

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

NORTHWEST MOUNTAIN REGION

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
RECORD OF DECISION

FOR A

PROPOSED BUSINESS PARK AT

COLORADO SPRINGS AIRPORT
EL PASO COUNTY, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

September 8, 2005

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Colorado Springs Airport (COS), located on the southeastern edge of Colorado Springs, is owned and operated by the City of Colorado Springs. The Airport is the region's primary air carrier airport. COS provides facilities for both commercial and general aviation activities. COS property consists of approximately 8,222 acres of land and includes two parallel runways, a cross-wind runway, parallel taxiway system, aircraft parking aprons, a passenger terminal building, vehicle parking, and a roadway system.

In 2001, COS initiated a Master Plan for the COS Business Park to fulfill the Airport's objectives of becoming more financially independent and promoting orderly growth of areas under its ownership. The study examined the market and feasibility of developing non-aviation use land at the Airport (specifically the south end of the airport) and created a Land Use Plan for the Business Park. The Plan has since been updated from the original plan to reflect the demand of the facilities. In 2004, COS revised the Business Park Master Plan to account for the changes, which includes development on approximately 1,500 acres for the business park. Currently, the plan includes a feasibility assessment and development strategy.

The elements of the Business Park include:

- Commercial/Office development
- Aviation/Military facility, with a "hazardous cargo" area located outside the business park
- 18-hole golf course
- Open space
- Roads and interchanges
- Associated utilities

In 2003, the airport selected a consultant to analyze the environmental impacts of the business park and prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) of its findings. On July 5, 2005, a draft EA was released for a 30-day public comment period. A public hearing on the draft EA was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado on August 4, 2005. The comments on the draft EA reflected a concern for the natural environment, with a primary focus on the preservation of the tall grass prairie.

Throughout the EA process, extensive coordination has taken place between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), COS, and local environmental organizations due to expressed public environmental concerns with the project.

The Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) was approved and signed by the FAA on September 8, 2005. This document addresses each area of public concern, through modifications to the text of the draft EA, and/or by specific responses to written comments submitted during the public comment period.

The initial phase of the Business Park is the "Arrival/Departure Air Control Group" facility. The development is anticipated to occur in the year 2006. The remainder of the Business Park is to be developed over 25 years in response to market demand.

II. THE PROPOSED AGENCY ACTIONS AND APPROVALS

The FAA actions, determinations, and approvals necessary for this project to proceed to completion include the determinations under 49 U.S.C. Sections 47106 and 47107 pertaining to FAA approval, including the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) approval (see 49 U.S.C. §47107(a)(16)), environmental approval (see 42 U.S.C. §§4321-4347, and 40 CFR §§1500-1508), and determinations under other statutes and regulations discussed in this Record of Decision (ROD).

III. ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The evaluation and conclusions of the alternatives analysis can be found in Chapter 3.0 of the FEA. The FAA participated in the alternatives analysis, and independently determined that the assumptions and methodology used and the conclusions reached by the airport sponsor in the study were appropriate.

The alternatives analysis was undertaken to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The four alternatives, including the No Action alternative, are outlined below.

Alternative 1 - Develop Maximum Business Park. This alternative includes developing on approximately 1,400 acres of airport property. The development would consist of 962 acres of office buildings, 91 acres of military facility, 200 acres of golf course and 111 acres of open space. While this alternative meets the purpose and need, it fails to meet the criteria set forth for the COS Business Park. In addition, this alternative would have the greatest impact to the environment.

Alternative 2 - Development Business Park with Open Space (Preferred Alternative). This alternative is similar to Alternative 1, except development would occur on 1,500 acres. The development would consist of 454 acres of office buildings, 100 acres of military facility, 232 acres of golf course and 474 acres of open space. This alternative was developed around preserving the tall prairie grass and designates more land for

open space. This option is the preferred alternative as it is the least environmentally impacting alternative that meets the purpose and need for the project.

Alternative 3 - Lease for Livestock Grazing. This alternative entails leasing approximately 1,440 acres of airport property for livestock grazing. The airport would generate revenue through a lease; however, it fails to meet the purpose and need of the airport remaining financially self-sufficient.

Alternative 4 - No Action. This alternative suggests that the business park would not be developed and the site would generally remain as it is today. It is assumed that other activities and development of the airport would continue. While this alternative will have less impact than Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative), it does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

After careful consideration of the analysis of the impacts of the various alternatives considered, and of the ability of these alternatives to satisfy the identified purpose and need for the proposed facility; and after review and consideration of the testimony at the public hearing, comments submitted in response to the draft EA and coordination with Federal, state, and local agencies; and after considering Federal policy, the FAA hereby selects the development proposal identified as Alternative 2 in the EA for Federal support.

IV. AGENCY FINDINGS

The FAA makes the following determinations for this project, based upon appropriate information and analysis set forth in the FEA.

a. The project is consistent with existing plans of public agencies for development of the area surrounding the airport. [49 U.S.C. 47106(a)(1)].

The determination prescribed by this statutory provision is a precondition to agency approval of project grant funding applications. Extensive coordination regarding this proposed project has taken place between Federal, state and local agencies. Evidence of public and agency coordination can be found in Appendices A and F of the FEA.

b. The interests of the community in or near which the project may be located have been given fair consideration. [49 U.S.C. 47106(b)(2)]

The determination prescribed by this statutory provision is a precondition to agency approval of airport development project grant funding applications. The FEA demonstrates that the proposed business park development will neither disrupt or divide the community, nor impede its orderly development, and it is not in conflict with the comprehensive planning and goals of the City of Colorado Springs, or El Paso County. This is shown in FEA Chapter 5, section 5.2.4, Compatible Land Use; section 5.3.1, Socioeconomic Impacts, Environmental Justice, and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks; and section 5.3.2, Secondary (Induced) Impacts. The draft EA was provided to the public and governmental agencies for review and comment. Further, a public hearing was held on August 4, 2005 to provide an additional opportunity for persons to comment on the proposed development.

c. Finding of No Significant Environmental Impact. (40 CFR 1508.13)

After careful and thorough consideration of the discussions set forth in the FEA and in this ROD, it is found that the proposed Federal action (FAA approval for the development of Alternative 2) 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 that such development 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.

V. MITIGATION

Based on the impact thresholds used for the analysis, no significant impacts result from the Proposed Action and no mitigation is required.

VI. DECISION AND ORDER

Although the "No Action" alternative has fewer developmental impacts than the Preferred Alternative, it fails to achieve the purpose and need for this project. For the reasons summarized earlier in this ROD, and supported by detailed discussion in the FEA, the FAA has determined that the Preferred Alternative is the only practicable alternative.

Having made this determination, the FAA must approve or not approve the agency actions necessary for the project's implementation. Approval would signify that applicable Federal requirements relating to airport development planning have been met, and would permit COS to proceed with the proposed development. Not approving these agency actions would prevent

COS from proceeding with the supported development in a timely manner.

I have carefully considered the FAA's goals and objectives in relation to various aeronautical aspects of the proposed project discussed in the FEA, including the purposes and needs to be served by the project, the alternative means of achieving them, the environmental impacts of these alternatives, and the costs and benefits of achieving these purposes and needs in terms of effective and fiscally responsible expenditure of Federal funds.

Therefore, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator of the FAA, I find that this project is reasonably supported, and I therefore direct that action be taken to carry out the agency actions discussed more fully in Section II of this Record of Decision.

Ernie A Sparks

Manager, Denver Airports District Office
Northwest Mountain Region

Sept 8, 2005

Date

RIGHT OF APPEAL

This decision constitutes the Federal approval for the actions identified above and any subsequent actions approving a grant of federal funds to COS. Today's action is taken pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Subtitle VII, Parts A and B, and constitutes a Final Order of the Administrator, subject to review by the courts of appeals of the United States, in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 46110.