



**MALONE-DUFORT AIRPORT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: OFF AIRPORT
OBSTRUCTION REMOVAL, T-HANGAR
CONSTRUCTION, RPZ EASEMENTS – FINAL**

Prepared For:
Town of Malone

Prepared By:
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This Environmental Assessment becomes a Federal document when evaluated, signed and dated by the responsible FAA official.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Location

Malone-Dufort Airport (MAL)
Malone, New York

Proposed Federal Action

The proposed federal action is the approval of a change to the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and potential for federal financial assistance for the Off Airport Obstruction Removal, T-Hangar Construction, and RPZ Easements project Malone-Dufort Airport (MAL).

Project Description

This project entails the maintenance of aircraft instrument approaches and reinstatement of night instrument approaches by removing obstructions (utility poles) that penetrate approach and departure surfaces to Runway 5 at MAL. Obstruction mitigation would be done by removing utility poles and burying their associated wires. The project also entails acquiring aviation easements to secure the runway protection zones (RPZ) on Runways 23, 14, and 32. In addition, new T-hangers will be constructed to satisfy an airport need based on user inquiries and the airport forecast. More specific details about each element of the Proposed Action can be found in Chapter 2 of the final EA.

Background

MAL consists of an intersecting runway configuration, where Runway 5-23 measures 3994 feet long by 100 feet wide and Runway 14-32 measures 3250 feet long by 75 feet wide. In December 2015, the FAA issued a letter to the Airport Sponsor identifying known airport obstructions to the 20:1 visual surface that limit nighttime instrument operations to Runway 5. Subsequently, night instrument operations were rescinded for Runway 5. By the end of 2017, the Airport Sponsor had worked with adjacent property owners to remove trees that were identified by the FAA as obstructions to all runway ends. On July 26, 2017, the FAA was notified of the tree removal and its database was updated. The only obstructions remaining in the database are utility poles along Creighton Rd. off the Runway 5 end. The wires between these poles are marked with unlighted spheres for visual use during the day but not at night. Installing lights on the poles is not an option, as the utility does not allow it. The EA includes an analysis of alternatives to best mitigate the utility pole obstructions so that nighttime instrument operations to Runway 5 can be restored.

Malone –Dufort Airports Master Plan identified a need for additional T-hangars and associated aprons based on the Airport Sponsor’s waiting list and forecasts. Construction of these new T-hangars will address that need. Two potential locations for these T-hangars identified in the

Master Plan, and both were examined in the EA to determine if they are clear of any historical or archaeological significance.

The Master Plan also identified properties that are within the Runway Protection Zones (RPZs) of Runways 14, 23, and 32, but are not currently owned by the airport. A RPZ is a trapezoidal area at ground level that protects people and property on the ground. FAA design guidance recommends that the airport sponsor control all the land within the RPZ. For Malone-Dufort, each runway is required to have an RPZ with a 500 ft. inner width, 700 ft. outer width, and 1,000 ft. length, and the airport sponsor can control this land through additional easement acquisitions. These easement acquisitions, known as aviation easements, were examined as part of the EA,

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to clear the 20:1 visual surface to Runway 5; acquire aviation easements within the Runway Protection Zone; and construct an additional 10-bay hangar and associated apron.

The need for these projects comes from multiple sources. On August 18, 2015, the FAA issued a memorandum about how airport sponsors are responsible for “*ensuring clear runway approach and departure surfaces.*” The memorandum discusses 20:1 visual surface and how “*the FAA expects airport sponsors to actively seek feasible and prudent opportunities to eliminate, reduce or mitigate risks associated with penetrations to the 20:1 surface anytime there is an ALP update or master plan update.*” This ties into Grant Assurance 20, *Hazard Removal and Mitigation.*

The utility poles are the last obstructions off Runway 5. The EA includes alternatives for how to mitigate these obstructions while ensuring that the FAA guidelines are met.

The need for the hangars was identified in the master plan, as it was determined that there is demand for them. All hangars currently on airport property are occupied, and the airport maintains a waiting list of aircraft owners seeking to base aircraft at the airport.

The need for RPZ Easement Acquisition stems from the RPZ’s goal of protecting people and property on the ground. Airports do this best by controlling the land within the RPZ. This also ensures adherence to FAA Grant Assurance 21, *Incompatible Land Use*, and Grant Assurance 31, *Disposal of Land (c).*

Alternatives

Alternatives for each of the three projects were considered (see Section 2 in the EA), including the No Action Alternative for each project. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508) for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) state that NEPA analyses such as the one in this EA shall “include the alternative of no action” (40 CFR 1502.14). The No Action Alternative for each of the three proposed projects was considered in the EA.

Off Airport Obstruction Removal – Four alternatives were analyzed for this project. The No Action alternative does not remove obstructions, and does not meet the purpose and need for the project. Removing the five utility poles and burying their associated wires would remove the

obstructions, and meet the purpose and need of the project. Attaching obstruction lights to the top of the utility poles could result in night instrument operations to be reinstated, and meet the purpose and need of the project.

Not removing the utility poles that penetrate the 20:1 visual surface and displacing the landing threshold on Runway 5 is the fourth alternative considered. This displacement would shorten the runway to 3,794 feet. Additional consequences include remarking and relighting the runway and adding an approach RPZ with an inner width of 500 feet, outer width of 700 feet, and length of 1,000 feet beginning 200 ft. off the displaced threshold. This new RPZ would add greater than 8400 sq. ft. of land over which an easement would be necessary. This alternative meets the purpose and need.

Removing the five utility poles and burying their associated wires is the sponsor's preferred alternative (Proposed Action) to remove off-airport obstructions. Removing the poles and burying the wires permanently removes the obstructions and allows the runway to remain at its current length.

Placing obstruction lights on the utility poles was dismissed as an alternative because the utility company provided documentation saying that lighting the poles is not a viable option (see Appendix A of EA).

Displacing the landing threshold of Runway 5 by 200 feet was dismissed as an alternative because it would require the runway to be remarked and possibly relit, a lengthy and costly project. Additionally, new aviation easements would be necessary over the lands that the new approach RPZ would be within. The runway, which is the airport's primary runway, would be shortened for landings, negatively impacting aircraft loads.

T-Hangar Construction – Two sites for a new T-hangar were identified as viable locations, and both were evaluated in the EA. Ultimately, the sponsor will decide which of the two locations will be selected to construct the hangar. The No Action Alternative was dismissed because it does not meet the project purpose and need.

Runway Protection Zone Easement Acquisition – Only two alternatives exist for this project. No action, or obtain easements. Easements over all off-airport lands within the RPZs off each runway end will be acquired. These total to about 18.9 acres of land. This alternative meets the purpose and need. The No Action Alternative was dismissed because the airport would not have control over the RPZ, and it does not meet the project purpose and need.

Discussion

The attached February 2019 Final EA addresses the effects of the proposed action on the quality of the human and natural environment, and is made a part of this Finding. Environmental impact categories that could potentially be affected by one or more of the projects assessed in the EA were carried forward for review. The following impact analysis highlights the more thorough analysis presented in Chapter 4 of the EA.

Air Quality

The results of the air emissions analysis resulting from use of non-road construction and logging equipment, utilizing both gas and diesel equipment, to remove obstructions and construct the T-hangar indicate that the emissions levels from the project will be below established threshold levels established by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Thus, emission levels associated with the projects will be *de minimus* and a formal conformity determination is not required. Chapter 4.1 of the EA provides analysis indicating this project will not have significant impact on air quality.

Water Resources; Surface Water

Surface waters are in the Proposed Project Area, and an analysis to assess impacts was conducted in the EA for the off-airport obstruction removal and T-hangar construction projects. For the off-airport obstruction removal project, the only potential impacts to the local riverine system would be during the 90-day construction period when the wires would likely be buried via direct excavation with conduit encased in concrete. A silt fence will be used where necessary during construction to protect surface waters.

For the T-hangar project, the hangar and associated apron increases the amount of impervious surface on airport property, resulting in increased runoff. The hangar will be developed so that runoff will flow northerly into the existing draining ditches along the taxiway. A silt fence will be used where necessary during construction to protect surface waters. Consequently, there are no foreseeable impacts to the riverine system behind the proposed T-hangar and apron. In summary, there are no significant impacts on surface water from either project.

Other Impact Categories

The impacts of the proposed Federal action on noise, land use compatibility, social, socioeconomic impacts, climate, farmlands, hazardous materials and solid waste, coastal resources, DOT Section 4(f), biotic communities, coastal barriers, energy supply and natural resources, visual effects, historical, architectural, archeological, and cultural resources, environmental justice, and cumulative impacts, were evaluated in the EA. It is the FAA's finding that the proposed action will not have any significant impact on any of the above noted categories.

Mitigation

There is no foreseeable mitigation required to carry out the Proposed Action. A Building Permit from the Town of Malone will be required for the T-hangar.

Public Involvement

A Notice of Availability and Request for Comment for the EA was published in the Malone Telegram on September 20, 2018. No comments were received during the comment period, which closed on October 22, 2018.

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:

Edward Bevel
Environmental Specialist
New York Airports District Office

2/25/19
Date

Approved:

Audrey Martinez
Manager
New York Airports District Office

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Date

Disapproved:

Manager
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Date