

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

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

**Location**

Albany International Airport (ALB)  
Albany, NY

**Proposed Federal Action**

The proposed federal action is the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) approval and potential for federal financial assistance for the New Runway 1 Airport Service Road project at Albany International Airport (ALB). This FONSI provides the necessary environmental determinations in support of a future request for federal financial assistance.

**Background**

Currently, ALB operations and security personnel must exit the secure side of the Airport Operations Area (AOA) fence and utilize public roadways to get around the Runway 1 end and reenter the AOA just south of the NY Air National Guard complex. This project would allow the personnel to remain within the AOA security fence while traversing the service road, thus improving airport operations and security functions performed by airport personnel.

**Project Description**

The Albany County Airport Authority is proposing to construct an approximately 5700 linear foot single-lane gravel perimeter road inside the AOA security fence on the southern end and eastern side of Primary Runway 01/19. The road will be used by airport operations and security personnel. The road will be offset from the existing fence by approximately twelve to fifteen feet. A portion of the road will pass through the existing Runway 1 Approach and Runway 19 Departure Runway Protection Zones.

**Purpose and Need**

Currently, airport operations and security personnel are only able to access this area by exiting the secure side of the perimeter fence, utilizing public roadways to traverse the Runway 1 end and then reentering the secure area (See Exhibit 1 of Final EA). This existing requirement of leaving the secured area and utilizing public roadways limits both the response time of airport personnel and the ability to inspect and maintain the existing perimeter fence. The Purpose and Need of this project is to correct this existing condition. The proposed relocated perimeter road would allow airport personnel to remain entirely within the secure Airport Operations Area (AOA) while performing airport operations and security duties.

**Alternatives**

Three project alternatives were considered:

**Alternative 1:** Alternative 1 consists of a new approximately 5,700 linear foot single lane 12 foot wide asphalt perimeter road. As currently aligned, the roadway avoids the Runway Object Free Area and navigational aid critical areas (See Exhibit 2 of Final EA). Alternative 1 would

result approximately 1.19 acres of unavoidable wetland impacts; however, it avoids wetland areas to the greatest degree possible.

**Alternative 2:** Alternative 2 would follow the same alignment as Alternative 1 but stays adjacent to the perimeter fence for the entire corridor and would not minimize impacts to wetland areas. Alternative 2 would impact approximately 1.31 acres of wetlands (see Exhibit 3 of Final EA).

**Alternative 3 – No Action Alternative:** The No-Action Alternative would not install a new on-airport perimeter road around the Runway 1 end. Airport personnel would continue the current operation of exiting the secure side of the airport and utilizing public roadways to traverse the Runway 1 end. The No Action alternative was dismissed from consideration because it did not meet the purpose and need of the project.

### **Discussion**

The attached September 29, 2023 Environmental Assessment (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 area is in Albany County, which is a part of the Albany-Schenectady-Troy Intrastate Area. According to the EPA, this area is in attainment for all criteria pollutants; therefore, a General Conformity analysis under 40 CFR 93, Subpart B is not required. The proposed project will not result in any changes to the number or size of aircraft operating, or increases in vehicular traffic at ALB, and therefore would have no change to existing aircraft or vehicle emissions. Temporary air quality impacts may occur during construction, however, no significant impacts to air quality are expected to result from implementation of the proposed project.

### **Biological Resources**

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identified the Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), a federally threatened species and potentially occurring within the project area. This bat species utilizes trees for roosting during the summer months. The project area is managed turf and emergent wetland, which does not contain habitat for the Northern Long-eared bat. No tree removal or impact to underground caves is associated with this project. The project will have no effect on this species.

Two insect species, the Karner Blue Butterfly (endangered) and the Monarch Butterfly (a candidate species) were also identified by IPaC as potentially present within the area of the airport. Both species have very specific habitat requirements which are not found within the project area. The USFWS, through IPaC, issued a determination consistency letter on December 13, 2022 for the Karner Blue Butterfly indicating that the proposed project will have no effect on this species. The Monarch Butterfly requires the presence of milkweed as a larval food source. Due to the managed nature of the upland areas within the project area, no milkweed is present and thus the project will have no effect on this candidate species.

Most of the project area consists of managed airport turf, which does not provide habitat for native plant or wildlife species. The wetlands identified within the project area are dominated by non-native invasive plant species, including reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and do not provide significant habitat for native plant or wildlife species. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Environmental Resource Mapper did not identify any rare animals or plants in the vicinity of the proposed project (see Appendix A of EA). Therefore, no significant impacts to biological resources are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

#### **Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)**

The proposed project is located in the AOA of the airport and will not have an impact on any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or an historic site of national, state, or local significance. Therefore, the proposed project would have no significant impact on Section 4(f) resources.

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

A review of the DEC Information Locator (<https://gisservices.dec.ny.gov/gis/dil>) and the Toxics Targeting website (<http://maps.toxicstargeting.com/>) indicated the presence of three (3) environmental remediation sites in proximity to the project area. These areas are mapped in Appendix B of the EA and includes the site records. Two of these sites (DEC Site codes 401027 and 401038) are located between ¼ and ½ mile from the project area and would not be involved in the proposed project activities. Both sites have been classified by the DEC as C (Completed), indicating that remediation has been satisfactorily completed under a remedial program and the sites have completed all active operation, maintenance, or monitoring requirements.

The third site (DEC Site Code 401081) is located directly adjacent to the eastern edge of the project area on property owned by the Albany County Airport Authority and the New York Division of Military and Naval Affairs. This site documentation is also contained in Appendix B of the EA. The contaminant of concern is perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (one of the PFOS chemical family) associated with the previous use of the site for the storage of fire fighting vehicles, including aqueous film forming foam (AFFF). Specific records of two discharges of AFFF indicate that a test of the system was completed in the parking lot in 2012, and in 2017 a burning garbage truck was extinguished. No specific information on levels of this contaminant have been collected, and the site is classified by the DEC as P (Potential), where preliminary information indicates that a site may have contamination that makes it eligible for consideration for placement on the Registry of Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites (commonly referred to as the list of State Superfund Sites). While this site is adjacent to the project area, no soil disturbance is planned within the identified site boundaries associated with the road construction.

The proposed project would not violate regulations, does not involve a known contaminated site, would not produce hazardous waste, would have limited solid waste generation, and would not adversely affect human health and the environment. The proposed project would have no significant impact with regard to hazardous materials.

### **Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources**

Per consultation with the New York State Historic Preservation Office, no historic properties (either listed in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Registry of Historic Places) will be affected by this undertaking as indicated in the response provided by the SHPO office on October 31, 2022. (See Appendix C of the EA)

### **Water Resources**

A wetland delineation was completed on September 16, 2022 (see Appendix D of the EA). Five (5) freshwater emergent wetlands areas with an aggregate total of approximately 2.94 acres were identified within the overall project area. The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 1) minimizes the impact to the wetlands in the project area to 1.19 acres. Alternative 2 would have impacted 1.31 acres. Because the cumulative wetland impacts will exceed 1 acre, an Individual 404 permit from the USACE along with a 401 Water Quality certification from NYSDEC will be required. New York has several wetland mitigation alternatives, including wetland mitigation banks and in-lieu fee programs. The specific compensatory mitigation pathway will be determined during the permitting process.

Regarding surface water, the proposed alignment of the perimeter road includes a crossing of one of the tributary streams in the project area and will require a permit from the USACE. An estimated 80 linear feet of stream will be impacted through the placement of a culvert. Pre-application coordination with the USACE is ongoing. ALB will continue coordination with USACE and NYSDEC to ensure proper permitting for this element of the project.

The proposed project is not expected to result in significant impacts to water resources, as wetland and surface water impacts will be mitigated in accordance with permit requirements.

### **Other Impact Categories**

The impacts of the proposed project on climate, 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 *Albany Times Union* on July 30, 2023. The Draft EA was made available for public review via the Airport website (<http://www.alb-master-plan.com/content/documents/>) for a period of 30 calendar days. Hard copies of the Draft EA were available for review at the Albany International Airport and the William K. Sanford Town Library in Loudonville, NY. The public comment period expired on August 29, 2023, 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- "Standards for specifying construction of Airports" item P-156, temporary air pollution, soil erosion siltation control and AC 150/5230-5B, "Airport Drainage";
2. All necessary permits for construction of the proposed action and associated mitigation shall be obtained prior to construction, including;

- a. Construction General Permit and SWPPP
- b. NYSDEC Article 24 Freshwater Wetlands permit
- c. NY SEQR approval
- d. USACE Section 404 Individual Permit

**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