

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
Southwest Region

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Record of Decision (ROD)

Runway 17/35 Decommissioning and Non-Standard Taxiways Improvement Project
William P. Hobby Airport
Harris County, Texas

November 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The Houston Airport System (HAS) prepared the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) to facilitate the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) review and consideration of the HAS's "Non-Standard Taxiways Improvement" project. This project (the Proposed Action) is proposed to improve Taxiways (TWY) D, E, F, G, K1 and M through realignment and associated demolition at William P. Hobby Airport (HOU or Airport). Also included with this project is the demolition of Runway (RWY) 17/35 and realignments of portions of some taxiways in order to facilitate the improvements. Federal action is required because the project involves a revision to the Airport Layout Plan (ALP), decommissioning of Navigational Aids (NAVAIDS), and cancellation of Instrument Flight Procedures (IFP). The general purpose of the proposed project is to correct non-standard airfield geometry and improve airfield safety with the correction of "hot spots" identified in FAA's Runway Incursion Mitigation (RIM) Program.

The FAA is the federal agency responsible for the approval of the Proposed Action analyzed in the EA, attached hereto. The FAA must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), other applicable statutes, and the NEPA implementing regulations (40 Code of Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508)¹ before taking any actions that are necessary prior to implementation of the project. After completing an EA, federal agencies must decide whether to issue a FONSI and approve the proposed project or prepare an Environmental Impact Statement prior to rendering a final decision on approval of a proposed project. The FAA has completed the EA, considered its analysis, and determined that no further environmental review is required. The FAA has determined that the Proposed Action will have no significant impact to the human environment. Therefore, the FAA is issuing this FONSI/ROD accompanied and supported by the EA, completing environmental review requirements for the project.

¹ New NEPA implementing regulations are in place for any NEPA process begun after September 14, 2020. Because this NEPA process began prior to that date, this process used the NEPA regulations effective July 30, 1979 and these earlier regulations are referenced throughout this FONSI/ROD. See 40 CFR 1506.13 (effective September 14, 2020).

2. BACKGROUND

HOU is owned and operated by the HAS and is located approximately 7 miles (11 km) southeast of downtown Houston, Harris County, Texas. HOU originally opened in 1927 and is Houston's oldest commercial airport. In addition to being a key airport in Southwest Airlines' route system, it serves multiple airlines for both domestic and international travel.

HOU's 2014 Master Plan² contemplates the decommissioning of RWY 17/35 because it intersects both RWYS 12R/30L (now designated as 13R/31L) and 4/22 and thereby creates hot spots for runway incursions. In addition, the closure of RWY 17/35 would reduce airport maintenance expenses and make some additional land available for potential future development. Based on these reasons, the Master Plan recommends decommissioning RWY 17/35 as part of the airfield development plan. The Master Plan also contemplates population and noise-sensitive land uses that would be affected by aircraft noise in 2030 due to future proposed developments such as the upgrade of RWY 12L/30R (now designated as 13L/31R) and the proposed decommissioning of RWY 17/35. The Master Plan recommends an amendment to the City of Houston's land use control ordinance for land use around the Airport. This ordinance protects the Airport from height hazards and protects surrounding land from incompatible land uses.

3. REQUESTED FEDERAL ACTION

The Federal actions necessary for implementation of the Proposed Action are:

1. Determinations under 49 U.S.C. §§ 47106 and 47107 relating to the eligibility of the Proposed Action for federal funding under the Airport Improvement Program;
2. Determinations under 49 U.S.C. § 40117, as implemented by 14 CFR 158.25, to impose and use passenger facility charges (PFC) collected at the airport to assist with construction of potentially eligible items shown on the ALP;
3. Unconditional approval of the portion of the ALP depicting the Proposed Action as described in Section 3 of the EA, including the decommissioning of RWY 17/35, realignment of TWYs D, E, G, and K1, and removal of all pavement associated with RWY 17/35 and portions of TWYs F, G, and M pursuant to 49 U.S.C. §§ 40103(b) and 47107(a)(16);
4. Cancel all necessary air traffic procedures under provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 40103 to accommodate the Proposed Action, including IFPs RNAV (GPS) for RWY 17 and RNAV (GPS) for RWY 35; and
5. Decommission the following NAVAIDS: RWY 17 Visual Approach Slope Indicator (VASI); RWY 35 Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI); and RWY 35 Runway End Identifier Lights (REIL).

² Master Plan available at: <https://www.fly2houston.com/biz/about/master-plans>; See pages 2-9, 10-28, and 10-42

4. PURPOSE AND NEED

Pursuant to the NEPA implementing regulations and FAA Orders 1050.1F and 5050.4B, an EA must include a description of the purpose of a proposed action and the reasons it is needed. Section 2 of the EA addresses the Proposed Action's purpose and need.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to correct non-standard airfield geometry issues to increase the safety of the airfield environment by eliminating hot spots.

The need of the Proposed Action is based on the existence of several areas on Airport that have been designated by the FAA's RIM Program as "hot spots". A hot spot is defined by the FAA as a location on an airport movement area with a history or potential risk of collision or runway incursion, and where heightened attention by pilots and drivers is necessary. Airfield geometry has been identified as a primary contributing factor for runway incursions. In addition to the runway incursion risks due to non-standard geometry, the runway was identified by the sponsor for closure due to low traffic use and increased maintenance costs.

5. ALTERNATIVES

A total of nine alternatives, including the Proposed Action and No-Action Alternative, were developed to potentially meet the purpose and need to increase safety and decrease the potential for runway incursions. The alternatives considered, except for the No-Action Alternative, were developed because they had the potential to meet stated purpose and need elements of closing the existing RWY 17/35 and modifying taxiways to improve safety and operational movements on the airfield. Section 3 of the EA addresses the alternatives.

5.1 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would close the existing RWY 17/35 and demolish TWYs D, E, G and M1. TWY K1 would be realigned and portions of TWY M and RWY 17/35 would be demolished. The remaining RWY 17/35 pavement between TWY F and TWY H would be used as a non-movement area.

5.2 Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would close, but not entirely demolish, the existing RWY 17/35. TWYs D, E, F, G, and K1 would be realigned. TWY E would be extended south of RWY 13R-31L and partial construction of the future TWY N would be completed. Portions of TWY M, M1 and RWY 17/35 would be demolished. The remaining RWY 17/35 pavement between TWY F and TWY H would be used as a non-movement area.

5.3 Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would close, but not entirely demolish, the existing RWY 17/35. TWYs D, E, G, and K1 would be realigned. Portions of TWY M and RWY 17/35 would be demolished, and Portions of TWY G and run-up pad, between RWY 35 and RWY 4 would be demolished. RWY

17/35 pavement would remain in place between TWY F and TWY H for use as a non-movement area.

5.4 Alternative 4

Alternative 4 would close, but not entirely demolish, the existing RWY 17/35. TWYs D, E, F, G, and K1 would be realigned and partial construction of future TWY N would be completed. Portions of TWY M and RWY 17/35 would be demolished. Portions of TWY G and run-up pad, between RWY 35 and TWY H, as well as the existing run-up pad at the approach end of RWY 4 would be demolished. RWY 17/35 pavement would remain in place between TWY F and TWY H for use as a non-movement area.

5.5 Alternative 5

Alternative 5 would close the existing RWY 17/35. TWYs D, E, G, and K1 would be realigned. Partial construction of future TWY N would be completed, and portions of TWY F, M and RWY 17/35 would be demolished. Portions of TWY G and run-up pad, between RWY 35 and TWY H would also be demolished. RWY 17/35 pavement would remain in place between TWY F and TWY H for use as a taxiway.

5.6 Alternative 6

Alternative 6 would close, but not entirely demolish, RWY 17/35. TWYs D, E, G, and K1 would be realigned and partial construction of future TWY N would be completed. TWY E would be relocated to align with existing TWY E. at the deicing apron. Portions of TWY M and RWY 17/35 would be demolished, and TWY E would be extended to intersect with TWY N. Portions of TWY G, between the run-up pad and TWY H demolished would be demolished. RWY 17/35 pavement would remain in place between TWY F and TWY H for use as a taxiway.

5.7 Alternative 6A

Alternative 6A would close RWY 17/35. TWYs D, E, G, and K1 would be realigned. TWY E would be relocated to align with existing TWY E at the deicing apron. Portions of TWY F, M and RWY 17/35 would be demolished. Portions of TWY G, between the run-up pad and TWY H would also be demolished. RWY 17/35 pavement would remain in place between TWY F and TWY H for use as a taxiway.

5.8 Alternative 6B (Proposed Action and Preferred Alternative)

Alternative 6B includes the closure of RWY 17/35 for use as a runway. TWYs D, E, G and K1 would be realigned. TWY E would be realigned at the deicing apron. RWY 17/35 and portions of TWY F, TWY G, and TWY M would be demolished. The Proposed Action also includes the construction of new access roads, demolition of access roads, and some drainage work. The Proposed Action will include the decommissioning of NAVAIDs and cancellation of IFPs. As noted above, three NAVAIDS would be decommissioned: the RWY 17 VASI, RWY 35 REIL, and RWY 35 PAPI. In addition, IFPs RNAV (GPS) RWY 17 and RNAV (GPS) RWY 35 would be cancelled.

5.9 No Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, RWY 17/35 and portions of TWY M would not be demolished, and TWYs D, E, G, and K1 would not be realigned.

Table 4 of the EA provides a comparison of alternatives based on FAA's Airport Design Advisory Circular 150/5300-13A, whether the alternative met the Purpose and Need, whether the alternative was economically reasonable, and whether the alternative was operationally feasible. Alternatives 1 through 3 and the No-Action Alternative do not meet the project's Purpose and Need. Alternatives 4, 5, 6A, and 6B met the project purpose and need. The proposed design for Alternatives 4, 5, and 6A were not economically reasonable or operationally feasible, as described in **Table 4** of the EA. As a result of this screening analysis, Alternative 6B was created. Therefore, only the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 6B, met the Purpose and Need and was economically reasonable and operationally feasible.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The environmental impacts, if any, of the proposed alternatives were examined in the attached EA according to the FAA Orders 5050.4B and 1050.1F. The environmental impacts of the No Action and the Proposed Action alternatives are summarized in this section.

The analyses included in Section 4 of the attached EA demonstrates that many resource categories will not be impacted by implementation of the Proposed Action. In particular, Section 4.1 of the EA indicates that the following resource categories were not evaluated further in the EA because the resources were not located in proximity to the proposed project area: Coastal Resources, Farmlands, and Wild and Scenic Resources. In addition, other resource categories will not be discussed in detail in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Record of Decision (ROD) because, as documented in Section 4 of the EA, there is not the potential for significant impact (see FAA Order 1050.1F, Paragraph 4-3.3 and Exhibit 4-1 for information on significance thresholds and factors to consider in evaluating significance for an environmental impact category). These categories include: Biological Resources, including Fish, Wildlife, and Plants; Climate; Water Resources, including, Wetlands, Floodplains, Surface Waters, and Groundwater; Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention; Socioeconomic Impacts, including Environmental Justice and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks; Natural Resources and Energy Supply; and Visual Effects and Light Emissions.

Implementation of the proposed action has the potential to impact the following resource categories:

6.1 Air Quality

Federally-supported or obligated actions occurring in areas designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as nonattainment or maintenance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) must comply with the General Conformity Regulations (40 CFR §93.150 et seq.) associated with the federal Clean Air Act. HOU is located in Harris County, which is designated by the EPA as being in marginal nonattainment of the 2015 eight-hour ozone

standards. On September 23, 2019, the EPA re-classified the Houston/Galveston/Brazoria nonattainment area from moderate to serious nonattainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS, which reduces the *de minimis* levels for the ozone precursors, volatile organic compounds (VOC) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) from 100 tons per year to 50 tons per year.

Section 4.2 and **Appendix D** of the attached EA address Air Quality.

6.1.1 No-Action Alternative

No development would occur on the project site with the No-Action Alternative; therefore, there would not be any construction air emissions of criteria air pollutants or criteria pollutant precursors.

6.1.2 Proposed Action

Construction Related Emissions

The Proposed Action would result in construction-related emissions. An analysis was performed to calculate the baseline conditions upon the equipment needs and duration for constructing the Proposed Action. The Transportation Research Board (TRB) Airport Cooperative Research Program's (ACRP) Airport Construction Emissions Inventory Tool (ACEIT) model was used in the Draft EA to determine construction emissions. The use of ACEIT was coordinated with the Environmental Protection Agency during project development. The EPA states that the use of ACEIT for a general conformity applicability analysis (comparison of estimated project emissions vs. the 40 CFR 93.153 *de minimis* levels) would be acceptable and that they have no preference how construction emissions are projected for the general conformity applicability analysis. However, during the draft EA public comment period, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) recommended that non-road mobile source emissions be recalculated using the Moves2014b model unless ACEIT had been updated to incorporate the updates from the current MOVES model. Because the current version of the model has not been updated with the latest version of MOVES2014b for on-road vehicle emission factors and NONROAD2008a for nonroad equipment emissions factors, these emission factors were obtained with the latest version of MOVES for Harris County and estimated outside of ACEIT and included in **Appendix D**. ACEIT continued to be used to determine construction activity schedules. Focusing on the ozone NAAQS (the criteria pollutant for which the area is nonattainment), under the current analysis using MOVES2014b, the emissions decreased slightly for ozone precursors (VOC and NO_x) for each year of construction 2020, 2021, and 2022) from the previous analysis using ACEIT. This was to be expected, since the current version of NONROADs uses more updated technology information and EPA regulations, compared to previous version. Construction-related emissions for other criteria pollutants are shown in **Table 7** of the EA.

Construction-related VOC and NO_x emissions for 2020, 2021, and 2022, are shown in **Table 7** of the EA. The net change from the No-Action to the Proposed Action for ozone precursors VOC is +0.07 tons per year (tpy) for 2020, +6.07 tpy for 2021, and +1.77 tpy for 2022 and for NO_x is +0.79 tpy for 2020, +18.84 tpy for 2021, and +4.73 tpy for 2022. These emissions are below the applicable *de minimus* thresholds (see **Table 8** of the EA). No mitigation is proposed or required.

HOU does expect to implement emissions reduction measures during construction to reduce construction-related emissions. For more information see Section 4.2.2 of the EA.

Operational Emissions

The Proposed Action would also result in operational emissions. The net change in aircraft operational emissions associated with the Proposed Action was estimated in Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT) for the Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives. Future 2030 No-Action aircraft emissions were estimated assuming operations, runway, and taxi configuration remain unchanged from the existing operations. Future 2030 Proposed Action aircraft emissions were estimated assuming RWY 17/35 is decommissioned along with changes to non-standard geometry taxiways, specifically TWYs D, E, G, K, and M.³ **Table 9** of the EA provides the No-Action and Proposed Action operational emissions for 2030.

Focusing on the ozone NAAQS (the criteria pollutant for which the area is nonattainment), as shown in **Table 9**, implementation of the Proposed Action shows slight increases in net operational emissions for VOC and NO_x in 2030. Operation-related emissions for other criteria pollutants are also shown in **Table 9** of the EA. Data on average aircraft taxi time for the No-Action and Proposed Action was calculated resulting in a taxi time decrease from 526 seconds to 428 seconds for departures, per aircraft, and a taxi time increase from 314 seconds to 571 seconds for arrivals, per aircraft. As shown in **Table 10** of the EA, the net change in operational emissions for VOC and NO_x due to changes in taxi times, would be well below *de minimis* thresholds. The net change from the No-Action to the Proposed Action for ozone precursors VOC is +1.5 tpy and for NO_x is +0.2 tpy. Thus, the Proposed Action would conform to the State Implementation Plan for future operational years, and therefore, no conformity determination for operational emissions is required.

As indicated from the result presented above, impacts to air quality with the implementation of the Proposed Action would not be significant when compared to the No-Action; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

6.2 Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f) Resources

Section 4(f) of the *Department of Transportation Act* (DOT Act), which was re-codified and renumbered as section 303 (c) of 49 U.S.C., states that the Secretary of Transportation will not approve any program that requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance or land from a historic site of national, State, or local significance as determined by the officials having jurisdiction thereof, unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land and such program, and the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from the use.

³ The analysis in the EA used an aviation forecast prepared before the COVID-19 public health emergency began. FAA acknowledges the impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency on aviation activity, including reduced confidence in growth projections using currently-available data. As such, the forecast information used in the analysis of impacts in the EA provides a conservative estimate of potential environmental impacts of the proposed action.

A review of potential Section 4(f) resources in the vicinity of the proposed project was conducted. This review included a search of City of Houston Parks and Recreation, Harris County Parks, and recreational facilities associated with Harris County schools within one mile of the site and within and adjacent to the existing and proposed noise contours (see **Figure 4**). The 1940 Houston Municipal Airport Terminal (1940 Terminal) is located approximately 375 feet west of RWY 17/35. The 1940 Terminal was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in March 2019.

As described in Section 4.3 of the EA, based on the results of the review of Section 4(f) resources in the vicinity of the proposed project, no schools or parks are located inside the Baseline 2020 Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) 65-75 dB contour boundary or projected No-Action and Proposed Action 2030 DNL contour boundary. In addition, the Proposed Action would not cause a physical or constructive use of the 1940 Terminal. Therefore, there are no impacts to or use of any Section 4(f) resource.

6.3 Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), the FAA is required to consider effects to properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the NRHP and consult with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to substantiate findings of effect to these resources.

As described in Section 4.8 of the EA, the location of the Proposed Action was reviewed for potential historic and archaeological resources. Because of the highly disturbed nature of the project area and its location on the active airfield, it is highly unlikely that any intact archaeological resources remain in the area. Prior to initial development, a resource review of the proposed location was completed, and no archaeological resources were found to exist in this area. The SHPO issued a concurrence with the finding in November 2019 that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action.

6.4 Noise and Compatible Land Use

The noise analysis in the EA focused on how the proposed action would change the cumulative noise exposure of individuals to aircraft noise in areas surrounding the airport. Day-night average sound level (DNL) is the standard federal metric for determining cumulative exposure of individuals to noise.

Existing condition aircraft operations were provided by HAS records and the 2014 Hobby Airport Master Plan for the most recent full year of operations. HMMH utilized model flight tracks from the 2014 HOU Master Plan Integrated Noise Model (INM) study to model track geometries. All aircraft operations were scaled to the FAA Terminal Area Forecast (TAF). Future operations were derived from the 2014 Hobby Airport Master Plan and FAA's TAF. **Table 12** of the EA shows the forecasted aircraft operations for Baseline (2020), Forecast (2030) No Action, and Forecast (2030) with the Proposed Action (see footnote 3). The analysis used the FAA's approved model (AEDT Version 2d) to conduct the noise analysis and predict the noise impact in the vicinity of the airport.

Section 4.11 and **Appendix D** of the attached EA address Noise and Land Use.

6.4.1 No-Action Alternative

No development would occur on the project site under the No-Alternative. As shown in **Table 14** of the EA, the 2030 No-Action Alternative includes 1,519 people and 592 housing units within the day-night average sound level (DNL) 65-70 db.

6.4.2 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action DNL 65-70 dB contour includes 1,636 people and 608 housing units as compared with the No-Action, as shown in **Table 14** of the EA. This is an increase of 117 people and 16 housing units. The difference in size of the noise exposure contours are a function of the flight tracks and shift of operations from RWY 17/35 to RWYs 13R/31L, 13L/31R and 04/22. The Proposed Action would not increase airport activity or the number of aircraft operations at HOU, and the Proposed Action would not result in a DNL 1.5 dB increase in any noise sensitive area within the DNL 65 dB contour. In fact, the grid analysis shown in Figure 8 depicts decreases of both DNL 1.5 dB and 3 dB along RWY 17/35, when compared to the No Action alternative. As such, the proposed action will not result in a significant impact and noise mitigation is not required nor proposed.

The Proposed Action is located within an area that is guided by HAS and subject to local development plan approvals. The Proposed Action is consistent with the 2014 Master Plan and local planning objectives. Implementation of the Proposed Action is not expected to create noncompatible land uses within or adjacent to the airport.

6.5 Cumulative Impacts

Consideration of potential cumulative impacts applies to those impacts resulting from implementation of the Proposed Action. The consideration of cumulative impacts addresses the potential for individually minor but collectively significant impacts to occur over time.

The NEPA implementing regulations at 40 CFR § 1508.7 define cumulative impacts as the incremental impacts of the action when added to the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of the agency (federal or non-federal) undertaking such actions. The Proposed Action in combination with other foreseeable future projects in the indirect study area would not reach or exceed thresholds of significance.

7. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

7.1 Public Involvement

The draft EA was made available for public review. The public notice of availability (NOA) was published in English on August 5th and 18th, 2020, in the *Houston Chronicle*, and in Spanish on August 19th and September 13th, 2020, in *La Voz* (**Appendix G** of the EA). The NOA was also available online in English on August 5th and in Spanish on August 5th and September 13th, through the *Houston Chronicle* website, which owns *La Voz*.

Electronic copies of the Draft EA and supporting materials were available online from August 5, 2020 to September 25, 2020, at: <https://www.fly2houston.com/filer/0/1596231393/8315/> and August 5, 2020 to October 22, 2020, at: <https://www.houstontx.gov/Draft-EA-HAS-Non-Standard-Taxiway.pdf>. Hard copies of the document were available for review at the following locations:

- William P. Hobby Airport: Airport Manager’s Office, 7800 Airport Boulevard, Houston, Texas 77061
- Houston Airport System Infrastructure Division Office (IDO), 111 Standifer Street, Humble, TX 77338; and
- Ellington Field: Airport Managers Office, 11602 Aerospace Avenue, Houston, Texas 77034, contact: Melinda Whittom, 713-847-4201.

Visitors were requested to call ahead for appointments at Ellington Field to ensure social distancing. Due to the Harris County Judge and City of Houston Mayor’s orders, no libraries were open at the time of notice. The FAA recognized that public travel and access could have been limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, therefore, availability through those locations could have been impacted. If the public was unable to access the document through one of the listed means (online or in person), print or electronic copies of the document were available upon request, by contacting the HAS project manager by phone or email. No public comments were received on the proposed project.

7.2 Agency Coordination

The proposed project was coordinated with the Texas Historical Commission, which is the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for Texas. The SHPO issued a concurrence in November 2019 that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action.

The Draft EA was provided to the TCEQ for comment. The TCEQ provided one comment on the draft EA on September 25, 2020. The TCEQ requested that potential construction air emissions derived using ACEIT be recalculated using the MOVES2014b and NONROADs models (**Appendix F** of the EA). Following this request, the emissions were recalculated using MOVES2014b and the results were included in this final version of the EA (**Section 4.2**). Following a review of the revised analysis, the TCEQ had no questions or comments on the updated methodology, inputs, or results. Based on the updated information, the project is still expected to result in a *de minimis* finding for ozone precursor emissions and would not trigger a general conformity demonstration.

8. CONDITIONS AND MITIGATION

As prescribed by 40 CFR § 1505.3, the FAA shall take steps as appropriate to the action, such as through special conditions in grant agreements, property conveyance deeds, releases, airport layout plan approvals, and contract plans and specifications, and shall monitor these as necessary

to assure that representations made in the EA and FONSI will be carried out. Specific conditions of approval associated with this project are listed below:

- The airport will comply with TCEQ's Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit. A Notice of Intent will be required. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared and implemented, and a construction site notice will be posted on the construction site. The SWPPP will include, among other items, identification of appropriate erosion and sediment controls and stormwater best management practices.
- The contractor shall be required to pay special attention to dust control when earthwork or hauling operations are in progress, and/or when wind or weather conditions cause excessive blowing of dust.

9. FINDINGS

Throughout the development of the airport, including the proposed improvements described above, the FAA has made every effort to adhere to the policies and purposes of NEPA, as stated in the NEPA implementing regulations. The FAA has concentrated on the truly significant issues related to the action in question. The FAA determined that the Proposed Action is in compliance with FAA Order 1050.1F 6-3.b(2), and is consistent with community planning as documented in the Master Plan. In its determination on whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or process the EA as a FONSI, the FAA weighed its decision based on an examination of the EA, comments from Federal and state agencies, as well as all other information available to the FAA.

As required by 40 CFR 1506.5, the FAA has independently and objectively evaluated this proposed project. As described in the Final EA, the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative were studied extensively to determine the potential impacts and appropriate mitigation for those impacts. The FAA provided input, advice, and expertise throughout the analysis, along with administrative and legal review of the project.

The following determinations are prescribed by the statutory provisions set forth in the Airport and Airway Improvement Act of 1982, as codified in 49 U.S.C. §§ 47106 and 47107. They are preconditions of FAA's approval of airport funding applications for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) eligible airport development.

- a. 49 U.S.C. § 47106(a)(1). The Proposed Action is reasonably consistent with existing plans of public agencies for the development of the area surrounding the airport.
- b. 49 U.S.C. § 47106(b)(2). The interests of the communities in or near which the project may be located have been given fair consideration.
- c. 49 U.S.C. § 47107(a)(10). Appropriate action, including the adoption of zoning laws, has been or will be taken to the extent reasonable to restrict the use of land next to or near the airport to uses that are compatible with normal airport operations.

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives of Section 101 of NEPA and other applicable environmental requirements and, with the required mitigation referenced above, and 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, FAA has determined that preparation of an EIS is not necessary for this proposed action and is therefore issuing this FONSI.

RECOMMENDED
FOR APPROVAL:

_____ Date: _____
Jesse Carriger
Manager, Texas Airports
District Office

APPROVED:

_____ Date: _____
Ignacio Flores
Director, Office of Airports
Southwest Region

DECISION AND ORDER

Runway 17/35 Decommissioning and Non-Standard Taxiways Improvement Project
William P. Hobby Airport
Harris County, Texas

November 2020

The FAA has identified the Proposed Action as the FAA's preferred alternative. FAA must now select one of the following courses of action:

- a. Approve agency actions necessary to implement the Proposed Project, or
- b. Disapprove agency actions to implement the Proposed Project.

Approval would signify that applicable Federal requirements relating to airport development and planning have been met and would permit HOU to proceed with implementation of the Proposed Action and associated mitigation measures. Not approving these agency actions would prevent the Proposed Action from being implemented.

I have carefully considered the FAA's goals and objectives in relation to the various aeronautical aspects of the Proposed Project as discussed in the EA. The review included: the purpose and need that this project would serve; the alternative means of achieving the purpose and need; the environmental impacts of these alternatives; and mitigation of impacts. The review concluded that all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the selected alternative have been adopted.

Under the authority delegated by the Administrator of the FAA, the undersigned finds that the Proposed Action, Runway 17/35 Decommissioning and Non-Standard Taxiways Improvement Project, is reasonably supported. Therefore, the following agency actions, discussed more fully in the FONSI, are directed to be taken including:

1. The FAA directs that actions be taken to:
 - A. Determinations under 49 U.S.C. §§ 47106 and 47107 relating to the eligibility of the Proposed Action for federal funding under the Airport Improvement Program;
 - B. Determinations under 49 U.S.C. § 40117, as implemented by 14 CFR 158.25, to impose and use passenger facility charges (PFC) collected at the airport to assist with construction of potentially eligible items shown on the ALP;
 - C. Unconditional approval of the portion of the ALP depicting the Proposed Action as described within Section 3 of this document, which includes decommission RWY 17/35, realign TWYs D, E, G and K1, and removal of all

pavement associated with RWY 17/35 and portions of TWYs F, G, and M pursuant to 49 U.S.C. §§ 40103(b) and 47107(a)(16);

- D. Cancel all necessary air traffic procedures under provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 40103 to accommodate the Proposed Action, including IFPs RNAV (GPS) for RWY 17 and RNAV (GPS) for RWY 35; and
- E. Decommission the following NAVAIDS: RWY 17 Visual Approach Slope Indicator (VASI); RWY 35 Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI); and RWY 35 Runway End Identifier Lights (REIL).

The FAA has carefully and thoroughly considered the facts contained in the attached EA. Based on that information, FAA finds the proposed Federal actions are 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. The FAA also finds the proposed Federal action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or include any condition requiring any consultation pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. As a result, FAA will not require an EIS for this action.

The undersigned, therefore, now approve and direct action as needed, to carry out the agency action outlined above under Proposed FAA Actions required for the Runway 17/35 Decommissioning and Non-Standard Taxiways Improvement Project described under the Proposed Action in the attached EA and this FONSI/ROD. These actions are directed to be taken, and determinations and approvals are made, under the authority of 49 U.S.C. §§ 40101, 40113, 44502, 44701, 47101, 47105, 47106, 47107, 47120, and 47122.

Rob Lowe
Regional Administrator
Southwest Region

Date

Right of Appeal

This order (FONSI/ROD) constitutes final agency action and final order of the Administrator under 49 U.S.C. § 46110. Any party having a substantial interest in this order may appeal this order to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit or in the Circuit Court of Appeals of the United States for the circuit in which the person resides or has its principal place of business, upon petition, filed no later than 60 days after the order is issued in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 46110.