

**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
Western Service Area
Engineering Services
Seattle, Washington**

**Final Environmental Assessment
and
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

**Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) and Base Building
Construction and Operation
McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada**

June 30, 2009

I. Introduction

This FONSI is being issued in association with the attached Final Environmental Assessment – *Airport Traffic Control Tower and Base Building Construction and Operation, McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada* dated June 30, 2009. It has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended; implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR parts 1500-1508); and FAA Order 1050.1E CHG 1, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, effective March 20, 2006.

II. Proposed Federal Action

The FAA is proposing to construct and operate a new Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT), Administrative Base Building and Parking Structure to serve McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas, NV (LAS). The proposed ATCT will be a 372-foot high, concrete and steel octagonal tower with glass cab windows on a concrete pile foundation. The base building will be an approximately 40,000 square foot, multi-story cast-in-place concrete structure. The multi-story parking structure will contain approximately 190 parking spaces totaling 48,750 square feet. The new tower will replace an existing tower built in the early 1980s which will be demolished as part of the proposed action. The existing base building may be demolished or continue to be used by the Clark County Department of Aviation (CCDOA).

III. Purpose and Need

The proposed new ATCT at LAS will ensure proper separation of aircraft and improve the functional efficiency of aircraft operations at and in the vicinity of the airport. The existing ATCT at LAS is inadequate for current airport traffic control needs due to the insufficient height and size of the tower cab. Visibility of some operational areas is blocked due to structures constructed since the existing ATCT was built. The number of air traffic controller positions has also increased from 6 to 14 since 1983, resulting in extremely crowded working

conditions. In general, the airport has outgrown the existing ATCT as airport facilities have expanded and aircraft operations have increased.

IV. Alternatives

An ATCT Siting Study conducted by the FAA utilizing the Airport Facilities Terminal Integration Laboratory (AFTIL) considered seven alternative sites for the proposed ATCT at LAS. After comparing the attributes of each site against the siting requirements, the preferred site (Terminal 3 Site) was ultimately carried forward for further evaluation of environmental impacts because it best meets the purpose and need of the project. A brief summary of each of the seven sites is described below. A no action alternative was also considered, under which a new ATCT facility would not be constructed and the existing ATCT facility would continue to be used.

Site A is located on the current ATCT site approximately 750 feet southeast of Terminal 1 in the northwest corner of the parking lot. Construction at this site would result in severe shadowing from the new ATCT of the final approach and touchdown areas of Runways 19R and 19L as viewed from the existing ATCT. While this shadowing would only be an issue after construction of the new tower progressed above the existing cab until the new ATCT was commissioned, the impact to air traffic controllers was deemed too severe even temporarily.

Site B is located on the current ATCT site approximately 750 feet southeast of Terminal 1 in the center of the parking lot near the base building loading dock access drive. This site has similar shadowing concerns as Site A (see above).

Site C is located on the current ATCT site approximately 750 feet southeast of Terminal 1 in the northeast corner of the parking lot. This site has significant construction challenges, does not meet security setbacks and has conflicting seismic and blast construction requirements. The small size of the site would result in extra construction costs resulting from accommodation of equipment, supplies and traffic; meeting security requirements; and protecting the existing ATCT and the elevated passenger tram, which crosses the site, during construction.

The *Sunset Road Site* is located approximately 2,500 feet south-southeast of the threshold of Runway 7R, south of Sunset Road on private land. The landowner was unwilling to sell the land to the CCDOA or the FAA.

The *Terminal B Site* is located between Terminal 1 and the B Gates. This site has inherent safety risks due to its proximity to a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) baggage screening facility. It is also located within the Aircraft Operations Area (AOA) which would expose the facility to noise and fumes from aircraft as well as limit construction and delivery access to the ATCT and restrict employee parking. Buried jet fuel lines around the B Gates may have to be relocated at this site. A sky bridge planned to connect the B and C Concourses at the time of the Siting Study was completed in 2008 making this site unfeasible.

The *Russell Road Site* is located near the intersection of Paradise Road and the relocated Russell Road. This site was eliminated from further consideration at the request of CCDOA

because they determined that due to the relocation of Russell Road and future construction in the area that no viable parcel of land would be available for an ATCT facility.

The *Terminal 3 Site* is the preferred new ATCT location. It is located at the southwest corner of Flight Path Avenue and Kelly Lane, approximately 4,000 feet north of the centerline of Runway 7L/25R and 5,500 feet east of the centerline of Runway 1R/19L. This site was chosen as the preferred new ATCT site from among the alternatives considered based on the results of the FAA airspace and TERPS evaluations, modeling information obtained from AFTIL, and a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of all of the primary siting options. Please see Section 4.1 of the Final EA (p. 11) for a summary of the evaluation of the Terminal 3 Site against the siting criteria.

V. Environmental Impacts for the Preferred Alternative

Based on the Environmental Assessment conducted for the proposed action (attached), no significant environmental impacts, as defined in FAA Order 1050.1E, CHG 1, are expected to result from the proposed action. Although no significant impacts are anticipated, in compliance with Nevada State and Clark County regulations, several measures have been identified to protect environmental resources during the construction and operation of the ATCT. Summaries of these measures are included below. Refer to the appropriate resource heading in Chapter 6, Environmental Consequences, of the EA for the full discussion of impacts and protective measures.

Air Quality (EA Sections 5.1 and 6.1)

The installation of the new ATCT would not increase the number of aircraft operations and would not change the arrival/departure schedule or the mix of aircraft use at LAS. Therefore, there would be no change in aircraft emissions. The proposed action would result in impacts to air quality from construction of the new ATCT, demolition (by dismantling) of the existing ATCT and from subsequent operation of the new ATCT. Pollutant emissions from the proposed action were estimated using the air emissions modeling software URBEMIS 2007 and were found to conform with the Nevada State Implementation Plan.

In order to minimize construction impacts to air quality, the following control measures will be implemented:

- Diesel particulate filters will be used on all construction equipment (dozers, tractors, loaders, backhoes, water trucks) to reduce particulate matter (PM) emissions.
- Exposed soils will be watered three times daily to control dust and reduce PM emissions.
- Low volatile organic compound (VOC) interior and exterior architectural coatings will be used.

Construction Impacts (EA Sections 5.4 and 6.3)

Because the construction of the ATCT and base building would not have significant impacts to other resources (air quality, water quality, fish, wildlife and plants, etc.), there would be no significant impacts from construction activities associated with the proposed action.

In order to minimize construction impacts, the following control measures will be implemented:

- The existing ATCT is known to contain asbestos in various materials throughout the building. A Demolition Notification Form, Notification of Asbestos Abatement and a Dust Control Permit for Construction Activities would be filed with the Clark County Department of Air Quality & Environmental Management (CCDAQEM) prior to commencement of demolition of the ATCT (See Appendix I). The National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants at 40CFR Part 63, as adopted by the CCDAQEM, and all permit stipulations will be complied with in regard to proper survey, abatement, containment and disposal of all asbestos containing materials prior to and during the demolition of the ATCT.
- To minimize impacts to surface and ground water, construction best management practices which address waste disposal, storage of petroleum products and hazardous materials, dust control, etc. as outlined in the EA (p. 48), will be followed to reduce potential construction impacts.
- An Application for an Authority to Construct Certificate and Supplemental Information Sheet with Emission Unit Information will be filed with the CCDAQEM as required by the county to permit emissions from the facility's two emergency power generators (See Appendix I).

Hazardous Materials, Pollution Prevention and Solid Waste (EA Sections 5.9 and 6.6)

The Environmental Due Diligence Audit conducted for the proposed ATCT site identified a recognized environmental condition for the site based on up-gradient releases of jet fuel from pipelines. These releases are located approximately 1,500 feet to 2,000 feet west and southwest of the proposed ATCT site and represent a low to moderate potential to degrade shallow ground water at a depth of approximately 20 to 30 feet below grade. The extent of these releases has not yet been investigated and hydrogeologic conditions in the airport vicinity appear to be consistent with significant ground water plume migration. However, if during excavation, in the unlikely event that contamination is discovered, or a spill occurs during construction, work would stop until the appropriate agencies are notified.

Typical construction debris will be generated during both the construction and demolition phases of the proposed action. The general contractor will be required to dispose of solid waste at an offsite facility. Handling, storage and disposal of all fuels, hazardous materials and solid waste during demolition and construction activities will conform to federal, state and local regulations.

In order to prevent pollution and minimize impacts from hazardous materials, the following control measures will be implemented:

- As stated above under *Construction Impacts*, the existing ATCT is known to contain asbestos in various materials throughout the building. Notification of appropriate State agencies and adherence to regulations and permit stipulations will occur as stated above.
- Spill prevention and control safeguards including secondary containment and double walled tanks will be installed for the ATCT emergency generator fuel tanks to prevent any potential releases from entering the subsurface at the site. A Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan will be prepared for any combination of fuel storage tanks greater than 1,320 gallons in accordance with the EPA's Oil Pollution Prevention Rule.

Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources (EA Sections 5.10 and 6.7)

Based on the lack of historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural resources in the area of potential effect, a finding of “no historic properties affected” for the proposed action was made by the FAA and concurred with by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer (NVSHPO) and the Indian Tribes with interest in the area (See EA, Appendix E). If potential historical, archaeological, or culturally important materials are discovered during construction, work will stop, the area will be secured, and the NVSHPO and the seven Tribes (as appropriate) will be notified within 48 hours of discovery to determine appropriate actions.

Water Quality (EA Sections 5.16 and 6.13)

The proposed action will not affect any streams or surface water bodies, and there will be no impoundment or diversion of water. Construction of the proposed ATCT would not affect the integrity or operation of the underground water reservoir located immediately south of the new ATCT site. The proposed action may affect ground water, which is expected at depths of 25 feet below grade at the site. The following measures would be implemented to protect water quality:

- A Temporary Groundwater Discharge Permit Application would be filed with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) Bureau of Water Pollution Control to regulate discharge of any ground water encountered during construction activities. This permit includes requirements for water quality lab analysis to determine appropriate discharge method (See Appendix I).
- Construction best management practices which address erosion, surface runoff and ground water protection as outlined in the EA (p. 48) will be followed to reduce potential impacts to water quality.
- A Notice of Intent for Stormwater Discharge Permit Application will be filed online with NDEP, Bureau of Water Pollution Control at http://ndep.nv.gov/bwpc/storm_cont03.htm along with a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (See Appendix I).

VI. Consistency with Community Planning and Tribal Lands

The Nevada Department of Transportation’s (NDOT) mission is, “Providing a better transportation system for Nevada through our unified and dedicated efforts.” (NDOT 2008, p. I-2). NDOT is committed to ensuring an effective system of airports through its involvement with airport planning (NDOT 2008, p. III-2). NDOT’s strategy to support air transportation includes making needed improvements to address airport safety issues (NDOT 2008, p. III-5). The current Nevada Airport Systems Plan (NASP) was prepared to “develop a system of airports that will meet the air transportation needs of Nevada until 2020” and “looks at where improvements or expansions are needed, establishes investment priorities, defines policies and process for implementation, and serves as the basis for continuing statewide aviation system planning.” (NDOT 2008, p. I-8).

The purpose and need of the proposed action supports the NDOT Statewide Transportation Plan and the NASP by improving functional efficiency and meeting the current and future airport traffic control needs at the airport. Based on its compatibility with these plans, the proposed action was found to be consistent with State of Nevada planning.

As detailed in the EA (p. 45-46), local planning documents for land usage at and around LAS, including the plans for the unincorporated communities of Paradise, Winchester, Spring Valley and Enterprise prevent land use which is incompatible with the airport and include policies which protect most existing and potential future developments from excessive noise. As stated in the EA (p. 66-69), noise impacts from the proposed action will be minor and would only occur during construction and occasional operation of the facility's emergency generator. The closest sensitive noise receptor to the proposed ATCT site is a residential area located approximately 1,700 feet north. Based on compatible land use in the vicinity of the airport and the distance to any sensitive noise receptors, the proposed action was found to be consistent with local community planning efforts.

The proposed action will not affect any Indian Tribal Reservations therefore consistency with Tribal plans is not applicable.

VII. Public and Agency Participation

Consultation with local, State and Federal agencies, and the appropriate Indian Tribes was conducted to determine the potential for impacts to specific resources. Consultation documentation for historic, architectural, archaeological and cultural resources and fish, wildlife and plants is available in Appendices E and F of the EA, respectively.

The Draft EA for the proposed action was made available to the public for a 30 day public review and comment period, from May 6, 2009 to June 4, 2009. Notice of the availability of the Draft EA was published in the Las Vegas Review-Journal, a newspaper of local circulation in the Las Vegas area (see p. 78 of the EA). Digital copies of the Draft EA were also sent to the Nevada State Clearinghouse and the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition for review by local, regional and State agencies. The Nevada Department of Air Quality & Environmental Management responded with a request to review future documents relating to the project. The Nevada State Clearinghouse declined to distribute the EA to State agencies because "the project is on previously disturbed land in an urban area and replaces existing infrastructure with similar structures" and "the project has already been extensively reviewed and commented upon by both state and federal agencies regarding environmental and cultural impacts." Copies of these comment letters are included as pages 79-80 of the attached Final EA. No other comments were received on the Draft EA.

VIII. Applicability with Environmental Laws and Requirements

The proposed action will be in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws and requirements, including interagency and intergovernmental coordination and consultation, public involvement, and documentation requirements as presented in the attached Environmental Assessment.

IX. Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision

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 as set forth in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable environmental requirements and 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.

Submitted by:  Date: 30 Jun 2009
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Approved by:  Date: 30 Jun 2009
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