



# Appendix B

## Environmental Assessment

### Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

**Atlanta Airports District Office**

1701 Columbia Ave., Campus Bldg.

Atlanta, GA 30337-2747

Phone: (404) 305-7150 Fax: (404) 305-7155

August 19, 2011  
Mr. Lew S. Bleiweis  
Asheville Regional Airport, Airport Director  
61 Terminal Drive, Suite 1  
Fletcher, NC 28732

Dear Mr. Bleiweis:

Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment (EA) Cover Sheet and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Record of Decision (ROD) for the proposed Runway Reconstruction and Parallel Taxiway at the Asheville Regional Airport, Fletcher, North Carolina. The associated development projects have been evaluated and environmentally approved. This is not an obligation for funding.

The FONSI/ROD addresses the immediate proposed action as defined and analyzed in the corresponding EA. If there are changes to the proposed action or if the improvements as described and analyzed in the EA are not initiated within three (3) years, this FONSI/ROD and corresponding EA must be reevaluated to determine if they are still adequate to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

A Public Notice announcing the availability of the EA and FONSI/ROD and the location where they may be reviewed should be made. A draft example of this notice is enclosed for your use. This notice is not to solicit public comments but rather to notify the public that the Final EA and FAA decision document has been issued and is available for review/information.

If you have any questions or require additional information please contact me at (404) 305-7152.

Sincerely,

Dana L. Perkins  
Environmental Program Manager

Enclosures:

- 1) 05-05-10 FAA Executed Acceptance of Final EA/Cover Page
- 2) 05-05-10 FAA Executed FONSI-ROD
- 3) Example Final NOA

cc

Mike Reisman, Asheville Regional Airport, 61 Terminal Dr., Suite 1, Fletcher, NC 28732

Laura Stevens, The LPA Group, P.O. Box 5805, Columbia, SC 29250

Jeff Kirby, The LPA Group, 7800 Airport Center Drive, Suite 100, Greensboro, NC 27409

Rick Barkes, NC Department of Transportation, Division of Aviation, 1560 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1560

**Asheville Regional Airport**  
**Runway Reconstruction and New Parallel Taxiway**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

prepared for:

**Asheville Regional Airport Authority**



prepared by:



**August 2011**

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Reiter".

08/19/11

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Responsible FAA Official

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Date

RECORD OF DECISION  
and  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Proposed Runway Reconstruction and  
New Parallel Taxiway at the  
Asheville Regional Airport  
Fletcher, North Carolina  
August, 2011



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
ATLANTA AIRPORTS DISTRICT OFFICE  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

## I. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

In compliance with the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA), this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Record of Decision (ROD) announces final agency determinations and approvals for those Federal actions by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that are necessary to support implementation of a capital improvement project to construct a new parallel taxiway for use as a temporary runway while the existing Runway 16-34 at the Asheville Regional Airport (AVL), located in Buncombe and Henderson Counties, North Carolina, is reconstructed in accordance with FAA standard design criteria, as requested by the airport sponsor, the Asheville Regional Airport Authority. Once the existing runway is completed, aircraft operations will move back to the primary runway and the new parallel taxiway will be signed and designated as a taxiway. The Proposed Action also includes development of a cargo facility with associated infrastructure.

This ROD provides the FAA's final determinations and approvals based on analysis described in detail in the *Asheville Regional Airport Runway Reconstruction and New Parallel Taxiway Final Environmental Assessment, August 2011*. The agency decision is based on information contained in the Final Environmental Assessment (EA), incorporated by reference, and all other applicable documents available to the agency.

This ROD is issued in accordance with the requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §1505.2.

## II. PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTION

The Sponsor has requested FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) financial assistance and approval to implement a capital improvement project that would reconstruct Runway 16-34 in accordance with FAA standard design criteria outlined in AC 150/5300-13 at AVL. The Proposed Action would involve disturbance of approximately 230 acres of land and require approximately 11.2 acres of property acquisition. Elements of the proposed capital improvement project include:

- Construction of an 8,000-foot by 100-foot parallel taxiway to be used as a temporary runway during the 75-foot shift west and reconstruction of Runway 16-34;
- Correction of the non-standard separation distance between Runway 16-34 and Taxiway A from the existing 325 feet to 400 feet of separation;
- Correction of the non-standard longitudinal gradient from 1.1 percent to less than 0.8 percent on the Runway 34 end;
- Replacement of airfield electrical cabling and airfield lighting;
- Installation of new airfield signage;
- Construction of an air cargo apron and associated facilities/infrastructure;
- Construction of associated stormwater controls; and,
- Installation and temporary use of staging areas, haul roads, and sedimentation and erosion control features during construction activities.

### **III. PURPOSE AND NEED**

The Sponsor has defined the purpose and need for implementing the Proposed Action as being necessary to correct the critical pavement, lighting, and electrical deterioration on Runway 16-34 in such a way that the runway meets FAA criteria for pavement condition, resolves the existing FAA non-standard design issues, minimizes operational impacts to the Airport during construction, and ensures the lighting system and Airport signage will continue to function satisfactorily. The purpose for the associated cargo apron project is to accommodate future air cargo activity and development at AVL.

The need for the proposed runway improvements was recognized as a result of recent airfield evaluations that identified deficient runway pavement and lighting systems. Based on visual evaluation and geotechnical investigation, a 2009 report<sup>1</sup> determined that although Runway 16-34 has adequate sub-base integrity, the asphalt pavement has deteriorated to a weighted Pavement Condition Index (PCI) value of 50, as compared to a PCI of satisfactory runway pavements being greater than 70. The weighted PCI is expected to decrease to 35, or very poor condition, by 2013. Based on this analysis, the pavement requires major rehabilitation/reconstruction in the immediate future. Having identified the need to rehabilitate/reconstruct Runway 16-34 pavement, the Airport must also consider solving the existing FAA airport design deficiencies for runway to taxiway separation and runway gradient. Finally, inquiries by prospective air cargo tenants have highlighted the need for the associated cargo apron project.

### **IV. ALTERNATIVES**

Federal guidelines concerning the environmental review process require that all reasonable and practicable alternatives that might accomplish the objectives of a proposed project be identified and evaluated. Such an examination ensures that an alternative that addresses the project's purpose and that might enhance environmental quality, or have a less detrimental effect, has not been prematurely dismissed from consideration. In the EA, reasonable and practicable alternatives for both the runway improvements and the proposed location of the cargo facility were carefully examined.

#### **Runway Alternatives**

Five runway alternatives were evaluated, including runway rehabilitation with full-time closure, nighttime closure, or reconstruction with use of existing Taxiway A as a temporary runway. However, reconstruction while using a new parallel taxiway as a temporary runway was the only alternative that satisfies the Sponsor's overall purpose and need of reconstructing Runway 16-34 and correcting the non-standard centerline separation distance. Thus, the runway alternatives considered in greater detail in the EA included the No-action Alternative and Runway Reconstruction with use of a New Parallel Taxiway, as described below:

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<sup>1</sup> RS&H, *Runway 16-34 Rehabilitation/Reconstruction – Phase 1 – Runway and Lighting Condition Assessment*, prepared for the Asheville Regional Airport Authority, April 16, 2009.

**No-Action Runway Alternative**

The No-action Alternative was evaluated pursuant to the CEQ Regulation 40 CFR § 1502.14(d). Under the No-action alternative, the existing deficiencies with the runway pavement, airfield lighting system, and signage at AVL would not be improved, nor would the non-standard separation distance between Runway 16-34 and Taxiway A be corrected. While the No-action Alternative would not impact the natural environment, it would not meet the Sponsor's overall purpose and need.

**Runway Reconstruction while using a New Parallel Taxiway as a Temporary Runway (Sponsor's Preferred Alternative)**

This Alternative would construct a full-length parallel taxiway to the west of the runway. The new taxiway centerline would be 475 feet from the existing runway centerline to meet FAA airport design and safety standards necessary to support its use as a temporary parallel runway for approximately 12 months while the existing runway would be reconstructed. During its temporary use as a runway, the new taxiway would also be temporarily striped, lighted, and signed for such use. Meanwhile, the existing runway would be removed and a new base, sub-base, and overlay would be constructed 75 feet to the west of the existing runway to correct the non-standard runway centerline to taxiway centerline separation distance (for existing Taxiway A). This new runway would be 8,000 feet long, 150 feet wide, and would meet FAA airport design standards, including correction of the existing non-standard longitudinal runway gradient on the Runway 34 end. The airfield circuits, lighting fixtures, and transformers would be replaced during reconstruction. In addition, new luminescent-paint sign panels that are in conformance with FAA standards would be installed.

Once the runway reconstruction is finished, Airport operations would move back to the primary runway and the new parallel taxiway would be designated as a taxiway and would provide airfield access for future development on the western side of the Airport. Total construction time to complete the Sponsor's Preferred Alternative is anticipated to be 48 months.

**Cargo Facility Alternatives**

With regard to the potential locations for the proposed air cargo facility, various screening criteria were used to evaluate nine undeveloped areas on existing Airport property. The following alternatives were considered in greater detail in the EA:

**No-Action Cargo Facility Alternative**

Although the No-action Alternative would avoid impacting human natural resources, it would fail to meet the purpose and need of accommodating future air cargo activity and development at AVL.

**Area West of Runway 16-34 - Site G**

Site G would provide adjacent airfield access and would be considered compatible with existing and future land use plans. Although the site does provide off-site road access, the existing roadway system would require truck traffic to travel approximately four miles via Pinner Road, Glen Bridge Road, and Bradley Branch Road to access I-26 from the north, or would necessitate construction of a new road to access Old Fanning Bridge Road approximately one mile to the south of Site G.

**Area Southwest of Runway 16-34 - Site I (Sponsor's Preferred Alternative)**

Located just east of Old Fanning Bridge Road and near the southern end of the proposed parallel taxiway, Site I would provide adjacent airfield and off-site road access. Off-site road access would consist of tying into Old Fanning Bridge Road to the south, approximately 800 feet from its intersection with North Carolina Highway 280 (Airport Road/Boylston Highway), and then traveling 1.5 miles to I-26. Site I is also consistent with future aviation development identified on the Airport Layout Plan (ALP).

Based on the lack of convenient highway access for truck traffic using the existing roadway system to the north of Site G and the cost associated with acquiring property and constructing a new access road to Old Fanning Bridge Road to the south, Site I was considered more favorable than Site G for the location of the proposed cargo facility. Site I was therefore incorporated into the Proposed Action.

**V. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

As documented in the attached EA, the Proposed Action and No-action Alternatives were evaluated for potential impacts to all environmental resource topic areas outlined in FAA Order 1050.1E, *FAA's Order implementing the NEPA*.

Under the No-action Alternative, no action would be taken and there would be no associated environmental impacts.

The following is a discussion of those resources identified as present and with potential to be significantly affected under the Proposed Action (Sponsor's Preferred Alternative):

**Noise:**

Seven single family residences are located within or immediately adjacent to the 65 DNL contour in the 2016 Proposed Action scenario. Based on a single point analysis, the noise levels on the exterior of six homes would increase by 3.5 to 5.8 dBA over the No-action Alternative in 2016 during the time the temporary runway was in use. Once the primary runway reconstruction was finished, with the 75-foot shift to the west and the temporary runway was converted back to a parallel taxiway, the exterior noise levels would decrease to be only 0.5 to 0.8 dB greater than the No-action Alternative in 2021. FAA guidelines discourage residential land uses within the 65 DNL. However, this noise exposure would be limited to the period of time (approximately one year) that the temporary runway is in operation. At the conclusion of the project, when the reconstructed Runway 16-34 is reopened, one residence, a mobile home located at 541 Glenn Bridge Road, would be located within the 65 DNL. Although the 0.4 dBA increase in noise experienced at this residence would not be considered significant from a NEPA perspective, the property would be located within the 65 DNL contour and thus, would not meet FAA guidelines for noise compatibility. Since mobile homes cannot generally be acoustically treated to achieve compatibility, the airport would make an offer to purchase the property and relocate this resident in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition



Act of 1970.

**Hazardous Materials and Waste Sites:**

The City of Asheville Police Training Firing Range is located within the construction footprint of the Proposed Action and has been previously identified as a Recognized Environmental Condition (potentially hazardous site). The City of Asheville has committed to vacating the Police Training Firing Range with clean closure documentation by March 2012.

**Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States/Water Quality:**

There will be permanent unavoidable impacts to approximately 0.9 acre of wetlands and approximately 2,276 linear feet of stream. As such, Federal and State permits and/or certificates must be applied for and adhered to, including a *Clean Water Act*, Section 404 Individual Permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certification. The Sponsor's agent has been in coordination with the appropriate regulatory agencies regarding a wetland mitigation plan as required by the Section 404 and 401 permitting and certification process and has obtained reasonable assurance that the proposed mitigation will support issuance of the necessary permits/certificates, indicating that these impacts will be less than significant.

While there would be impacts to water quality and wetlands if the Proposed Action is implemented in accordance with the Sponsor's Preferred Alternative, these impacts are not considered significant due to the mitigating factors that are already addressed and required by FAA grant assurances and in the regulatory permitting process for these resources.

The Proposed Action would involve disturbance of approximately 230 acres of land and require approximately 11.2 acres of property acquisition. However, prior to land disturbance the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources requires approval under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Stormwater Permit (NCG010000). Due to the amount of impervious surface proposed for the new parallel taxiway and cargo apron, a Phase II NPDES Stormwater Permit, which regulates post construction run-off, will also be required and will adhere to FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-33B, "Hazardous Wildlife Attractants on or Near Airports."

**Floodplains:**

Although the Proposed Action would not impact the floodway, fill from the proposed construction footprint would result in approximately 5.6 acres of unavoidable encroachment into the 100-year floodplain. Based on coordination with the City of Asheville Floodplain Manager, encroachment into the 100-year floodplain is permissible for the proposed action under City regulations, as long as no practicable alternatives exist and the fill remains a minimum of 10 feet outside of the floodway.

**Light Emissions/Visual Effects:**

Finally, construction of the Proposed Action would result in visual effects associated with the clearing of approximately 8.8 acres of trees that are located within the proposed construction footprint, adjacent to the residential area northwest of the runway. The clearing of trees would result in a diminished buffer between the residential area and the Airport, making airport operations more visible to the adjacent Riverport and River View Acres subdivisions. However, due both to height restrictions in the vicinity of the airfield and the significant

elevation difference from the runway end to the toe-of-fill or approximate elevation of the adjacent residences (approximately 45 feet difference), constructing a screen or providing a vegetative buffer is not practicable. From north to south, the closest residences to Airport property would be located from 350 to 560 feet, respectively, away from the temporary approach lighting system and temporary runway/new parallel taxiway.

Agency Coordination/Comments:

The information presented in the EA, including comments from Sovereign Nations, Federal, State and local agencies did not identify any significant impacts to the human environment.

## VI. ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION

Since no significant impacts were identified in association with implementing the Proposed Action, except for assuring clean closure on the City of Asheville Police Training Firing Range, carrying out standard best management practices required by FAA grant assurances as outlined in FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5370-10, "Standards for Specifying Construction of Airports," and minimization and mitigation measures mandated by permitting requirements and/or other special purpose laws, no additional mitigation measures are necessary to ensure less than significant impacts.

As referenced above, there are regulatory permits or certifications that impose mitigation requirements to minimize environmental impacts during implementation of the Proposed Action. The Sponsor is responsible to acquire and comply with all applicable permits and certifications throughout the implementation/construction of the Proposed Action.

Regulatory permits or certificates required for this Proposed Action include:

- *Clean Water Act* Section 404 Individual Permit;
- *Clean Water Act* Section 401 Water Quality Certification;
- NPDES Construction Stormwater Permit NCG010000; and,
- Phase II Stormwater Permit (post construction).

## VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

The Asheville Regional Airport Authority issued a public notice of availability of an EA and notice of opportunity for a public hearing for the proposed project, in *The Asheville Citizen-Times* on Friday, June 3, 2011, with the last day for comment being July 5, 2011. Additionally, letters were sent to seven adjacent residences that would experience temporary or permanent changes in noise levels as a result of the proposed project. Although one comment letter was received from the public, no requests for a public hearing were made. The comment letter voiced concerns regarding construction impacts, such as noise and dust, which will be mitigated by limiting typical construction hours to between 7:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M., as much as possible, and through implementation of on-site Best Management Practices to reduce dust and minimize the construction air "footprint" of the Selected Alternative. These Best Management Practices could include: reducing equipment idling times; limiting construction activities during high wind periods to minimize dust generation or

when atmospheric conditions are conducive for ozone formation; regularly applying water or dust suppressants to unpaved areas; reducing vehicle speeds on unpaved roads on the Airport property; and covering materials stockpiles.

## **VIII. AGENCY FINDINGS**

In accordance with applicable law, the FAA makes the following findings/determinations for the Proposed Action, based upon the appropriate information and data contained in the EA.

- Certification under 49 U.S.C. §44502(b) (formerly Section 308 of the *Federal Aviation Act of 1958*, as amended). I certify that the proposed improvement project is reasonably necessary for use in air commerce or for national defense.
- Based on the EA, no significant environmental impacts would be incurred as a result of the Federal action.

## **IX. DECISION AND ORDER**

The FAA has determined that environmental and other relevant concerns presented by interested agencies and private citizens have been addressed sufficiently in the EA, hereby acknowledged and fully and properly considered in the decision-making resulting in this ROD. The FAA concludes there are no outstanding environmental issues to be resolved by it with respect to the proposed project.

The No-Action Alternative fails to meet the purpose and need for the proposed project. For reasons summarized earlier in this ROD, and supported by disclosures and analysis detailed in the EA, the FAA has determined that the Sponsor's proposed project is a reasonable, feasible, practicable and prudent alternative for a Federal decision in light of the established goals and objectives. An FAA decision to take the actions and approvals required by the Sponsor is consistent with its statutory mission and policies supported by the findings and conclusions reflected in the environmental documentation and this ROD.

After reviewing the EA and all of its related materials, I have carefully considered the FAA's goals and objectives in relation to various aeronautical aspects of the proposed development actions discussed in the EA, including the purpose and need to be met by this project, the alternative means of achieving them, the environmental impacts of these alternatives, the mitigation necessary to preserve and enhance the environment, and the costs and benefits of achieving the purpose and need.

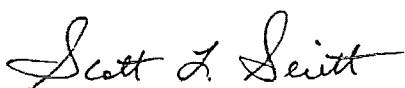
While this decision does not approve Federal funding for the proposed airport development and does not constitute a Federal funding commitment, it does provide the environmental findings and approval for proceeding to funding actions in accordance with established procedures and applicable requirements.

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with the national environmental policies and

objectives as set forth in Section 101(a) of NEPA and that with the mitigation that is a part of the project it will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 101(2) (C) of NEPA.

This ROD presents the FAA's final decision and approvals for the actions identified, including those taken under the provisions of Title 49 of the United States Code, Subtitle VII, Parts A and B. These actions constitute a final order of the Administrator subject to review by the Court of Appeals of the United States in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. Section §46110.

*Issued in College Park, Georgia*



19 August, 2011

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Scott L. Seritt  
Manager  
FAA, Atlanta Airports District Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## PUBLIC NOTICE

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the potential environmental impacts for the proposed Runway Reconstruction, and New Parallel Taxiway improvements at the Asheville Regional Airport, Fletcher, North Carolina. The FAA has determined the project as proposed would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not necessary. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Record of Decision (ROD) was issued on August 19, 2011. The EA and FONSI/ROD are available for review by the public for thirty (30) days at the following locations:

FAA Southern Region  
Atlanta Airports District Office  
1701 Columbia Avenue, Suite 2-260  
College Park, GA 30337

and

**Insert location(s) where the EA and FONSI/ROD are available for review in  
Sumter County**

For additional information contact:

Dana Perkins  
Environmental Program  
Specialist Atlanta Airports District  
Office (404) 305-7152

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