

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

**Location**

Syracuse Hancock International Airport (SYR)  
Town of Cicero, Onondaga County, New York

**Proposed Federal Action**

The FAA’s approval of a release of sponsor obligations is a federal action subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The FAA has determined, under Section 163(b) of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, that the Agency has the legal authority to approve or disapprove the change in land use for Parcels 26, 28, and 30.

**Project Description**

The Syracuse Regional Airport Authority (SRAA or “The Authority”) is proposing to release 8.80 acres of obligated airport land at the Syracuse Hancock International Airport, specifically Parcel 057.-02-12.1, 4.46 acres; Parcel 057.-02-12.3, 1.93 acres and Parcel 051.-02-15.1, 2.41 acres from aeronautical use to non-aeronautical use (shown in Appendix A of the EA). SRAA plans to lease the land in the future for non-aeronautical commercial development.

**Background**

These parcels of land were transferred to the City of Syracuse by the United States of America, acting through the Administrator of General Services, under the provisions of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 and the Surplus Property Act of 1944 via a Quitclaim Deed dated March 21, 1977. Parcel 38 originally consisted of 3.12 acres: 0.71 acres of the parcel appears to have been sold to the Town of Cicero in 1993 without an FAA release.

**Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the Proposed Project is to use surplus property for non-aeronautical development to provide SRAA with additional revenue streams.

The need of the Sponsor’s Proposed Action is to maintain a fee and rental structure for facilities on airport property to allow SRAA to be as self-sustaining as possible. By leasing the proposed released parcels for non-aeronautical development, The Authority could then apply the revenue earned towards supporting airport capital improvements as well as repair and operations activities that would benefit the Airport. Revenue earned from the land lease would benefit the Airport directly.

**Alternatives**

Two alternatives were considered:

1. Alternative 1- the no action alternative
2. Alternative 2 - land release from Aeronautical Use to Non-Aeronautical Use

Alternative 2 was designated as the Preferred Alternative, as it best met the project's purpose and need.

### **Discussion**

The attached May 2023 Final 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**

The airport is not located in a NAAQS nonattainment or maintenance area. The release of airport property from aeronautical to non-aeronautical use would not directly cause or create an increase in emissions. There will be no changes in operations, GSE equipment, APU usage, or the number of people traveling to/from the Airport due to the Proposed Action. Any air quality impacts from future development would be limited to short-term increases in fugitive dust, particulates, and localized pollutant emissions from construction vehicles and equipment. Thus, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to result in significant impacts on air quality at the airport.

### **Biological Resources**

Three endangered/threatened species were identified as potentially occurring in the project area: Indiana Bat, Northern Long-eared Bat, and Eastern Massasauga. Additionally, according to the IPaC, twelve species of migratory birds have the potential to be located in the project area. Parcel 057.-02-12.1 had a rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) habitat assessment performed by a Professional Wetland Scientist/Certified Ecologist on February 3, 2020. The remaining parcels (057.-02-12.3 and 051.-02-15.1) were assessed through a RTE habitat assessment performed on December 22, 2021 by their Associate Wildlife Biologist and Wetland Scientist. It was found through these assessments that it is not likely any of the listed species are inhabitants of the parcels. The majority of the parcels are vacant; previously disturbed, either by clear cutting or mowing, and stoned/paved staging or parking areas. Should any trees need to be removed the NYSDEC and the USFW will be contacted so the removal can be done at a time approved by the agencies. Historically this time frame has been between the months of October and March, ensuring that animals have migrated to their winter homes/hibernacula. As the lease holder, the Airport will require compliance with all recommendations made by these State and Federal agencies. No mitigation measures are required at this time, however to ensure development has the least potential impact all new projects will need to complete the NYS State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process and follow direction from the local NYS Department of Environmental Conservation office.

### **Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, & Pollution Prevention**

The Sponsor's Proposed Action would not violate regulations; does not involve a known contaminated site; would not generate a different type or quality of solid waste, use a different collection method or exceed local capacity; and would not adversely affect human health and the environment. Future development has the potential to generate large amounts of solid waste. However, it is unlikely that any development would be significant solid waste generators that are out of line with standard waste volumes generated by commercial development operations. There are 3 disposal facilities in Onondaga County that can accept waste from new development, none of which have capacity issues at this time. The site has the potential to be a gas station or

automotive repair shop so there is the possibility that hazardous materials could be present in small amounts. It shall be made clear in the lease agreement that the Tenant will be required to follow all local, state, and federal regulations regarding the use and proper disposal of hazardous materials. Normal operation of any potential development should not cause any significant impacts. Therefore no significant impacts are expected.

### **Land Use**

The Sponsor's Proposed Action would not change the current land use; however, it would change the site's development potential. A land release would make the land available for lease or sale as a commercial site. Any permits, site plan approvals, and zoning changes would be completed by the potential developer and/or The Authority after the EA is completed, and the land release process is finished. No significant impacts are anticipated.

### **Natural Resources and Energy Supply**

The Sponsor's Proposed Action for the release of airport property from aeronautical to non-aeronautical use would not directly affect the demand for rare consumable natural resources and/or energy. An indirect effect of the Sponsor's Proposed Action could increase the use of natural resources and the energy supply demand depending on the future development proposal. Any construction by lessees could result in temporary increases in energy demand. Any potential development could require aggregate, asphalt, and various metals. Additionally, trucks and construction equipment would burn fuel during construction; however, none of these materials are rare or in short supply. New development will require a new electrical connection. However, the zoning designation for these parcels will limit the size of buildings so no large demand is anticipated. Overall, any impact would not be significant.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Airport projects are contained within the existing airport property and generally involve redevelopment and renovations. The properties in the proposed land release are zoned as General Commercial Plus. Therefore, the property's intended future use will generally be consistent with land use patterns in this portion of the Town and with aviation uses. There are no anticipated significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed project and no adverse cumulative impacts would result from implementation of the proposed project. Section O of the EA, can be referenced for information regarding past and future projects.

### **Other Impact Categories**

The impacts of the proposed Federal Action on climate, coastal resources, Section 4(f) and 6(f) properties, farmlands, historic, architectural, archaeological and cultural, noise, socioeconomics and environmental justice, visual resources, and water resources 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.

### **Mitigation**

Foreseeable mitigation measures include:

- Time of year restrictions to remove trees so that potential impacts to migratory birds and endangered/threatened bats are minimized
- Coordination with USFWS, NYSDEC, and USACE when parcel development is proposed.

### **Public Involvement**

Public Involvement activities were conducted in accordance NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §4321 et seq., and the CEQ regulations, 40 C.F.R. parts 1500-150, and are summarized below.

A Notice of Availability for the Draft EA was published in the *Syracuse Post Standard* on April 15, 2023 and on the airport's website. The Draft EA was available for public viewing at the airport offices, and on the airport's website for thirty days after publication of the notice of availability. No public comments were received. More information regarding the public notice is made available in Section 9 of the Draft EA.

**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

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Date

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager  
New York Airports District Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DISAPPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager  
New York Airports District Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date