

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/  
RECORD OF DECISION  
FOR  
TERMINAL AREA IMPROVEMENTS  
AT  
MIDDLE GEORGIA REGIONAL AIRPORT  
MACON, GEORGIA

MAY 2021



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
ATLANTA AIRPORTS DISTRICT OFFICE

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/RECORD OF DECISION**

**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 runway extension at the Middle Georgia Regional Airport as request by the airport sponsor, Macon-Bibb County, Georgia.

This FONSI/ROD provides the FAA's final determinations and approvals based on analyses described in detail in the *Final Environmental Assessment for the Runway 5/23 Extension at Middle Georgia Regional Airport, April 2021*. The agency decision is based on information contained in the Final Environmental Assessment (EA), incorporated herein by reference, and all other applicable documents available to the agency.

**II. PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTION**

The Sponsor has requested FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) financial assistance and approval to implement a capital improvement project. The project entails extending primary Runway 5/23 from 6,500' to 7,100'. All major components of the project include:

- Extend, mark, and light Runway 5; the extension is 600 linear feet to the south to reach a total runway length of 7,100'. Includes marking to displace the Runway 5 threshold by 600'.
- Extend, mark, and light Taxiway B to new runway end.
- Construct approximately 1,000 LF Mechanically Stabilized Earth Retaining Wall along north side of Sardis Church Road to hold required fill to build runway and taxiway extensions and Engineered Material Arresting System (EMAS).
- Place approximately 250,000 cubic yards of fill material for construction of runway, taxiway, and EMAS.
- Construct EMAS off Runway 5 end.
- Acquire parcel of land, approximately 7.5 acres, from the Macon-Bibb County Industrial Authority to the Airport for the future physical needs (boundary) of the project area and the grading limit lines of the completed runway/taxiway extension project.
- Replace and extend existing three (3) 120" culverts under the runway approximately 1,100 linear feet.
- Revise, publish, and implement new air traffic procedures for the new extended runway, as needed.

These components are the components of Alternative 5, the preferred alternative in the final EA.

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

The Sponsor has defined the purpose and need for implementing the proposed action as necessary to: extend the primary runway at MCN, Runway 5/23 from 6,500' to 7,100'. The need is to support and increase the safety and efficiency of the operations of the runway's critical aircraft, the Embraer 135.

The Embraer 135 is the most demanding aircraft that regularly operates on Runway 5/23. Most of these Embraer 135 operations are from Contour Airlines, and aircraft performance charts from Contour Airlines showed that their Embraer 135 aircraft suffered weight penalties when departing, especially in the hot Georgia summers. Therefore, based on the runway length study and FAA review, Runway 5/23 is justified for a 600' extension, which would increase the length to 7,100'.

### **IV. REASONABLE 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 were carefully examined. The alternatives considered are described below:

Several alternatives were carried forward for the preliminary screening criteria analysis.

- No-Action
- Extend Runway 23 (end) by 600' and provide a full dimension 1,000' x 500' RSA on the Runway 23 end
- Extend Runway 5 (end) by 600' and provide a full dimension 1,000' x 500' RSA on the Runway 5 end
- Extend Runway 5 (end) by 600', displace the Runway 5 end by 300', install an EMAS to provide a standard RSA on the Runway 5 end
- Extend Runway 5 (end) by 600', displace the Runway 5 end by 600', install an EMAS to provide a standard RSA on the Runway 5 end

The following alternatives were carried forward for evaluation in the EA:

#### **Alternative 1: No Build Alternative**

The No-Action Alternative is included in the Alternatives Analysis as part of the NEPA process. It describes the existing conditions at the Airport, and provides a baseline for comparing the reasonable alternatives in terms of fulfilling the purpose and need of the proposed project and impacts to resources within and in the vicinity of the project area.

**Alternative 4: Extend Runway 5 (end) by 600', displace the Runway 5 end by 300', install an EMAS off Runway 5 to provide a standard RSA.**

**Alternative 5: Extend Runway 5 (end) by 600', displace the Runway 5 end by 600', install an EMAS off Runway 5 to provide a standard RSA (Sponsor's Preferred Alternative)**

## **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 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, 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):

Air Quality - Bibb County is designated as a maintenance area for both 8-hour Ozone and PM-2.5. No significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are anticipated due to the implementation of the proposed action.

Biological Resources - The proposed action is not expected to significantly impact fish and wildlife resources.

Farmland – The proposed action would impact 9.4 acres of soils classified as prime farmland and 0.86 acres classified as farmland of statewide importance. However, since the project is completely contained within a U.S. Census Bureau designated urban area, it is exempt from further evaluation.

Land Use – A 7.5-acre parcel of land will be acquired for the proposed action. Land use surrounding the site will not be significantly impacted.

Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use - The FAA's Area Equivalent Method (AEM) was used to determine potential noise impacts associated with the proposed action. The AEM found that the existing traffic and resulting potential traffic from the project would not increase the DNL 65 dB contour area by 17%.

Water Resources - The proposed action will have impacts to wetlands, surface waters, and floodplains.

Floodplains will be impacted by construction of the proposed action. The study area sits in three different flood zones: regulatory floodway, 100-year floodplain, and 500-year floodplain. The project will impact 1.37 acres of floodplains. The impacts are associated with the replacement and extension of the three culverts. Design and construction will be completed through coordination with the Bibb County Floodplain Manager. With appropriate design, the impact to floodplains is not considered to be significant.

The project will impact 303 feet of linear feet of streams. The impacts are associated with the replacement and extension of the three culverts. The Sponsor will purchase credits based on the USACE 404 permit.

## **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION**

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. The following environmental mitigation is needed for the proposed action:

- Mitigation measures for the vegetative impacts include revegetation of all temporarily disturbed areas.
- The USACE 404 permit shall be obtained prior to start of work in any Waters of the U.S. All measures that may be required by the permit become enforceable mitigation measures of this FONSI. Any credits required as a condition of USACE permits shall be purchased prior to the start of any construction for which a permit is required. A Section 401, Water Quality Certification shall be acquired prior to start of construction. Any trees cleared within a stream buffer will require a buffer variance.
- Mitigation for floodplain impacts include coordination with the Bibb County Floodplain Manager to ensure that activities within the floodplain follow Bibb County's FEMA approved floodplain management plan. A detailed analysis will be completed during the design phase, and the culverts will be designed to ensure no increase in flood levels or floodway widths.

## **VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A Notice of Availability and Request for Comment for the EA was published in the Macon Telegraph on Tuesday, March 9, 2021. The comment period extended from March 9, 2021 to April 8, 2021. No comments were received for the project.

## **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.

The following determinations are prescribed by the statutory provisions set forth in the Airport Airway Improvement Act of 1982, as codified in 49 U.S.C. Sections 44502, 47106 and 47107.

- The proposed improvement project is reasonably necessary for use in air commerce or for national defense [49 U.S.C. §44502(b)].
- The project is reasonably consistent with existing plans of public agencies for development of the area surrounding the airport [49 U.S.C. §47106(a)(I)].

- The interests of the community in or near which the project will be located have been given fair consideration [49 U.S.C. §47106(b)(2)].
- The airport sponsor certifies that it has provided an opportunity for a public hearing [49 U.S.C. §47106(c)(1)(A)(i)].

**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 FONSI/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 FONSI/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 FONSI/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 the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (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.

Issued in College Park, Georgia

*Parks Preston*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parks Preston, Assistant Manager  
FAA, Atlanta Airports District Office

5/28/2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date