

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA)**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Location

Syracuse Hancock International Airport (SYR)
Syracuse, NY

Proposed Federal Action

The proposed federal action is the provision of land consent for a change in use from aeronautical to non-aeronautical use of 46.47 acres of obligated airport property located north of Col. Eileen Collins Boulevard at SYR. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) provides the necessary environmental determination to support a land use consent and a future long-term lease for non-aeronautical use to allow for mixed-use commercial development.

Background

The 46.47 acres of land proposed for non-aeronautical use is comprised of five parcels and is located north of Col. Eileen Collins Boulevard within the Town of Salina. This land is currently designated for aeronautical use. In 1948, the United States conveyed the aforementioned acreage of surplus property (the subject property) via Quitclaim Deed. Pursuant to the quitclaim deeds, and federal law, the property shall not be used, leased, sold, salvaged, or disposed of for other than airport purposes without the written consent of the Administrator.

The sponsor has requested FAA consent to the non-aeronautical use of the 46.47 acres of land. The sponsor intends to lease this property in the future for non-aeronautical mixed-use commercial development.

Project Description

The proposed project involves the conveyance of 46.47 acres of airport property to enable aeronautical land to be utilized for future non-aeronautical mixed-use commercial development. The specific development will be determined based on future proposals, however, the impact assessment in the *Col. Eileen Collins Blvd. Land Consent, Syracuse International Airport (SYR) Final Environmental Assessment (EA)*, dated May 2024, was made based on a development concept of a projected full build out of the site as mixed-use commercial development. This future development may include multiple restaurants, hotels, a gas station, and other commercial development such as a pharmacy, a bank, and office buildings. As development is constructed, new roadways, parking lots, hard and softscapes, and stormwater facilities will also be constructed.

The types of development are conceptual in nature and represent generalized designations of potential future land uses. This framework provides a means for generally assessing the potential significance of the environmental impacts associated with the development that could be proposed for the property. At present, there are no specific developments proposed. The

properties would be developed in response to market conditions as tenants commit to long-term leases for the property.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide the airport sponsor with additional revenue streams by utilizing existing airport property for non-aeronautical development. This is consistent with the sponsor's obligation to improve its financial self-sufficiency pursuant to AIP Grant Assurance 24. The 2021 SYR Airport Master Plan update determined that the subject property is not needed for future aeronautical development.

The need of the proposed project is to support the sponsor in becoming as self-sustaining as possible by maintaining a fee and rental structure for facilities on airport property; earned revenue from future leases would be used to support airport capital improvements, repair, and operations activities that would directly benefit the airport.

Alternatives

Two project alternatives were considered.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative maintains the current aeronautical use designation for the property; non-aeronautical development of the property would not occur leaving the property in its current condition. The No Action Alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

Alternative 2 – Build Alternative: This Alternative designates the property as non-aeronautical use enabling development of the site as mixed-use commercial development. It is anticipated that interested entities would construct facilities to meet their respective needs, provided the development is compliant with 14 CFR part 77 guidelines and is compatible with airport operations.

Discussion

It should be noted that since redevelopment of the property will be conceptualized, designed, and implemented by an entity yet to be determined, the purpose of the Final EA is to provide a means to generally assess the potential significance of environmental impacts associated with non-aeronautical use of the property. Further detailed studies and surveys will likely be required in accordance with state and local regulations when a specific proposal is brought forward.

The attached May 2024 Final EA addresses the effects of the proposed project 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 EA document.

Air Quality

The proposed project site is located in Onondaga County which is part of the Central New York Intrastate Air Quality Control Region. This area is in attainment for all criteria pollutants, therefore a General Conformity analysis is not required. Construction activities may result in short-term impacts to air quality including emissions from construction equipment, fugitive dust and particulates from earthwork and site preparation, and emissions from motor vehicles and

haul trucks. These impacts would be temporary and are expected to affect the immediate vicinity of the construction site. Impacts from day-to-day activities post-construction would be localized and related to building heating and cooling systems and emissions from vehicle and truck traffic from those accessing the site. Significant impacts to air quality are not anticipated as a result of this project.

Biological Resources

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website indicated that the Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and the Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*), both endangered species, may occur at the project location. Both species utilize trees for roosting during the summer months. Full development of the property would involve the removal of approximately one acre of trees. The USFWS has developed determination keys as part of the IPaC tool to streamline review of projects for potential effects on federally listed species. The NLEB Determination Key and the Northeast Endangered Species Determination Key apply to the project. The NLEB Determination Key resulted in a determination of “*Not Likely to Adversely Affect.*” The USFWS issued a consistency letter for this determination dated December 14, 2023. Adverse effects to the NLEB are not anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

The Northeast Endangered Species Determination Key, completed on December 27, 2023, resulted in a “*May Affect*” determination indicating that continued Section 7 coordination was necessary. Through informal consultation with the USFWS initiated in January 2024, it was determined that a “*May Affect, but is Not Likely to Adversely Affect*” determination would be appropriate if ‘Time of Year’ restrictions were utilized during tree clearing. At the request of the USFWS, the sponsor signed a letter on January 9, 2024, committing to the restriction of tree removal to the inactive season for the Indiana Bat (November 1 through March 31) or conducting emergent surveys if trees would be removed within the summer months. The USFWS on February 21, 2024 concurred with the “*May Affect, but is Not Likely to Adversely Affect*” determination (See Appendix B of the EA). Adverse effects to the Indiana Bat are not anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

Coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Natural Heritage Program for information on the presence of state-listed or proposed endangered or threatened species and critical wildlife habitat within or near the project area. Their December 2023 response identified two State-Listed Threatened species (see Appendix B of the EA), Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) and Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*). Most of the project area consists of mowed grass and does not contain suitable habitat for either of these grassland species. The NYSDEC has a general rule that grassland needs to be at least 25 acres to offer appropriate habitat for grassland birds considered at-risk in NY. The proposed project is expected to have no effect on either of the State listed species.

Climate

Implementation of the proposed project is likely to result in a temporary increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with construction activities, and operational emissions associated with vehicle traffic and building heating and cooling. As the specific nature of the potential future development is unknown, any potential increase in GHG emissions cannot be

quantified at this time. Construction equipment would be properly maintained and equipped with emission-reducing exhaust systems. Future development would be limited to mixed-use commercial development. Future development of the site is expected to be phased over several years which would reduce GHG emissions associated with construction. It is anticipated that GHG emissions would not be significant.

Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention

The proposed project site was evaluated for the presence of contamination. No listed hazardous waste facilities or evidence of Recognized Environmental Conditions were found. Future site development is expected to generate solid waste from construction and operation and is not expected to involve or produce contaminated materials, hazardous waste, or generate a different type or quality of solid waste. All waste would be managed and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations; local landfills have capacity to accept construction waste.

Currently site pollution prevention is accomplished through stormwater management, proper storage, regulated handling of hazardous materials, and best management practices for maintenance activities. The sponsor currently has an approved New York State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System general permit (NY0244074) and an airport wide stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP). Any new development would be required to follow the conditions and limitations of the permit. Any future development would include a construction specific SWPPP that would be developed and approved prior to construction. The proposed project is not expected to result in significant impacts from hazardous materials, solid waste, or to pollution prevention.

Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources

Consultation was conducted with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (SHPO). The SHPO provided a letter on October 30, 2023 (See Appendix B of the EA) stating no historic properties either listed in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, or archaeological resources will be affected by the proposed project.

Land Use and Zoning

The project site is currently vacant. The proposed future non-aeronautical use of the site for mixed-use commercial development would require a zoning change. This zoning change would be completed by the potential developer and/or the sponsor after the land consent process is complete.

As part of any future lease agreement, the sponsor would include avigation easement(s) requiring new development to comply with 14 CFR part 77 restrictions to ensure that development is compatible with Airport operations and meets FAA design standards for the continued safe and secure use of the property.

Water Resources

A wetland delineation was completed in November 2023 (see Appendix D of the EA). One freshwater emergent wetland comprising 0.17 acre was identified within the overall project area. This wetland has no inlet or outlet, is not adjacent to water defined as relatively permanent, standing, or continuously flowing, does not have a continuous surface connection to those

waters, and is presumed to be non-jurisdictional. Accordingly, no significant wetlands are expected. However, a future developer would be required to pursue a jurisdictional determination for the wetlands and water resources and avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts as appropriate.

No additional surface water resources were identified within the proposed project area. Future site development Prior would also require a SWPPP for construction activities, including a soil and erosion control plan, as well as compliance with the SPDES General Construction Permit.

Traffic

A qualitative traffic analysis was completed as part of this EA to document existing conditions and assess potential impacts to the traffic network from future site development (see Appendix F of the EA). Implementation of the proposed project as mixed-use commercial development has the potential to increase traffic.

The trip generation potential of this development was estimated using the data and methodologies of the Trip Generation Manual, 11th edition of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). Based on the ITE data, it is estimated that a future mixed-use development of approximately 400,000 square feet could generate over approximately 10,000 vehicle trips per day combined and 1,200-1,500 vehicle trips during peak hours. The traffic generated by the potential future development of the site would be distributed through the transportation network based on the origin and destination patterns that would be associated with the characteristics of the development. This distribution would reduce the amount of site traffic on any specific segment of the area transportation network. Given the direct connectivity to the site from Interstate I-81 via NY936, long-distance trips would primarily utilize the Interstate for access to the site.

A future developer may need to perform a traffic impact study to determine the expected trip distribution and assignment specific to their proposal. However, the traffic generated by the future development of the site is not anticipated to change traffic patterns significantly in the area. Should mitigation measures be necessary, the future developer would include specific access design treatments and traffic control needed to accommodate the traffic movements in and out of the site safely and efficiently.

Other Impact Categories

The impacts of the proposed project on coastal resources, farmlands, land use, natural resources and energy supply, noise, socioeconomic and environmental justice, wild and scenic rivers, and cumulative impacts were evaluated in the EA. It is the FAA's finding that the proposed project will not have any significant effect on any of the above noted categories.

Public Involvement

A Notice of Public Availability was published in the Post-Standard on April 14, 2024. The Draft EA was made available via the Airport website (<https://syrairport.org/sraa/public-and-legal-notice/>) for a period of 30 calendar days. Hard copies were made available at the Salina Free Library in Mattydale, NY, and the Northern Onondaga Public Library, in North Syracuse, NY. The public comment period expired on May 15, 2024 and no comments were received in either written or electronic format.

Mitigation Measures

- 1. 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.”
- 2. All necessary studies and permits for construction of the proposed project and associated mitigation, including zoning changes shall be obtained prior to construction.
- 3. Adherence to the conditions and limitations of the Construction General Permit and SWPPP, including construction specific SWPPP.
- 4. To minimize and avoid any potential impact to protected species, tree clearing and trimming shall only be conducted between November 1 through March 31.
- 5. Any artificial lighting should be downward facing, full cut-off lens lighting. Any temporary lighting must be directed away from suitable NLEB roosting habitat.
- 6. Use of erosion and sedimentation Best Management Practices during construction.
- 7. Inclusion of avigation easement(s) as part of any future lease agreement requiring new development to comply with 14 CFR part 77 restrictions to ensure that development is compatible with Airport operations and meets FAA design standards for the continued safe and secure use of the property.

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:

 Asst Manager/Environmental Specialist
 New York Airports District Office

8/30/24
 Date

Approved:

 Manager
 New York Airports District Office

 Date

Disapproved:

 Manager
 New York Airports District Office

 Date