



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Federal Aviation Administration
New England Region

12 New England Executive Park
Burlington, MA 01803

December 9, 2013

Ms. Brona Simon
State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

Dear Ms. Simon:

The FAA is in receipt of your letter of October 28, 2013 regarding the proposed replacement of the Jet Aviation hangar, apron and roadway improvements at L.G.Hanscom Field. These projects are the subject of a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) issued in October 2013. The draft EA was widely distributed, and generated several comment letters. The EA document was submitted to the local historical commissions, who did not comment.

The potential impacts to historic resources can be categorized as either direct effects caused by construction, or indirect effects caused by increased operations (landings and takeoffs). The hangar to be replaced by Jet Aviation appears to be of limited historical value; based on its lack of association with historic events/persons, its design/construction or information value. The land area to be impacted by the hangar/roadway/apron construction has been significantly disturbed by past airport construction.

Civilian operations at airports are driven by regional and national economic factors. Hanscom's annual operations from 1980 to 2000 fluctuated between 180,000 and 250,000. Annual operations declined from 2002 to 2009, followed by recent slow growth to 166,000. The current operations are historically low for this airport; all years prior to 2007 exceeded this amount. Experience at other airports indicates that improvements of the type contemplated at Hanscom have little effect on numbers of operations or associated noise impacts.

Analysis now underway by Massport for the 2012 Environmental Status and Planning Report (ESPR) updated the 2005 ESPR reconnaissance survey of historic resources near Hanscom Field. This analysis identified 61 historic properties (39 individual resources and 22 districts) within the 6,000 acre general study area around Hanscom Field. The noise analysis shows no historic properties fall within the 65DNL noise contour, and no historic properties fall within the 60DNL noise contour. It does show 2 individual properties within the 55DNL noise contour. These properties are the Deacon John Wheeler/Captain Jonas Minot Farmhouse (aka Thoreau Birthplace) and the Wheeler-Meriam House in Concord. The noise levels at these properties have decreased since the 2005 ESPR noise analysis, and remain well below the threshold level of 65DNL.

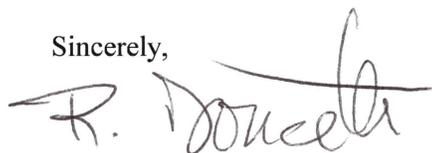
No portion of Minute Man National Park is within the 65, 60 or 55DNL contour. DNL values in the low 50s are considerably lower than the federally-recognized threshold of 65DNL. The FAA does, in limited circumstances, conduct nonstandard noise analyses to assess noise impacts on national parks and other sensitive locations. These analyses are not conducted at all airports near national parks. They are limited to projects that would increase noise levels in parks where a quiet setting is a generally recognized purpose and attribute. As described above, we do not feel these undertakings will result in additional operations or noise impacts. While we understand the importance of Minute Man National Historical Park and the desire for a quiet setting for park visitors, the presence of interpretive programs alone is not sufficient to require additional noise analyses. Such analyses would only be initiated if the undertaking caused additional noise impacts on a park where a quiet setting is a recognized purpose and attribute of that park.

After review of the relevant information, the FAA issues a draft Section 106 "Finding of No Adverse Effect" for these undertakings. This document will be available for public review on the FAA New England Region's website at:

http://www.faa.gov/airports/new_england/

Thank you for your review of this draft Finding. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Doucette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Richard P. Doucette
Manager of Environmental Programs
FAA New England Region

CC: Tom Ennis, Massport
Nancy Nelson, Minute Man National Historical Park