



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 631-1000 Main Office

January 28, 2019

The Honorable Jim Puckett
Mayor
City of Fitzgerald
302 East Central Avenue
Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750

Re: Transmittal of the FONSI for an Environmental Assessment (EA) at the Fitzgerald Municipal Airport

Dear Mayor Puckett,

This letter responds to your submission of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project that includes: extend, mark and light Runway 2 by 500' x 100' and parallel taxiway for a total length of 5500' with the threshold and RPZ remaining in the existing location, grading and drainage, construct Runway Safety Area (RSA) 300' x 150', construct blast pad 150' x 100', relocate NAVAIDs, at Fitzgerald Municipal Airport, Fitzgerald, Georgia. Enclosed is a copy of the approved Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for this proposed project.

This Finding is issued pursuant to certain continuing requirements for mitigation and permits that are discussed and indicated in the EA, and in the FONSI. These requirements are considered to be enforceable conditions of this approval and of any future funding or grant agreements.

In accordance with Federal Aviation Administration procedures, the FONSI must be made available to the public. The enclosed notice should be placed in the local newspaper(s) as soon as possible and run for a minimum of three days. Please, provide this office with a certified copy of the notice as it appears in the newspaper(s).

This letter should be attached to the FONSI for public inspection. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact Ronnie Hall, Project Manager, at 229-325-0021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol L. Comer". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Carol L. Comer, Director
Division of Intermodal

CLC: SVB:BB

Enclosures: FONSI and Notice of Availability of Finding of No Significant Impact

NOTICE

of Availability of Finding of No Significant Impact

On behalf of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) under the FAA State Block Grant Program, on January 28, 2019, issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project that includes extend, mark and light Runway 2 by 500' x 100' and parallel taxiway for a total length of 5500' with the threshold and RPZ remaining in the existing location, grading and drainage, construct Runway Safety Area (RSA) 300' x 150', construct blast pad 150' x 100', relocate NAVAIDs, at Fitzgerald Municipal Airport, Fitzgerald, Georgia. Copies of the FONSI and its associated Environmental Assessment are available for review by the public for thirty (30) days at the following locations:

Georgia Department of Transportation
Intermodal Division – Aviation Programs
600 West Peachtree Street, N. W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

City of Fitzgerald
City Hall
302 East Central Avenue
Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR
FITZGERALD MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
PROPOSED RUNWAY EXTENSION

FITZGERALD, GEORGIA
21 SEPTEMBER 2018

Prepared for:
CITY OF FITZGERALD

Prepared by:



Robert and Company

Engineers Architects Planners

Atlanta, Georgia

RAC #15002.10

This Environmental Assessment becomes a federal document when evaluated, signed, and dated by the Responsible FAA Official.


Responsible FAA Official


Date



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF INTERMODAL-AVIATION PROGRAMS
STATE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
FOR
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**FITZGERALD MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
FITZGERALD, GEORGIA**

JANUARY 28, 2019

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
INTERMODAL DIVISION-AVIATION PROGRAMS
STATE BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
for

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Extend, mark and light Runway 2 by 500' x 100' and parallel taxiway for a total length of 5500', with the threshold and Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) remaining in the existing location, grading and drainage for the project, construct Runway Safety Area (RSA) 300' x 150', construct blast pad 150' x 100', and relocate NAVAIDs

**FITZGERALD MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
FITZGERALD, GEORGIA**

I have carefully and thoroughly considered the facts contained in the attached EA. Based on that information, I find the proposed Federal Action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives of Section 101(a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other applicable environmental requirements. I also find the proposed Federal Action, with the required mitigation referenced below, will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring any consultation pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of NEPA. As a result, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will not prepare an EIS for this action.

APPROVED: Carol L. Comer DATE: January 28, 2019
DISAPPROVED: _____ DATE: _____

Carol L. Comer, Director
Division of Intermodal
Georgia Department of Transportation
State Block Grant Program Representative for the Federal Aviation Administration

Proposed Federal Action: The Preferred Alternative includes extend, mark and light Runway 2 by 500' x 100' and parallel taxiway for a total length of 5500', with the threshold and Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) remaining in the existing location, grading and drainage for the project, construct Runway Safety Area (RSA) 300' x 150', construct blast pad 150' x 100', and relocate NAVAIDs at Fitzgerald Municipal Airport, Fitzgerald, Georgia.

The proposed Action is necessary to meet FAA airport safety design standards for a B-II airport. The proposed Federal Action is the unconditional approval of the Airport Layout Plan of the Preferred Alternative, and the possible future approval of Federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding for this project.

The City of Fitzgerald, Georgia (the Sponsor) has submitted an Environmental Assessment (EA) that includes the work described above. The EA also includes discussion and evaluation of the proposal to acquire land to allow the request to lower visibility minimums to be less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. That portion of the proposed project was rescinded in a letter from the Sponsor on January 14, 2019, and, is attached. The letter, along with the EA, with its appendices, are hereby made a part of this document. As indicated above, the proposed project may be accomplished partially with Federal funding. The FAA, through the State of Georgia, a Block Grant State, supports the objectives of the proposed project to provide necessary airport safety and flexibility to meet the current and forecast needs of Fitzgerald Municipal Airport, Fitzgerald, Georgia.

The Sponsor included a discussion of the possibility of acquisition of land and obtaining an instrument approach procedure that would have visibility minimums of less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. It is the determination of the responsible FAA official that this part of the Preferred Alternative is not currently viable and concurs with the Sponsor's decision to remove that portion of the project from the Proposed Action. Property acquisition originally included has been removed and is not a part of this Finding. Therefore, the above Proposed Federal Action is identified as the environmentally preferred alternative.

Basis of Finding:

Although the Sponsor has presented their Preferred Alternative, the No Action alternative was also evaluated. The No Action alternative would not satisfy the purpose and need to provide increased safety and accessibility, or meet design standards. The FAA Preferred Alternative (Preferred Alternative) would meet the required airport safety and design standards and accessibility. Four other alternatives were studied but not carried forward for evaluation because none was considered a viable alternative.

It has been determined that the Preferred Alternative would not significantly impact the human environment. The Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the attached EA which was independently evaluated by the State of Georgia, Department of Transportation, Intermodal Division, Aviation Programs through the FAA State Block Grant Program, and determined to adequately discuss the environmental issues and impacts of the proposed project. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Air quality impacts are not expected to be significant because of the Preferred Alternative. The Fitzgerald Municipal Airport is located within Ben Hill and Irwin Counties that are considered to be in attainment of all pollutant standards. This project will not increase aircraft operations. Emissions from construction equipment will be temporary and minimal and would not be considered to be a significant impact.

Biological resources (including fish, wildlife, and plants) will not be significantly affected by the Preferred Alternative. After research and a comprehensive survey of the area, there were no endangered species or critical habitat found on this highly disturbed and regularly maintained airport property.

Climate will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative.

Coastal Resources, under the Coastal Barriers Resources Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and E. O. 13089 Coral Reef Protection, will not be impacted by the Preferred Alternative.

Department of Transportation Act (DOT), Section 4(f) lands will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative.

Farmland or farmland soils will not be significantly impacted. No existing farmland will be converted to non-agricultural use as a result of the Preferred Alternative because the project will be constructed entirely on Airport property. Therefore, the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) as they pertain to the protection of prime farmlands and soils of statewide importance are not applicable.

Hazardous materials, solid waste, and pollution prevention will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative does not have the potential to violate applicable Federal, state, tribal or local laws or regulations regarding hazardous materials and/or solid waste management. The Preferred Alternative does not involve a contaminated site. The Preferred Alternative does not have the potential to produce an appreciably different quantity or type of solid waste or use a different method of collection or disposal and does not have the potential to exceed local capacity or adversely affect human health or the environment.

Historical, architectural, archaeological and cultural resources will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative would not result in a finding of Adverse Effect through the Section 106 process.

Land Use surrounding the Fitzgerald Municipal Airport will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative.

Natural Resources and Energy Supply will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will not have the potential to cause demand to exceed available or future supplies of these resources.

Noise and non-compatible land use will not significantly change by constructing the Preferred Alternative. The compatibility of the existing land uses surrounding the airport

will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative. Aircraft operations are not expected to significantly increase as a result of this project. No land will be purchased. The forecasted growth in operations will not cause noise levels to significantly increase over any non-compatible land uses. As a result, noise impacts on non-compatible land uses near the airport will not be significant. Some noise will occur during construction, but will be temporary and considered not significant.

Socioeconomics, environmental justice, and children's environmental health and safety risks will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative. No acquisition of property will be required for the Preferred Alternative, so, there is no potential to lead to a disproportionately high and adverse impact to any low-income or minority population, or lead to a disproportionate health or safety risk to children. The Preferred Alternative will not have the potential to induce substantial economic growth, divide or disrupt communities, cause extensive relocations, disrupt local traffic, or significantly change the tax base of the community.

Visual effects (including light emissions) will not be significantly affected by the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will not create annoyance or interfere with normal activities from light emissions or affect the visual character of the area due to light emissions. The Preferred Alternative does not have the potential to significantly affect the nature of the visual character of the area or block or obstruct any view of visual resources.

Water resources (including wetlands, floodplains, surface waters, groundwater, and wild and scenic rivers)

Wetlands will not be impacted by the Preferred Alternative.

Floodplains will not be impacted by construction of the Preferred Alternative.

Water Quality, with appropriate mitigation indicated below, will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative.

Streams will not be significantly impacted by the Preferred Alternative.

State or Federal designated wild and scenic rivers are not located near the airport, so none will be affected by the Preferred Alternative.

A public involvement program was carried out during the project development. The EA included a review and coordination process involving applicable Federal, state, and local government agencies. All comments received as a result of various public input have been addressed in the EA. The proposed project is reasonably consistent with existing plans of public agencies for development of the area and fair consideration has been given to the interest of communities near the airport.

The approved EA addresses all the viable alternatives that were studied during project development. The environmental effects of the viable alternatives under consideration were evaluated when preparing the EA.

Following the submittal of the draft EA, the GDOT conducted an independent review of the document. The September 2018 Environmental Assessment and subsequent letter from the Sponsor is found to be valid and represents the Federally accepted environmental document through acceptance by the Georgia Department of Transportation, Aviation Programs, through the FAA State Block Program. The GDOT Preferred Alternative is the environmentally Preferred Alternative and so becomes the FAA's Preferred Alternative.

Mitigation Measures: This Finding is contingent upon the Airport Sponsor's implementation of the following mitigation measures:

1. The Airport Sponsor shall obtain all permits required by Federal, state and local laws and regulations for this project prior to start of any construction for which the permit is applicable.
2. An erosion and sedimentation control plan that includes the use of construction controls to prevent degradation of water quality and potential associated impacts on aquatic ecology shall be approved by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division prior to start of the project, and shall be implemented during the project. Any bare soil within the project area will be immediately planted and established with native grasses.
3. The project shall comply with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit(s), as applicable. The construction contracts shall include compliance with Georgia Environmental Protection Division General NPDES Permit process.
4. Construction activity shall conform to requirements of FAA Advisory Circular 150/5370-10, Standards for Specifying Construction of Airports, and FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-33 Hazardous Wildlife Attractants on or Near Airports.
5. Measures shall be taken during clearing and trimming to prevent or minimize the spread of invasive species. Care should be taken to ensure that invasive species or non-native species are not introduced or spread into the area by clearing and replanting activities.
6. Should any cultural resources or archaeological artifacts be discovered during construction, work shall immediately stop and the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer notified.

Proposed changes in, or deletion of, a mitigation measure that is included as a condition of this approval must be reviewed and approved by the signing official of the Finding of No Significant Impact. Steps will be taken through grant agreements, licenses, contract specifications, operating specifications, directives, and other project review or implementation procedures to monitor and enforce implementation of the mitigation measures listed above.

JIM PUCKETT
Mayor

CAM JORDAN
Deputy Administrator

KATHY A. YOUNG
Deputy Administrator

City of Fitzgerald

City Hall
302 East Central Avenue
Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750

January 14, 2019

Ms. Carol Comer
Director, Intermodal Division
Georgia Department of Transportation
600 West Peachtree Street, NW
2nd Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Dear Ms. Comer:

The City of Fitzgerald submitted the final Environmental Assessment (EA) in September 2018 for your approval. The Preferred Alternative included:

- Extend, mark and light Runway 2 by 500' x 100' and parallel taxiway for a total length of 5500', including grading and drainage for the project
- Construct Runway Safety Area 300' x 150'
- Relocate NAVAIDs
- Construct blast pad 150' x 100'
- Publish and implement new approach procedures to the new threshold that provide non-precision approaches with visibility minimums less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile.
- Acquire land to clear a 34:1 approach slope for a Runway Protection Zone 2500' long, 1,000' inner width, and 1,750' outer width to meet the standards for visibility minimums less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the new runway threshold.

After our submittal of the EA to your office, we continued the planning process to develop the plan for this proposed project. We began investigating the acquisition of the property necessary to clear the required approach and departure surfaces. The property acquisition requires the purchase and relocation of a major electrical transmission line and substantial acquisition in the adjacent county. Based on the cost estimates for this portion of the project, and the estimated minimal amount of time that the airport visibility is actually less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, we believe that the minimal benefits gained by providing visibility minimums less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile are not justified, at this time. Based on this determination, the City of Fitzgerald wishes to change the Preferred Alternative to remove the portions of the project necessary to achieve the lower approach minimums. Other alternatives were evaluated and we feel that we have an alternative that is reasonable, has less harmful impacts on the environment, and will be more economically and socially feasible for this community. This alternative also meets the Purpose and Need discussed in the EA. To remove the requirement for land acquisition, the threshold (and the existing RPZ) will remain at its current location once the runway is extended, allowing the departure length to be 5,500' from the extended runway end, and a landing length of 5,000'. The approach procedures will not have to be modified.

The new Sponsor Preferred Alternative becomes:

- Extend, mark and light Runway 2 by 500' x 100' and parallel taxiway for a total length of 5500', with the threshold and RPZ remaining in the existing location
- Grading and drainage for the project
- Construct Runway Safety Area 300' x 150'
- Construct blast pad 150' x 100'
- Relocate NAVAIDs

The removal of the stated portions of the proposed project substantially reduce the environmental impacts and allows construction within the existing airport boundary. This letter is to request that GDOT accept our new Preferred Alternative and complete the environmental finding based on the new Sponsor Preferred Alternative.

Thank you for adjusting the EA.

Sincerely,



Kathy A. Young
Deputy Administrator

Pc: Ronnie Hall
Will Hammond

NOTICE

of Availability of Finding of No Significant Impact

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