areas and the areas with proposed tree removal.

Water Quality, Surface Waters and Wetlands

Tree removal has the potential to impact stormwater runoff. Best Management Practices are recommended to minimize these impacts. The Preferred Alternative would result in temporary impacts to wetlands during construction. No permanent impacts are anticipated, as wetlands will be converted from forested wetlands to scrub-shrub wetlands. Mitigation measures are recommended to minimize construction impacts to wetlands.

Construction Impacts

Limited short-term effects resulting from construction may occur. Specific effects could include noise from construction equipment on the site, fugitive dust, soil erosion, and sedimentation. These impacts will be limited by requiring the contractor to comply with all contract provisions for environmental protection. These short-term construction impacts will not persist beyond the construction period, and no significant long-term construction impacts are expected as a result of this project.

Other Impact Categories

The impacts of the proposed Federal action on coastal resources, DOT Section 4(f), farmlands, historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources, land use and zoning, natural resources and energy supply, noise and noise-compatible land use, and socioeconomics, environmental justice, and children's environmental health and safety risks were evaluated in the EA. It is the FAA's finding that the proposed action will not have any significant effect on any of the above noted categories.

Public Involvement

During the Draft EA preparation, the sponsor conducted individual meetings with four affected property owners. A Notice of Public Availability was published in *The Utica Observer-Dispatch* and the *Rome Daily Sentinel*, and on the project website at <http://oc-gov.net/airport>. The EA was made available for review from November 7, 2019 to December 7, 2019 at the airport offices and at the Jervis Public Library in Rome, NY. Involved agencies and affected property owners were sent electronic copies of the EA on CD. One comment was received from a member of the public, and one comment from the EPA. Both comments were addressed in Appendix K of the EA.

Mitigation Measures

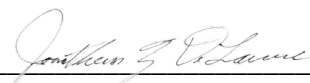
1. Best Management Practices are recommended to reduce the emissions of criteria pollutants, and impacts to surface and groundwater.

2. Construction contract provisions shall contain the provisions of AC 150/5370-10A, "Standards for specifying construction of Airports" item P-156, temporary air, water pollution, soil erosion and siltation control and AC 150/5320-5B, "Airport Drainage."
3. All necessary permits for construction of the proposed action and associated mitigation shall be obtained prior to construction.
4. To minimize and avoid any potential impact to protected species, tree clearing and trimming shall be conducted between October 31 and March 31.
5. No grubbing of soils, removal of stumps, or removal of root systems shall occur within wetlands or within 100 feet of wetlands.
6. Clearing activities in the vicinity of wetlands will be conducted such that individual trees are felled in a direction away from the wetland. Larger trees should be removed from the project area and smaller shrubs should be cut into small segments and left in place.
7. Vegetation removal areas will be flagged, cutting will be limited to the minimum needed to address obstructions, and trees or portions of trees cut shall be promptly removed from affected landowner's properties
8. Construction staging and stockpiling will occur outside of wetlands and wetland buffers.
9. The requirements listed in the Record of Decision and the Land Use Controls provided in the Deed for Parcels A4, A5, A6, F10B, and F10C must be followed for invasive work in or adjacent to those areas. Consultation with EPA, NYSDEC, and NYSDOH shall occur before work near these areas commences.
10. Existing groundwater monitoring wells will be identified and protected.

CONCLUSION AND APPROVAL:

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds the federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 (a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and it will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of NEPA.

Recommended:


 Environmental Specialist
 New York Airports District Office

3/30/2020

Date

Approved:

Manager
New York Airports District Office

Date

Disapproved:

Manager
New York Airports District Office

Date