

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration  
Southern Region  
Atlanta, GA

RECORD OF DECISION

For  
Proposed 9,000-Foot Fifth Runway and Associated  
Projects  
Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport  
Fulton and Clayton Counties, Georgia  
September 27, 2001

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announces its decision, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) [42 U.S.C. section 4321, *et seq.*], the implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) [40 CFR Parts 1500-1508], and FAA Orders 1050.1D and 5050.4A. This Record of Decision (ROD) provides final agency determinations and approvals in response to a proposal from the City of Atlanta - Department of Aviation (DOA), airport owner and operator (hereinafter Sponsor) of the Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport (ATL).

In addition, this ROD is prepared to document the agency's compliance with several procedural and substantive requirements of aeronautical, environmental, programmatic, and related statutes and regulations that apply to the agency's decision and ultimate action on the proposed project. These determinations and approvals are necessary to support the proposed construction and operation of a full-service, air carrier runway. The proposed fifth runway is 9,000-foot long by 150-foot wide and includes the 6,000-foot commuter runway that is currently under construction. See Section 1.1.2 of the FEIS for a description of the commuter runway and a history of the approvals for the commuter runway. Projects associated with the proposed runway construction include taxiways, navigational aids, lighting, relocation and addition of low level windshear alert systems, three airfield structures spanning Interstate 285, the relocation of local roadways, and land acquisition. This ROD provides the final determinations and approvals of the Sponsor's proposal, described in detail in Chapter 2 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). This ROD also concludes a thorough environmental and decisionmaking process, including review of the FEIS to facilitate the identified purposes and needs of the Sponsor.

The FAA approves that portion of the ATL Airport Layout Plan (ALP) depicting the following projects more fully described in Section 2.4 of the FEIS:

- Construction and operation of a full-service, 9,000-foot fifth parallel runway;
- Construction of a parallel taxiway, connector taxiways on the north side, and an "endaround" taxiway to route airplanes around the Runway 9R threshold;
- Installation of Category III ILS approach navigational aids;
- Relocation and addition of Low Level Windshear Alert Systems (LLWS);
- Installation of runway, taxiway, and approach lighting;
- Realignment of Loop Road; Tunneling of Interstate 285 for runway; Bridging for taxiway, and eastern connector taxiway; Relocation of West Fayetteville Road; Riverdale Road, and Sullivan Road; and,
- Acquisition of approximately 310 acres of land.

The FAA has worked for several years with the Sponsor to develop a solution to the existing delay and future airfield capacity constraints at ATL. ATL is an essential national air transportation resource centrally located within the 20-county Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The airport is a gateway for international operations as well as a hub for Delta Air Lines, Atlantic Southeast Airlines (a regional carrier), and AirTran (a low-fare carrier). In 2000, ATL accommodated approximately 80.2 million passengers and 915,600 aircraft operations, making it the busiest airport in the world.

According to operational delay data collected by the FAA, ATL experienced 6.7 million minutes of delay in 2000. ATL experiences delay for three primary reasons: large volume of traffic, variation in aircraft fleet mix, and a high percentage of the year that the airport must conduct simultaneous ILS approaches due to poor weather conditions. ATL can currently conduct only dual independent instrument approaches. The main capacity limitation at ATL (and the main cause of delays) is the lack of an additional independent runway for landings and takeoffs.

In 1994, an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were prepared by the FAA documenting the need for a fifth runway with full instrument landing capability that would reduce aircraft delay by providing additional airfield capacity. The intended use of the new runway was primarily for landing by commuter aircraft, general aviation, and light military aircraft with a maximum landing weight of 100,000 pounds. The FONSI was issued for construction of a 6,000-foot by 100-foot runway, as well as construction of associated taxiways; installation of Category I Instrument Landing Systems (ILS); runway, taxiway, and approach lighting systems; land acquisition; road relocations; and the relocation of residences, business, and community facilities.

Since approval of the 6,000-foot commuter runway in 1994, the Sponsor has determined that while the approved 6,000-foot fifth runway would provide delay reduction benefits. These benefits are no longer sufficient given recent aviation industry trends regarding increased use of regional jet aircraft and increasing traffic volume at ATL. The Sponsor has determined, through re-evaluation of the 6,000-foot runway, that a longer runway is needed to provide delay reduction by accommodating all aircraft types for arrivals and most currently-operated aircraft types for departures (by providing triple independent instrument landings and takeoffs).

Existing and future delay caused by inadequate airfield capacity is a major aviation issue today in the United States. FAA policy supports the objectives of the proposed project – to reduce existing and future delay (arrivals and departures) at ATL through the addition of a 3,000-foot extension to the previously environmentally approved 6,000-foot fifth commuter runway. Reduced delay at ATL will result in many benefits to the National Airspace System, including fewer flow control delays by aircraft bound for ATL; quicker emptying of holding patterns; improved airline competition; reduced weather dependency; cost savings; and balanced airfield operations during runway maintenance and airfield emergency situations.

This ROD describes the proposed Federal actions and approvals; public and agency involvement in the EIS process (see Chapter 7 of the FEIS); project purpose and need (see Chapter 2 of the FEIS); the alternatives considered, including criteria used in the two-level alternatives screening process and the results of the screening process (see Chapter 3 of the FEIS); environmental impacts (Chapter 5 of the FEIS) and mitigation (Chapter 6 of the FEIS); agency findings; and decision and order.

## **II. PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTIONS AND APPROVALS**

Chapter 1 of the FEIS outlines the necessary Federal actions and approvals that must take place in order to implement the Sponsor's proposed project. The FAA's actions will be focused on approval of the revised ALP; development and approval of instrumentation and revised flight procedures; funding and grant approval processes for elements of the proposed project; and facilitating actions and approvals of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

By letter dated March 15, 1999, the FAA invited the FHWA to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EIS. The Sponsor is proposing to bridge over Interstate 285 and thus would require an Interstate Encroachment Permit. The FHWA intends to adopt the FAA's FEIS in accordance with CEQ 1506.3, and in support of the FHWA's environmental decisionmaking process.

Separate Federal or state actions and determinations will be made by other appropriate agencies in accordance with established procedures. The FEIS discloses those matters to the extent they are known. The following is a summary of the necessary environmental and aeronautical actions and approvals:

- Determinations under 49 U.S.C. Section 47106 and 47107 pertaining to FAA funding of airport development (including approval of a revised Airport Layout Plan [ALP]; 49 U.S.C. Section 47107(a)(16);
- Determination under 49 U.S.C. Section 47101, *et.seq.* and of project eligibility for Federal grant-in-aid funds under Section 47104 and determination under 49 U.S.C. Sections 40117(a) to approve use of Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) funds;
- Determination and actions, under 49 U.S.C. Section 44718 (14 CFR Part 77) evaluating obstructions to navigable airspace;
- Determinations and actions under 49 U.S.C. Sections 40103(b), and 44701 designing, developing, approving and implementing new flight procedures, including airspace determinations, visual and instrument procedures, missed approach procedures, providing for establishment of modified flight procedures, and other rules or terms and conditions for the safe and efficient use, as well as management, of the navigable airspace;
- Federal Highway Administration approval for an Interstate Encroachment Permit for bridging of an Interstate Highway;
- Conformity of proposed project with applicable air quality standards under the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. Section 7506, Section 176(c)(1) and 40 CFR Part 93);
- Certification under 49 U.S.C. Section 44502(b) that the proposed improvement is reasonably necessary for use in air commerce or for national defense.

### III. PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Chapter 7 of the FEIS provides a detailed outline of the involvement by FAA, other government agencies, and the public during the environmental evaluation process. The FAA has been actively involved with agency coordination and consultation at the Federal, state, and local levels. Federal agencies including the FHWA, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and state agencies including Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) have all been actively involved in the coordination and consultation process. Local coordination and consultation have occurred with elected officials as well as special interest groups and the public at large. The FAA's coordination and consultation process began with Scoping meetings and continued up to the preparation of this ROD, and provided an opportunity for the public to provide input to the FAA during the EIS process.

Prior to initiating the environmental evaluation, the FAA met with the Sponsor to discuss the problems of delay at the airport and identify the purposes and needs for the proposed project. The FAA determined that an EIS would be prepared to appropriately evaluate the proposed project, other alternatives, and their potential environmental impacts. The FAA selected a consultant team experienced in preparing NEPA environmental documents to assist the agency in fulfilling its NEPA responsibilities.

Using preliminary information prepared by the consultant, FAA conducted Agency and Public Scoping meetings in April 1999. These meetings were held as part of an early and open process to determine the scope and significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the EIS. A Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 8, 1999. Notifications of the Agency Scoping Meetings were by letter dated March 30, 1999, to agencies having an interest in the project or having special jurisdiction by law. Notifications for Public Scoping meetings were published in local newspapers on March 18 and 19 and again on April 1 and April 8, 1999. The FAA conducted the Agency Scoping Meeting at 10:00 a.m., April 13, 1999, at the FAA Southern Region offices. Representatives from EPA, USACE, FHWA, Georgia EPD, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Metropolitan Atlanta Rail Transit Authority (MARTA), and City of Atlanta – Department of Aviation were in attendance. Fifteen representatives from those agencies were in attendance.

The Public Scoping Meetings were conducted over a three-day period, April 11-13, 1999. The meetings were held from 5:00 pm to 8:00 PM each night at three separate locations. Those locations were South DeKalb Mall Community Room (Suite 81), Decatur, Georgia; South Fulton Annex, College Park, Georgia; and the Georgia International Convention Center, College Park, Georgia. These meetings afforded the general public an opportunity to provide input into

and view the Sponsor's proposed project. Representatives of FAA, FWHA, the EIS consulting team, and airport staff were available to respond to questions. The main purpose of the Scoping meetings were to introduce the Sponsor's purposes and needs for its proposed project and to receive comments on issues of environmental concern to be included in the study.

Responses to questions or concerns received during Scoping are included in the Scoping Document published as Volume II, Appendix A of the FEIS. A total of 289 comments were tabulated from 103 individual comment forms, letters, and oral transcripts. Approximately 53 percent of the total comments focused on project Purpose and Need, alternatives, the public involvement process, cumulative impacts, construction and safety, and the NEPA EIS process. The remaining 47 percent of total comments were related to potential project impacts. These comments provided inputs on definition and analysis of alternatives, including operational constraints and consideration of a second airport.

Two Public Information Workshops were held on July 11 and 12, 2000, during preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Advance notification of these two Public Information Workshops was provided through advertisements, over the Internet, and through a newsletter generated by the FAA and mailed to over 1,800 persons. The workshops were conducted in an open-house format with presentation boards and the EIS project team members available to provide information. Fundamentally, the Public Information Workshops provided a forum to update the public on the EIS evaluation process to date, to hear comments, and to respond to questions. Written and oral comments were received from 57 persons. The largest number of comments reflected concerns regarding noise, public involvement, and socioeconomic issues.

Based on FAA review and comments received through the Scoping process and Public Information Workshops, a DEIS was prepared and released for review and comment on December 29, 2000. A Notice of Availability appeared in the *Federal Register* on January 12, 2001. Individual copies of the DEIS were mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies. Additionally, copies were supplied to local libraries, the Sponsor, and FAA Atlanta Airport District Office for review by interested parties. A joint Public Information Workshop and Public Hearing for the DEIS was held January 30, 2001, at the Georgia International Convention Center. More than 700 persons attended the workshop/hearing. The agency and public comment period ended on February 26, 2001. A total of 1,500 form letters and 341 non-form letter comments were received from agencies and the public during the comment and review period.

In preparing the FEIS, the FAA assessed and considered all comments received during the comment periods. Environmental concerns and comments have been dealt with in the FEIS. In some instances, the FAA responded by supplementing, improving, or modifying analyses, clarifying text, and/or making factual corrections to DEIS text. In other instances, comments not germane to the environmental process or a substantive environmental concern expressed as an opinion have been noted. In all cases, the FAA responded either individually or collectively to comments and all substantive comments received on the DEIS are incorporated in the FEIS as Volume III.

The FEIS was approved by the FAA on August 16, 2001 and was released to agencies and the public on August 17, 2001. A Notice of Availability was published in the *Federal Register* on August 24, 2001, for a 30-day review period. Substantive comments received on the FEIS on matters within its jurisdiction have been fully assessed and considered in Appendix 1 of this ROD.

#### **IV. PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED**

ATL is the world's busiest airport and is currently the highest delay impacted airport. This delay is 31 percent higher than the total delay experienced at Chicago-O'Hare (ORD), the second highest total delay impacted airport in the United States. In 1999, ATL handled the second highest number of operations per runway of any air carrier airport. On a comparative basis, this attests to ATL's airfield being operated as effectively and efficiently as any other airport in the United States. To determine existing levels of delay, an airside simulation analysis was performed. The airside simulation analysis completed for the EIS confirmed that ATL is experiencing high levels of delay. The analysis determined that delays in Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC) were approximately 7 minutes per operation, and in Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) were over 12 minutes per operation.

The 6,000-foot commuter runway was intended to serve primarily arrivals with landing weights less than 100,000 pounds. Since issuance of the FONSI in 1994, a number of changes at ATL have occurred that limited such a runway's ability to provide the maximum amount of airport-wide delay reduction. These changes include the trend of airlines to replace turboprops with regional jets, growth in annual passengers and operations, growth in peak hour operations, and increase in commuter arrivals over north fixes.

The FAA updated the forecasts developed by the Sponsor in support of their Master Plan Update (MPU), finalized in 1997, for the DEIS because three events had occurred since 1997 which affected assumptions driving the MPU forecasts:

- Actual commuter/regional aircraft activity greatly exceeded forecast activity in the MPU;
- Actual passenger counts exceeded the MPU forecasts;
- International activity increased faster than projected in the MPU.

The forecasts indicate that there would not be enough commuter arrival demand to fully utilize the 6,000-foot runway. While valuable in reducing delay, such a runway would not provide the maximum delay reduction needed under the present and future conditions. Forecast peak period demand would exceed the capacity of the existing airfield with a 6,000-foot runway. The DEIS forecasts that peak hourly operations would increase to 238 by 2005 and reach 258 by 2010. The difference in demand exceeding capacity leads to delay.

The FAA considers an airport to be congested if the average delay per operation exceeds 5 minutes, and delays per operation of 10 minutes or more may be considered severe. All weather delays with a 6,000-foot fifth commuter runway are projected to exceed 15 minutes per operation in 2005 and 20 minutes in 2010. All weather delays with a 3,000-foot extension to the commuter runway would be over 6 minutes in 2005 and 8 minutes in 2010. If delays increase, ATL would experience unacceptable delay levels, air service would deteriorate, and the multi-airline hub would not grow. Assigning all commuter traffic arriving from the north to the 6,000-foot runway during peak periods would cause further delay due to circuitous routing that would be required. The annual cost of delay to airlines serving ATL has been projected to increase from \$192 million in 1998 to approximately \$767 million in 2005 with the 6,000-foot commuter runway. A 9,000-foot runway would handle arrivals of all aircraft types in all-weather conditions, would provide more air traffic control flexibility, and provide more efficient flow of traffic to the runways.

The purpose of the Sponsor's proposed project is to reduce current and future all-weather airport operating delay by providing sufficient airfield capacity through 2010 to accommodate most aircraft types during all weather conditions. As a result of the recent FAA-mandated national groundstop and subsequent reduction in all air traffic operations in the aftermath of the tragedies in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, the FAA has reviewed the purpose and need for the proposed project presented in the FEIS. The proposed airport development is a long-term

planning and implementation solution for the established purposes and needs at ATL. The FAA concludes that the forecasts included in the FEIS are based on supported data and valid assumptions, and that the analyses for the proposed project and its need are still sound. Therefore, based on the information available at this time, the FAA believes the proposed project is still needed and supported at ATL.

To alleviate identified deficiencies and constraints, a full service air carrier fifth runway with a 9,000-foot length is essential in accommodating ATL's demands during peak arrival and departure periods regardless of weather. Four critical components of delay would be addressed by the proposed project: providing additional independent approach capability; decreasing the dependency between departure runways in poor visibility conditions; providing an enhanced airfield to serve all air carrier aircraft under all weather conditions; and maintaining existing and future hub activity at ATL.

The FAA has determined that ATL needs a solution to its existing and future delays and capacity problems and that the proposed runway and associated improvements meet those needs as identified in Chapter 2 of the FEIS. As identified in Section 2.2, the addition of a 9,000-foot fifth runway will reduce, but not eliminate, delays at ATL. Additional review of the need for future increased airport capacity at ATL will be required to further reduce delays in the future based on the most current forecasts.

## **V. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

In addition to its responsibility to comply with relevant environmental statutes, the FAA, in its consideration of alternatives, has kept in mind two agency statutory missions: to encourage the development of civil aeronautics and air commerce in the United States (49 U.S.C. 40104); and to plan the kind of airport development necessary to provide a safe, efficient, and integrated system of public-use airports adequate to anticipate and meet the needs of civil aeronautics, national defense and the United States Postal Service (49 U.S.C. 47103). FAA has also considered the congressional policy declaration that airport construction and improvement projects that increase the capacity of facilities to accommodate passenger and cargo traffic be undertaken to the maximum feasible extent so that safety and efficiency increase and delays decrease (49 U.S.C. 47101 (a)(7)).

While the FAA does not have the authority to control or direct actions and decisions of a Sponsor in planning proposed projects, it does have the authority to withhold project approval, including Federal funding and the other Federal actions required and identified in this ROD. Alternatives to the proposed project have been considered from this standpoint, in terms of their respective abilities to satisfy the independent purposes and the recognized needs and their resulting environmental and socioeconomic impacts to determine whether there was an alternative superior to that proposed by the Sponsor.

The FAA must be assured that a range of reasonable alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative, has been considered and that there are no feasible, practicable or prudent alternatives to approve Federal actions in support of the Sponsor's proposed project. In determining the best method to meeting the needs identified in Chapter 2 of the FEIS, the FAA evaluated a broad range of alternatives, including some alternatives that were eliminated from further evaluation because they would not meet the Sponsor's purposes and needs. Both off-site and on-site alternatives to the proposed project were evaluated in Chapter 3 of the EIS.

As discussed below, most of these alternatives were not feasible, reasonable, practicable or prudent; they were not logistically achievable, not responsive to reducing existing levels of delay, not timely, or too costly. Following is a summary of the alternatives considered.



## **No-Action Alternative**

CEQ regulations require the No-Action Alternative be considered in the environmental assessment of alternatives (40 CFR Part 1502.14 (d)). The No-Action Alternative would consist of constructing a 6,000-foot commuter runway located south of Runway 9R/27L primarily to serve arriving aircraft under 100,000 pounds maximum landing weight, and this runway would be constructed even if the proposed project were not approved. This runway was environmentally approved by the FAA through a FONSI in 1994 and subsequent re-evaluations to better define the separation and width requirements, resulting in a 150-foot wide runway at a 4,200-foot separation from Runway 9R/27L. While the 6,000-foot commuter runway would provide some delay reduction, it would not provide enough reduction to serve as a long-term solution to effectively accommodate forecast demand. The restriction placed on operations of the 6,000-foot runway to serve primarily arrivals weighing less than 100,000 pounds greatly reduces its delay reduction potential. The No-Action Alternative would not accommodate landings of all aircraft types and would generally not accommodate take-offs by any aircraft. The No-Action Alternative would only temporarily reduce delay and would not meet future forecast demand.

The No-Action Alternative also consists of aviation activities and facilities planned to occur in the 2001 to 2010 timeframe. Those development projects have independent utility from the Sponsor's proposed project and are identified in detail in Section 2.5 of the FEIS. Those projects include taxiway and runway improvements; terminal expansion, modifications, and additions; on-site support facilities to support airport tenants; and off-site facilities, including the upgrade of terminal area roadways and construction of a consolidated rental car facility.

The No-Action Alternative was not considered to be reasonable, practicable, or prudent in accomplishing the identified purposes and needs, but, as required, was carried through detailed analysis of all impact categories contained in FAA Orders 1050.1D and 5050.4A.

## **Off-Site Alternatives**

### **Use of Other Modes of Transportation/Communication Alternatives**

Alternative modes of transportation and communication can offer feasible alternatives to air travelers particularly those traveling 500 miles or less. A review of air travelers using ATL revealed that more than 87.6 percent of domestic passengers begin or end their trip at a point more than 500 miles from ATL. The FAA considered whether surface roadway transportation, rail, telecommunications or video-conferencing could absorb some of ATL's passenger or air cargo. Beyond 500 roadway miles, these alternative modes of transportation to air travel become less efficient and less desirable. Due to the limited number of markets that could be served by surface roadway transportation and rail and the desire to reach destinations quickly, the use of these modes of transportation will not eliminate the need for an additional air carrier runway nor reduce existing delay at ATL. These modes were eliminated from further consideration, as they would not meet the need to reduce delay at ATL. Telecommunications and video-conferencing have been available for several years, however they have had little or no impact on demand for air travel. These modes were eliminated as they would not decrease the demand for air travel in the short-term, provide the ability to handle air carrier operations, and/or meet the need to reduce delay at ATL.

### **Use of Other Airports**

The FAA considered the possible use of other airports or sites (including construction of a potential new airport) and the use of existing commercial-service airports to meet the need to reduce delay. A potential new airport was considered on properties owned by the City of Atlanta specifically to preserve the option to create a second air carrier airport. These properties

currently do not have airport-related infrastructure or existing air service. It would not be possible for Delta Air Lines, ASA, or AirTran to establish hub operations at a new airport site to provide short-term or mid-term delay at ATL. There is no viable proposal from a willing sponsor for a new airport site at this time.

There are several other airports in the area; however, none of them contain sufficient airfield capacity or landside facilities to adequately relieve the aircraft delay problem at ATL, and there are no known plans for the required infrastructure investments, and no willing sponsor to undertake the needed improvements. Moreover, none of these airports have existing air carrier service to accommodate a significant number of ATL passengers.

No proposal has been made for a new airport or use of existing airports that would provide immediate or short-term delay reduction. The development of a new airport and the use of existing airports were eliminated from further consideration, as they offered no practical way to resolve the central issue of reducing delay at ATL.

## **On-Site Alternatives**

### **4-Runway Alternative**

In response to comments raised by U.S. EPA during the development of the DEIS, the FAA conducted analyses of the future conditions at ATL which assumed that neither the No-Action Alternative nor any of the other alternatives would be constructed. The analyses identified the impacts in 2005 and 2010 as if only the current airfield configuration (4 runways) were available for use in the future. The analyses were presented for information, disclosure, and comparison purposes only because the No-Action (6,000-foot) runway, currently under construction, will be operational in 2005. Therefore, the 4-Runway Alternative is not a viable alternative. However, this alternative was carried through detailed analysis for noise, air quality, and surface transportation.

## **Procedural Alternatives**

The FAA considered the possibility of implementing procedural alternatives such as Simultaneous Offset Instrument Approach (SOIA) and Along Track Spacing (ATS). Both involve using revised air traffic control procedures to land aircraft. While both SOIA and ATS appear to hold promise in reducing delay for certain runway configurations and levels of traffic, there are limitations for their use at ATL. These limitations include, but are not limited to, the ability to provide all-weather capability; standards do not exist for conducting SOIA to three runways; no standards exist for ATS, and both SOIA and ATS involve landing aircraft on a departure runway. When applied at ATL, arrival delay would be reduced but departure delay would increase because of the need to land aircraft on a departure runway. These procedural alternatives will not provide a short-term or long-term solution for reducing arrival and/or departure delay and were eliminated from further consideration.

## **Demand Management**

The possible use of Demand Management measures was considered by the FAA as a way to increase airport efficiency through non-developmental actions to reduce delay or postpone the need for increasing airport capacity. Seven measures were evaluated for their potential applicability and limitations at ATL:

- Hourly Limits on Operations
- Daily Limit on Operations and Annual Passenger Limit
- Allocation of Operations to Other Airports in the Region

- Peak Period Pricing
- Mandatory Use of Larger Aircraft
- Restrict Use of Hub Airports
- Schedule Smoothing

The implementation of such measures at ATL would require joint and coordinated efforts by the Sponsor, FAA, the airlines, and other area airports. Demand Management raises major policy issues as any of these strategies may conflict with existing airline agreements as well as Federal law. The implementation of Demand Management measures at ATL was determined not to meet the need for reducing existing delay and was eliminated from further consideration.

Absent any feasible or practical way to create a new airport, provide other competitive modes of transportation, or useable procedural or demand management measures, the choice remaining is limited to improving the existing airfield. The remaining on-site alternatives deal with airfield expansion options at ATL. These alternatives include the extension of existing runways; new runways on existing airport property; new runways at an angle to existing runways; a new dependent parallel runway; a new independent parallel runway south of Runway 9R/27L; and a new independent parallel runway north of Runway 8L/26R. The most critical current need at ATL is to reduce existing delay. These airfield configurations represent a range of reasonable airfield alternatives that were identified and evaluated in order to determine if they provided a means to satisfy the Sponsor's identified problem of reducing delay.

### **Evaluation and Screening of Alternatives**

Based on the purpose and need identified in Section 2.3 of the FEIS, Level One screening criteria were developed and applied to the off-site and on-site alternatives. The screening criteria were: reduce arrival delay at ATL; reduce departure delay at ATL; reduce delay at ATL by providing enhanced airfield ability to serve air carrier aircraft; and ability to maintain hubs at ATL. Failure to meet any one of the criteria in the first level of screening would exclude an alternative from further analysis, as it would not reasonably meet the objectives or the purpose and need of solving the identified problem of reducing delay at ATL.

The range of alternatives was reviewed against the Level One screening criteria. The conclusions reached from this evaluation were:

- The extension of the existing four runways would provide little or no arrival or departure delay reduction benefit.
- New runways on existing airport property would have runway lengths limited to between 4,000 and 7,000 feet and would not be sufficient for takeoffs and landings of most of the airport's air carrier aircraft and thus would not reduce existing arrival or departure delay.
- Due to operational dependencies and lack of flexibility, angled runways that intersect the existing runways would not provide a long-term delay reduction due to reduced utility.
- ATL currently has two sets of close parallel runways. To meet FAA airfield safety and geometric criteria, an additional dependent runway would be located adjacent to one of the existing arrival runways, separated by as little as 700 feet. Adding a new, closely spaced dependent parallel runway would not provide the needed capacity in instrument operating conditions to reduce delay.
- Development of a new independent parallel runway south of Runway 9R/27L would provide maximum arrival and departure delay relief based on the Airspace and Airport Simulation Model (SIMMOD) results. Four geographic areas were identified with seven potential runway locations.
- A new independent parallel runway north of runway 8L/26R would reduce delay by providing both independent approach capability and the ability to serve air carrier aircraft.

Those alternatives that did not meet the Level One screening criteria were not considered further. Based on the Level One screening results, alternatives in two geographic areas were evaluated further in Level Two screening: new independent parallel runway south of Runway 9R/27L, and new independent runway north of Runway 8L/26R. Those alternatives were further evaluated under Level Two screening for constructability, operations, and cost factors. The Level Two criteria included tower sight distance; need for major highway modifications; the number of residential and business relocations; the need for Section 404 wetlands permitting; the level of landfill encroachment; and the estimate of probable cost.

After further evaluation, two potential locations south of Runway 9R/27L for a new independent parallel runway remained and were carried through detailed environmental analysis in Chapter 5 of the EIS. These alternatives were referred to in the EIS as Alternative 1 and Alternative 2.

The following alternatives were the subject of detailed environmental evaluation in the EIS:

- No-Action Alternative – This alternative consists of constructing a 6,000-foot commuter runway located south of Runway 9R/27L. This runway would primarily serve arriving aircraft under 100,000 pounds maximum landing weight, and would be constructed even if the proposed project were not approved. The No-Action Alternative also includes aviation activities and facilities planned to occur in the 2001 to 2010 timeframe that have independent utility from the Sponsor's proposed project; these projects are listed in Section 2.5 of the FEIS.
- 4-Runway Alternative – This alternative assumes that neither the No-Action Alternative nor any of the other alternatives would be constructed. This alternative is included for information, disclosure, and comparison purposes only because the No-Action Alternative is currently under construction and will be operational in 2005.
- Alternative 1 – This alternative consists of a 9,000-foot fifth runway that is 4,200 feet south of Runway 9R/27L, with the west threshold in the same location as the previously approved 6,000-foot commuter runway. This alternative also includes aviation activities and facilities planned to occur in the 2001 to 2010 timeframe that have independent utility from the Sponsor's proposed project; these projects are listed in Section 2.5 of the FEIS.
- Alternative 2 – This alternative consists of a 9,000-foot fifth runway that is 4,200 feet south of Runway 9R/27L, with the west threshold shifted approximately 1,900 feet to the east from the location of the previously approved 6,000-foot commuter runway. This alternative also includes aviation activities and facilities planned to occur in the 2001 to 2010 timeframe that have independent utility from the Sponsor's proposed project; these projects are listed in Section 2.5 of the FEIS.

## **VI. The Selected Alternative**

### **Sponsor's Preferred Alternative**

The Sponsor's preferred long-term airport development alternative is the proposed project, identified in the FEIS as Alternative 2. The Sponsor's preference for Alternative 2 is based on its evaluation, airline and pilot preference, payload restrictions, and, operational reasons which include:

- With the west threshold shifted to the east, the controller sight distance to the threshold is reduced, thus enhancing safety.
- No stagger would exist between the fifth runway and Runway 9L thresholds, greatly reducing the negative effects of southwest override (a meteorological effect) between Runway 9L and the fifth runway departures.
- The I-85 /I-285 interchange acts as an "obstacle" when departing to the west under Alternative 1. This obstacle reduces aircraft payload and creates an airline operation and

air traffic control restriction. Under Alternative 2, this restriction is not present because of the runway's eastward shift away from the interchange.

### **Environmentally Preferable Alternative**

As required by the CEQ (40 CFR Part 1502.14(e), a lead agency must identify its preferred alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and must identify the environmentally preferable alternative (40 CFR Part 1505.2(b)) at the time of its decision. The environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative which best promotes the national environmental policies incorporated in Section 101 of NEPA. In general, this would be the alternative resulting in the least adverse impacts to the human environment and which best protects natural and cultural resources.

As discussed in Section 3.6 of the FEIS, there is no substantial difference between the overall environmental impacts of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 and FAA has determined that either can be considered environmentally preferable. Both of these alternatives are environmentally preferable over the No-Action Alternative. As disclosed and analyzed in the FEIS, the impacts resulting from the No-Action Alternative on floodplains, wetlands, streams and biotic communities would total 75 percent or more of the impacts identified for Alternatives 1 or 2. In addition, the No-Action Alternative would have more residential relocations than Alternative 2. The additional relocations for the No-Action Alternative would be required within the west runway protection zone of the No-Action Alternative, but will be avoided by the shifted threshold of Alternative 2. From an air quality perspective, the No-Action Alternative would result in increased emissions over either of the environmentally preferable alternative. The area of incompatible land use based on noise contours would be the greatest under the No-Action Alternative, while either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 would have a slightly higher number of noise sensitive sites compared to the No-Action Alternative, due to the redistribution of noise to the south. Furthermore, and most importantly, the No-Action Alternative fails to address the critical needs identified in Chapter 2 to reduce delay at ATL. More detailed comparisons with the No-Action Alternative are included throughout Chapter 5 of the FEIS.

## **VI. Selected Alternative**

The FAA does not initiate airport development projects. Therefore, the FAA may consider the Sponsor's preferences in evaluating alternatives that would meet the needs for the National Airspace System and operations at ATL, and FAA's environmental responsibilities. The Sponsor has identified specific safety and operational benefits of Alternative 2 over Alternative 1. These safety and operational benefits, due to the eastward shift of Alternative 2 to align the runway threshold, are the primary differences between the two alternatives.

FAA has completed the appropriate environmental review and the necessary steps in the NEPA process, including:

- Careful consideration of alternatives and the ability of the alternatives to satisfy the identified purpose and need for the proposed project;
- Evaluation of the potential impacts of the alternatives carried forward including the determination that Alternative 2 can be considered an environmentally preferable alternative; and
- Review and consideration of public testimony, of comments submitted in response to the DEIS and FEIS, and of coordination with Federal, state, and local agencies.

Therefore, FAA finds Alternative 2, one of the environmentally preferable alternatives and to be a feasible, reasonable, practicable, and prudent alternative to meet the purpose and need for satisfying existing delay and future forecast demand at ATL.

With the proposed project, improvements can be made which would reduce delay and satisfy future demand at ATL. The FAA's selection of Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative incorporates mitigation measures described in Chapter 6 of the FEIS and later sections of this ROD. Having thus considered the policies set forth in 49 U.S.C. Sections 40104 and 47101, the ability of the available alternatives to meet the purpose and need, and the environmental impact of the alternatives, the FAA's approval of the preferred alternative signifies that the project meets FAA standards for approval of the agency actions discussed in Section II of this ROD.

## VII. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

### Summary of Impacts and Mitigation

This section contains a brief summary of the principal findings relative to environmental impact categories that have been examined by the FAA in the FEIS. More detailed evaluations of these environmental categories can be found in Chapter 5 of the FEIS. Mitigation measures to which the Sponsor has committed are described in Chapter 6 and listed in Table 6-5 of the FEIS.

### Noise

Revisions to existing departure flight patterns will be required to accommodate the 9,000-foot fifth runway. The resulting departure flight patterns will influence the noise exposure in the area surrounding ATL, effectively redistributing some of the sound energy. The results of the noise analysis indicate that some populated areas near ATL will be exposed to increases in noise as a result of the 9,000-foot runway, particularly to the southeast, south, and southwest of the existing runways. Areas north of ATL will experience slight reductions in overall noise levels.

The proposed project is expected to increase the population exposed to 65 DNL or greater by 5 to 10 percent over the projected No-Action conditions for 2005 and 10 to 15 percent for 2010. Table 1 summarizes the estimate of persons within the 65+ DNL contour for 2005 and 2010.

<b>Noise Level</b>	<b>Proposed Project: 2005</b>	<b>Proposed Project: 2010</b>
65-70 DNL	19,336	22,028
70-75 DNL	10,758	7,896
75+ DNL	52	9
<b>Total Above 65 DNL</b>	<b>30,146</b>	<b>29,933</b>

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., 2001.

By comparison, the 65+ DNL contour under the No-Action Alternative would include 27,902 persons in 2005 and 25,903 persons in 2010. Even with the 4-Runway Alternative, the 65+ DNL contour would include 25,656 persons in 2005 and 23,947 persons in 2010. While the proposed project will increase exposure to the 65 DNL for residences to the southeast, south, and southwest of ATL, it will also minimize exposure to the 75 DNL conditions. The 75 DNL contour for the proposed project will result in an 80 percent decrease from that which would have been affected under the No-Action Alternative. Because the proposed project will introduce the 65+ DNL noise exposure to residential areas that would otherwise be outside this level of noise from ATL, mitigation measures were identified and committed to by the Sponsor.

According to FAA policy guidelines established in FAA Order 1050.1D and Draft Order 7490xx, new flight procedures or changes to flight procedures that affect flight routes near noise sensitive land uses are required to be evaluated for potential noise impacts from aircraft at high altitudes. These guidelines indicate that changes in departure routes where typical aircraft altitudes are

between 3,000 feet and 10,000 feet above ground level (AGL) will be subject to a required noise screening analysis. Similarly, changes in arrival routes that affect aircraft at altitudes between 3,000 feet and 7,000 feet AGL will also be subject to the noise screening analysis.

An analysis of high altitude noise impacts was conducted on the communities that would experience noise due to the proposed project in excess of 45 DNL as a result of a change of 5 DNL or more. Two communities, Peachtree City and Lovejoy, would experience a noticeable change in the overall noise environment as a result of the proposed project. However, there is no information to suggest that the change would be considered significant. Further, the DNL levels at these communities would clearly be of a similar magnitude as the ambient noise levels in the areas. Finally, a review of the current ATL radar flight tracks reveals that both of the communities experience regular overflights of aircraft arriving and departing ATL. Consequently, there is no viable mitigation for these areas, particularly at noise levels very near ambient levels.

The noise mitigation measures include both actions that will occur to provide noise abatement at the eligible structures and a commitment to further evaluate other measures in cooperation with surrounding jurisdictions as part of a new FAA Part 150 study update. The specific commitments for abatement include acoustical treatment of residences and community facilities within the 65-74 DNL exposure. Relocations will be provided to willing sellers of residences within the 75+ DNL contour.

### **Land Use**

The FAA has adopted guidelines regarding land use compatibility within varied levels of noise. The 65+ DNL contour is the threshold of noise compatibility with residential or other noise-sensitive land uses. Therefore, residences (and estimated number of persons) within the 65+ DNL contour were identified, as well as acres of land use types. Land uses identified include residential, commercial, cemetery, institutional, industrial, park/recreational, residential, transportation/ utilities (including parking lots), emergency service facilities, public/government, and vacant. FAA guidelines for land use compatibility state that of these land uses, residential, park/recreational, and institutional are incompatible within the 65 DNL contour.

As previously summarized, the proposed project will result in noise exposure at the 65+ DNL levels for approximately 30,146 persons in 2005 and 29,933 in 2010. The 65+ DNL contour for existing (1998) conditions includes 36,757 persons. These estimates were derived by combining land use inventory data, occupancy rates of multi-family and single-family residences, and population data from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the U.S. Census Bureau (described in Section 5.3.2 of the FEIS). Therefore, the proposed project will result in noise exposure at the 65+ DNL contour level for 6,611 fewer people in 2005 and 6,824 fewer people in 2010 compared to the existing (1998) condition. The persons within the 65+ DNL noise contours represent 11,663 households in 2005 and 11,594 households in 2010. Within the 1998 65+ DNL contour, there are 14,295 households. The proposed project will introduce 65 DNL noise level exposure over 10 noise sensitive sites (residential, institutional, and park/recreational), in addition to the 85 sites that will remain in the noise contour with or without a fifth runway. These additional sites include day care centers and churches, most of which are located in Fulton County.

Mitigation measures will be provided for these impacts. The Sponsor will evaluate noise levels and acoustical treatment methods at the noise sensitive sites, applying appropriate treatment where practicable to reduce the interior sound levels to meet the FAA's noise compatibility guidelines.

### **Social Impacts**

The proposed project will require the acquisition of land that will be needed for construction of the runway, taxiways, and road relocations and for the runway protection zones. The proposed project will displace 1,265 residences, 11 community facilities, and 254 businesses. Of these totals, 994 residences, 7 community facilities, and 148 businesses have been relocated already to accommodate the approved 6,000-foot commuter runway.

Relocation assistance will be provided in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Acts of 1970. In addition, the Sponsor will provide a variety of services to help residents and business owners with the transition. Examples of the support include providing details about community and family resources, contacts for available properties to rent or purchase, and information on local schools.

### **Environmental Justice**

Potential disproportionate impacts were evaluated in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 12898 by determining the percentage of minority and low-income populations affected by the impact categories. The findings in this ROD clarify the process followed to make the determination of disproportionate impacts.

Consistent with policies of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Census Bureau, the populations for the environmental justice (EJ) analysis were defined as follows:

- Minority population refers to any readily identifiable group of minority persons (Black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and other non-White populations) who share either geographic proximity or a similar potential impact in relation to a proposed project that is Federally funded. The EJ analysis used this definition based on 1990 and 2000 population data from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), which bases its estimates on the U.S. Census Bureau data.
- Low-income population refers to any readily identifiable group of persons whose median household income is at or below \$15,000. The EJ analysis used this threshold based on percent below poverty status from the 1990 Census.

During the analyses and documentation for the EIS, environmental justice concerns were coordinated at Federal, state, and local levels. Planning staff at Fulton, Clayton, and DeKalb Counties were consulted to locate minority or low-income neighborhoods within the project area. In addition, planning staff at eight municipalities in the vicinity of the airport were contacted early in this analysis and asked to identify any community concerns or EJ populations.

In addition to the EJ considerations at a county and community level, population characteristics within the demographic project area were reviewed. See Figure 1 in Appendix 3 for the demographic project area. Areas of minority and low-income populations were identified consistent with guidance from several sources, including *the U.S. Department of Transportation Order on Environmental Justice* and *Interim Policy to Identify and Address Potential Environmental Justice Areas* from EPA's Region IV. Census tract data from 1990 and 2000 in the demographic project area were compared with the averages for the state and counties. The Census tracts that had minority or low-income populations exceeding either the state or three-county totals by 20 percent were identified as being potential environmental justice areas (EJ areas).

Impacts of the proposed project were then considered in relation to these EJ areas and the demographic project area. The demographic project area was defined by determining the 65 DNL noise contours for 1998, extending south of the contours to include area within the future contour (2005 and 2010), and combining the composite 65 DNL contour of the three years with



Census tract boundaries. The estimated population within the demographic project area is 40,490, with 67 percent minority and 26 percent low-income persons.

Based on updated data obtained subsequent to the DEIS, the disproportionate impact analysis was changed in the FEIS. The changes reflect more accurate estimates of occupancy rates in multi-family communities, refined contour boundaries, updated land use inventory, and more current coordination with the Sponsor's land acquisition program.

Based on a review of the direct and indirect effects and the population characteristics of the demographic project area, three categories of possible disproportionate impacts were determined: residential displacements, noise, and short-term construction impacts. These impacts would occur with any of the alternatives involving construction of a fifth runway. The FAA has concluded that these impacts will be unavoidable, requiring mitigation consistent with state and Federal laws and policies.

The displacements of the proposed project will include the 154-unit Brandon Towne Apartments, the 111-unit Woodland Hills Mobile Home Park, and between 7 and 15 single-family residences, depending on whether or not the final realignment of Sullivan Road will require any residential acquisitions.

The displacements of the proposed project will disproportionately affect minority and low-income residents. This determination was made by comparing the percentages of the populations affected with the percentages for the demographic project area and counties. In addition, the displacements will occur within the potential EJ areas that were identified. The residents displaced from single-family residences and apartments will consist of approximately 75 percent minorities. Low-income persons displaced by the proposed project will be 31 percent overall and up to 75 percent at the mobile home park. The percentages are greater than the corresponding percentages of these populations within the demographic project area (67 percent minority, 26 percent low-income) and the three adjacent counties (47 percent minority, 14 percent low-income).

Noise impacts also have been determined to disproportionately affect minority populations. As summarized in Table 2, the percentage of minority and low-income persons that will experience 65+ DNL noise exposure is higher than the percentage of one or both of these populations within the either the three adjacent counties or the demographic project area. The noise impacts will also occur within the identified EJ areas.

<b>Table 2</b>		
<b>Minority and Low-Income Persons Within Noise Contours</b>		
<b>Area of Coverage</b>	<b>Proposed Project: Percent Minority</b>	<b>Proposed Project: Percent Low-Income</b>
Fulton, Clayton, DeKalb Counties	47	14
Demographic Project Area	67	26
4-Runway 65+ DNL	69	25
Alternative 2 65+ DNL	76	26

Note: Relative comparison for Alternative 2 and 4-Runway Alternative applies to either 2005 or 2010; there is less than a one point difference in the percentages of minority or low-income populations between these years.

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., 2001.

Short-term construction impacts will occur primarily in areas of vacant, industrial land uses. The one exception is the realignment of Sullivan Road, which will occur near the Cherry Hill subdivision, a traditionally minority neighborhood. During construction phases over a two-year period, residents of the neighborhood will experience increases in noise levels due to the use of equipment and trucks. Among the mitigation measures for construction activities is a commitment by the Sponsor to minimize noise impacts in the vicinity of the Sullivan Road realignment. Specifically, construction will be prohibited during nighttime hours near the subdivision.

In addition to following guidelines of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Acts of 1970, the Sponsor has conducted and will continue a program that is designed to assist renters with first-time home ownership. This program will be offered to residents of Brandon Towne Apartments as an alternative to renting. Relocation assistance will also be provided to renters. As mitigation for the mobile home residents, the Sponsor has committed to providing additional relocation assistance payments to enable the owner-occupants to purchase newer mobile homes. These relocation programs will be funded through Passenger Facility Charges upon application by the Sponsor and approval by the FAA.

The noise mitigation program by the Sponsor will include several of the EJ areas for noise abatement measures. Due to the high percentage of minority residents in multi-family housing, the City will expand its noise abatement program to include the multi-family residences within the respective contours. Within the 65-74 DNL contour, residences will receive acoustical treatment, while relocation assistance will be provided for willing sellers and tenants in the 75+ DNL contour.

The Sponsor will update the identification of EJ areas upon the availability of the 2000 Census data and provide early notification to those residents about upcoming schedules for implementing various project phases.

#### Surface Transportation

To accommodate the proposed project, the roadways immediately south of the existing ATL property to I-285 will be acquired. Access to the roadways currently serving uses in the acquisition area for the proposed project will be closed. Modifications will be required to Sullivan Road, SR 314 (West Fayetteville Road), SR 139 (Riverdale Road), and Airport Loop Road. Based on a modeling analysis of the needed roadway modifications, the redistribution of traffic will lower the Level of Service at spot locations on local roadways. Mitigation will be provided through intersection improvements in order to provide acceptable levels of traffic service.

By evaluating the benefits and costs of various methods to address the traffic impacts, improvements were recommended on a network-wide basis to four intersections: I-285 Westbound ramps and Riverdale Road, I-285 Eastbound ramps and Riverdale Road, West Fayetteville Road and Godby Road, and Riverdale Road and Phoenix Boulevard. The Sponsor has committed to funding these improvements or similar modifications to balance the traffic and maintain acceptable Levels of Service within the network.

#### **I-285 Structures**

Structures are required to carry the runway and two taxiways over I-285. Presently, three separate structures have been proposed: one will carry the runway and be constructed to tunnel standards and the two others will be classified as bridges. Because it would be cost-prohibitive to modify the structures in the future to add lanes to I-285, the freeway section through the structures will be constructed with the ability to accommodate additional, future lanes. The Sponsor has been coordinating the planning, design, and construction of the structures with Georgia Department Of Transportation (GDOT). As planning details are refined, coordination will

continue to include FHWA, GDOT, and ARC in a cooperative effort to minimize long-term impacts on I-285 traffic as well as temporary construction impacts.

The structures will not require displacements of residences or businesses in addition to those identified in the acquisition area for Alternative 2. The structures will not include vehicular access that could affect traffic patterns. The foundations or structures will not impact biotic communities, wetlands, or floodplains in addition to those required for Alternative 2. Therefore, attention during coordination with GDOT has focused on planning phases to prepare for long-term safety of motorists and for temporary construction impacts on traffic. At this time, no specific mitigation measures are warranted for the long-term use of the structures. However, coordination must continue during design phases to refine agency and local government roles for emergency response, hazardous materials transportation, and maintenance of the structures. The Sponsor has committed to the mitigation measures during construction, which are described in the Construction Impacts section of this ROD.

#### Historical, Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 addresses the responsibilities of Federal agencies to afford protection of historic and cultural resources. Historic, architectural, cultural, and archaeological surveys have been conducted during the course of this environmental review process. Properties and resources that are either listed, or potentially eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) have been identified in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and 36 CFR Part 800.4. The FAA has made a determination based on the Cultural Resource Study and in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800.5 that the proposed project will have No Effect on 27 architectural historic resources and No Adverse Effect on seven architectural historic resources. The FAA initiated consultation with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) with release of the DEIS on December 29, 2000. The SHPO has concurred by a letter dated April 16, 2001 with the FAA's findings. The preferred alternative will not directly (physically) impact any of the three archaeological resources (the Hart Family Cemetery, Flat Rock Cemetery, and the Pope Cemetery) determined eligible for listing on the NHRP.

In further consultation, the SHPO has indicated that no Memorandum of Agreement is necessary, as the seven architectural historic resources will experience only indirect effects due to slight increases in aircraft noise levels. Nonetheless, acoustical treatment will be provided to mitigate the noise cognizant of their historic integrity. In addition, the SHPO concurs that no other known archaeological sites are located in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and that "in-situ" preservation of the three archeological resources is appropriate to avoid an effect. However, if any cultural resources are discovered during construction activities, construction will be halted immediately and the SHPO will be contacted.

#### **Section 303(c) Properties and Resources**

No publicly owned parks, recreation areas, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges protected under 49 U.S.C. Section 303(c) [formerly known as Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966] were identified within the limits of the proposed project. Under Section 303(c), use of land may be either physical or constructive. A constructive use occurs where use of or adverse impacts to Section 303(c) land conflicts with the normal activity associated with the land so as to constitute a substantial impairment of its value.

One architectural historic resource (HS-71, a Greek revival house) that was not previously identified during the 1994 EA would experience high noise levels with the No-Action Alternative. The resource is located in the 75+ DNL where noise typically exceeds compatible levels even with acoustical treatment. This impact would occur only in the future (2005) and only under the

No-Action Alternative. The eastward shift of the west threshold for the proposed project will shift noise exposure further away from this resource.

The FAA has determined that there will be no constructive use of this architectural historic resource under the proposed project because the degradation of the noise environment will not impact its historic integrity or its criteria for eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The preferred alternative is considered to be a prudent and feasible alternative that will avoid the high noise impact to the historic resource currently being experienced and that would continue under the 2005 No-Action Alternative. Therefore, no acquisition or constructive use of Section 303(c) resource will occur, and no mitigation measures are warranted.

No properties eligible for protection under Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, were identified within the boundaries of the proposed project.

## **Air Quality**

The key status and findings of the air quality analysis documented in the EIS are:

- *Attainment Status:* The Atlanta 1-hour serious nonattainment area consists of 13 counties, which include Clayton and Fulton Counties.
- *General Conformity:* Alternative 2 meets general conformity requirements and conforms to the requirements of Georgia's plan to prevent "air pollution in quantities or characteristics or of a duration which is injurious or which unreasonably interferes with the enjoyment of life or use of property in such area of the State as is affected thereby."[\[1\]](#)
- *Transportation Conformity:* Riverdale, West Fayetteville, and Sullivan Roads are minor arterials serving the community surrounding the airport and as such are considered to be regionally significant. However, the proposed modifications to these roads are included in the project listing for Clayton County contained in the current TIP for the Atlanta region.[\[2\]](#) The proposed project meets transportation conformity requirements and conformity is demonstrated since the roadway modifications are included in the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).[\[3\]](#) Therefore, a transportation conformity determination is not required.
- *Air Emissions:* Temporary, short-term net increase in emissions levels will occur due to construction activities for the proposed project in the Years 2000 through 2006. All airport construction emissions are accounted for in the most recently developed SIP budget for future construction in the Atlanta ozone nonattainment region. The proposed project will cause a net decrease in the total regulated emissions due to the decrease in aircraft queue delay time. Therefore, for 2005 and 2010, the proposed project conforms to the Georgia SIP. FAA has made a Final Conformity Determination in accordance with 40 CFR Part 93, Subpart B, General Conformity that the proposed project conforms to the SIP.
- *Dispersion Analysis:* The dispersion analysis performed for the airport area showed the concentration levels for CO, SO<sub>2</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub> will be below the Federal and state standards with or without the proposed project. In addition, there will be no increase in future NO<sub>2</sub> concentration levels due to the proposed project when compared to the future 4-Runway and No-Action Alternatives. In fact, the 9,000-foot fifth runway will result in a reduction in these pollutant concentrations at most locations.
- *Roadway Intersection Analysis:* Pollutant concentrations at several highly congested intersections in the vicinity of the airport showed that there will be exceedances of the 1-hour and 8-hour CO standard for baseline conditions. In all cases, however, the proposed intersection improvements are projected to cause the concentration level to decrease, falling below the baseline concentration level, and, therefore, will comply with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The pollutant concentration levels for the proposed project will not cause or increase the severity of any existing violation of a NAAQS standard, thereby demonstrating compliance with the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA). The dispersion modeling results support the conclusion that the proposed project will neither cause any new violation of the established NAAQS nor increase the severity of any violation of any standard in Atlanta's ozone nonattainment area.

The Governor's Office has certified that the proposed project will comply with applicable air quality standards (see Appendix 2).

Ongoing mitigation measures for air quality at ATL will be continued as part of the Sponsor's commitments for the proposed project. These measures include increasing the use of alternative fuel vehicles in ATL's ground vehicle fleet, incorporating language in construction contracts to encourage use of equipment with cleaner emissions, and retrofitting construction equipment to further reduce emissions. The Sponsor, in partnership with Delta Air Lines, has recently been selected for an FAA grant to acquire additional low emission ground service equipment, on-road or on ground access vehicles, and refueling infrastructure. The Sponsor has committed to partnering with EPD to share data and identify other opportunities to improve long-term air quality at ATL.

### **Water Quality**

Surface water, stormwater runoff, sanitary flow, groundwater and permitting requirements were identified in the FEIS. An increase in runoff will occur due to disturbing sediments during construction; short-term increase of non-point pollutants which include grease, oil and fuel during construction; and, long-term non-point pollutants from the operation of aircraft and maintenance vehicles.

By diverting existing flows at various locations on ATL directly to the Flint River Pump Station, the existing sanitary sewer system is sufficient to meet the demand through the year 2010. No impacts will occur to sanitary sewer flow.

There are no sole source aquifers or principal drinking water resources in the project area; therefore, groundwater quality is not expected to be impacted.

ATL presently operates under the State of Georgia's General Permit No. GAR000000. This permit requires the development of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and expires on May 31, 2003. Filing a Notice of Intent is required to update the existing NPDES General Stormwater Permit, which monitors discharges to surface waters. In addition, the following permits are required prior to construction: a Phase II NPDES permit for construction activities; a State of Georgia variance to encroach within 25 feet of state waters; and a Clayton County Land Disturbance Permit pursuant to the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975.

The Governor's Office has certified that the proposed project will comply with applicable water quality standards (see Appendix 2).

### **Floodplains**

Executive Order (EO) 11988, together with FAA Orders 1050.1D and 5050.4A,

requires that FAA evaluate the potential effect of its actions on a floodplain. The agency must consider alternatives to avoid adverse effects and incompatible development in a floodplain and where avoidance is not practicable, the agency must design or modify its action to minimize potential harm to or within the floodplain. The proposed project will impact 41 acres of Sullivan

Creek floodplain and 0.25 acre of Flint River to place three concrete pads for light towers and a gravel access road to the light structures. Floodplains in the project area have been previously impacted due to prior development. The encroachment will not be significant and there are no practicable alternatives as all of the alternatives share common impacts. The No-Action Alternative would encroach upon 37 acres of the same floodplain without adequately addressing the purpose and need of reducing delay.

As a mitigation measure, the Sponsor will preserve the remaining Flint River floodplain within the acquisition area, totaling 14 acres. In addition, the Sponsor has initiated a stream restoration program with Clayton County downstream of ATL along Sullivan Creek and the Flint River. One benefit of the stream restoration will be floodplain creation.

### **Farmland**

Based on an evaluation of soils and field surveys, there are no areas in the proposed project area designated as prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of state or local significance.

### **Coastal Zone Management Program and Coastal Barriers**

There are no coastal zones or coastal barriers in the proposed project area.

### **Wild and Scenic Rivers**

There are no wild and scenic rivers located in the proposed project area.

### **Light Emissions**

Each approach end of the proposed 9,000-foot runway will be provided with ALSF- 2 high intensity approach light systems prior to the runway threshold and touchdown zone and centerline lighting in the runway pavement. In addition, the runway will be lighted with high intensity runway edge lights and the taxiways lighted with medium intensity taxiway centerline and edge lights. All lighting will be contained within the runway environs with the exception of the approach lights, which will extend from the ends of the runway approximately 2,400 feet outward into the approach. These lighting systems will be placed in accordance with FAA regulations. No residential areas are located near the required lighting, therefore, no impacts from light emissions will occur. No mitigation measures are warranted.

### **Hazardous Materials and Solid Waste**

Construction of the proposed project will not have any on-site impact on the generation, storage, or removal of hazardous materials. Hazardous materials used in conjunction with routine airport operations will continue to be stored, used, and disposed of at current levels in accordance with Federal, state and local regulations.

Off-site properties to be acquired for the proposed project were investigated through Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), which consist of background checks for the historical uses of the property, review of state and Federal databases on contaminated sites, and field observations of any environmental concerns on the property. Assessment results were used by the FAA during preparation of the EIS. The investigation was completed to identify recognizable environmental concerns regarding these off-site properties to be acquired. The parcels within the acquisition area were surveyed (104 were surveyed and four others were evaluated based on background research and limited access to the parcels). Sixty of those properties were identified as having recognizable environmental concerns related to underground storage tanks, asbestos

containing materials, and lead paint. Disturbance of these materials could result in impacts to the soil, groundwater, and air. In addition to these properties, ESAs were prepared for the acquisition area for the commuter runway. Detailed surveys and remediation measures for parcels in the commuter runway acquisition area have been undertaken.

Remediation methods were reviewed for the affected properties. The Sponsor's mitigation plan includes commitments to complete Phase 2 ESAs (further investigation) and to complete the necessary remediation of the 60 properties prior to construction. Removal of storage tanks, asbestos-containing materials, lead paints, and potentially contaminated soils will be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal and state laws and regulations.

Adequate solid waste facilities are located within the vicinity of the proposed project with the capacity to handle solid waste from the construction of the proposed project. However, there will be temporary construction impacts resulting from the clearing of debris and structures in the proposed acquisition areas.

### **Energy Supply and Natural Resources**

An increase in power requirements will result from proposed airport lighting. However, according to Georgia Power, this increase in electricity demand will be offset by removal of other uses within the acquisition area. Fuel consumption by aircraft will be reduced as a result of the delay reduction. Furthermore, none of the project alternatives will increase ground vehicle access or change the movement patterns of on-airport service vehicles or other vehicles. The supply of materials necessary to construct the proposed project is readily available and no natural resources that will be needed are in short supply. No mitigation measures are warranted.

### **Biotic Communities**

The proposed project area was evaluated for the occurrence of distinct and

definable natural communities and land use. The assessment included the evaluation of potentially affected terrestrial communities, as well as wildlife and wildlife habitat. Implementation of the proposed project will result in the unavoidable disturbance of up to 197.48 acres of non-urban biotic communities, based on the proposed acquisition for construction and safety areas. This loss will directly result in the loss of wildlife habitat. However, due to existing development in the area of construction and because the non-urban biotic communities are severely fragmented and isolated, adverse impacts are considered to be minimal.

As a mitigation measure, the Sponsor will voluntarily preserve approximately 20 acres of forest communities (consisting of bottomland hardwood, loblolly, mesic hardwood, and upland mixed communities) that remain in the east runway protection zone for the fifth runway, subject to pruning to meet height restrictions. The forest areas are adjacent to or near the Flint River floodplain that also is being preserved within the acquisition area. There is no regulatory requirement for such mitigation.

### **Endangered and Threatened Species of Flora and Fauna**

Surveys for Federal and state endangered and threatened species were conducted during the development of the EIS. No Federally-listed terrestrial species or critical habitats were identified during field surveys. However, in a letter received after the comment period but during preparation of the FEIS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requested that further investigation be conducted along portions of Sullivan and Flat Rock Creeks and the Flint River for potential impacts to mussel habitat. Based on additional investigation, the streams exhibit an increased amount of point and non-point source pollutants; an increased amount of silt content; a

decreased rate of water flow; and, multiple culverts from previous road crossings – all leading to the conclusion there is no suitable habitat for mussel species. The FWS has indicated by letter dated August 29, 2001 (See Appendix 1) to the USACE that their concerns regarding endangered mussels and the proposed stream mitigation have been resolved. Therefore, they have no objection to the proposed project.

## **Wetlands**

The wetland delineation conducted during the EIS determined that the proposed project will impact a total of up to 9.02 acres of wetlands and up to 6,690 linear feet of stream. No Section 10 resources protected under the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 will be impacted.

The Sponsor was issued a Section 404 fill permit pursuant to the Clean Water Act in April 1999 from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Permit No. 970018261). The permit was issued to allow the fill of wetlands resulting from the construction of the 6,000-foot commuter fifth runway. In July 2001, the Sponsor submitted a request for a Letter of Modification (LOM) to the existing permit to consider impacts resulting from the 3,000-foot extension to the fifth runway. Beyond the impacts approved in the permit for the commuter runway, the 3,000-foot extension to the 6,000-foot runway will impact an additional 0.37-acre of wetland and 1,520 linear feet of stream along Sullivan Creek. The Sponsor has provided the USACE with a mitigation plan for impacts to the stream corridor. The request for Letter of Modification was routed for comment to resource agencies by the USACE. The DOA was granted a LOM to the existing permit by the USACE on September 14, 2001.

The mitigation plan for the affected wetlands includes enhancement of wetlands on the Flint River at Sam's Lake, and restoration of 630 feet of Sullivan Creek downstream of the proposed project. No additional mitigation is warranted.

## **Construction Impacts**

Impacts during the four-year construction phase of the proposed project were evaluated in the FEIS. The following impacts were determined to occur as a result of construction:

- Noise
- Emissions
- Erosion
- Maintenance of traffic
- Utilities
- Hazardous materials
- Removal and transport of fill material

Noise associated with demolition activities will be generated from heavy equipment such as bulldozers, dump trucks, loaders, and scrapers. Noise impacts from construction of the fifth runway will be generated from equipment such as vehicles, production plants generating material (such as asphalt, concrete, and crushed rock), potential borrow pits, areas being cut to grade, and potential rock blasting (dependent upon final line and grade).

Both demolition and new construction activities will generate noise. Residences and businesses within the acquisition areas will have been relocated before the start of demolition activities. Also, land uses adjacent to the acquisition areas are primarily industrial and vacant, with the exception of the Cherry Hills subdivision near the Sullivan Road realignment. As previously described, construction of the realignment near the subdivision will be prohibited during nighttime hours.



Demolition and construction activities will also result in a temporary increase in air emissions. During demolition, the main contributor to air emissions will be vehicular activity. During construction, air emissions will result from vehicle exhaust, asphalt plants, and concrete plants. These air emissions will be temporary in nature and will cease once construction of the fifth runway is completed.

Emissions from vehicles used during construction will be insignificant compared to vehicle emissions from surrounding traffic and from air traffic. The construction process for the proposed project will increase air emissions temporarily. These emissions are accounted for in the SIP.

During demolition activities, erosion will not have a great impact. Though base and subgrade materials will be exposed, appropriate measures at drainage structures, ditches, and other possible runoff points will control the potential for erosion resulting from rainfall. Appropriate dust control measures identified in Chapter 6 of the FEIS will be implemented to reduce wind erosion.

Because of the magnitude of the earthwork required for this project, some erosion and sedimentation into Flat Rock Creek and Sullivan Creek will be unavoidable. However, erosion control measures required by the State of Georgia and outlined in the FAA Advisory Circular 150/5370-7 will be incorporated into the project plans and specifications. These provisions will require the contractor to implement temporary erosion control measures such as silt fences, sedimentation basins, and diversion ponds. During construction, extensive monitoring and enforcement will be undertaken to ensure that erosion control measures are effective. Temporary diversion of streams and appropriate erosion control measures during construction of culverts will reduce the amount of sedimentation entering streams.

Based on the current details known about the construction phasing, no construction activities will occur over live traffic on I-285. Instead, the freeway lanes will be shifted during certain phases to maintain both traffic flow and safety for motorists and construction crews. The lane shifts will require construction of temporary lanes along the shoulder of existing I-285. These temporary lanes will likely be converted into the lanes comprising a collector/distributor system if such a system is eventually implemented. Additionally, traffic could be shifted from one side of I-285 to the other. For example, eastbound lanes may be shifted over to the westbound side.

The runway extension will cross I-285 just south of the Sullivan Road bridge over I-285 and eventually cross Sullivan Road in the road's current location. The runway's proximity to the road and bridge requires the relocation of the road and bridge closure. During the detouring of Sullivan Road for the bridge closure, the traffic characteristics (volumes, turning movements, and directional distribution) of the area will be affected. The detour will be in effect from Spring 2002 through Spring 2003. During removal of the bridge, most of the work will occur at night. The beam removal will be scheduled on up to four weekends at night to minimize traffic impacts.

Prior to construction, the Sponsor will coordinate closely with GDOT and the Clayton County Department of Transportation to conduct traffic analyses, and complete design plans and maintenance of traffic plans to assure adequate flow of traffic along this corridor.

The proposed project includes relocations of three major utilities (gas, water, power). Temporary interruption of utility service may occur during the disconnection from existing utility systems and reconnection to the temporary utility systems. However, through careful planning and coordination among the construction designer, utility company, and contractor, outages will be minimized.

During the demolition phase within the acquisition areas, potentially hazardous materials may be exposed. Such substances include ACMs within facilities, PCBs in electrical materials, and other potentially hazardous materials such as gasoline, oils, and aviation fuel. Any hazardous

materials found during the demolition phase will be contained, transported, and disposed of in full compliance with regulations of the EPA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Transportation, Georgia EPD, and any other appropriate Federal and state agencies. Because any hazardous materials will be removed during the demolition phase, no hazardous materials should be found during the actual construction phase of the fifth runway and associated projects. If any hazardous materials not already identified were encountered, then the regulations mentioned above will be adhered to.

The construction of the proposed project will require an extensive amount of fill material to raise the elevation of the fifth runway to make it compatible with the existing four runways. The 9,000-foot runway will require a total of 27 million cubic yards of fill dirt. Approximately 60 percent of the fill will be required for construction of the approved 6,000-foot commuter runway. Construction activities are underway within the commuter runway area, and the City of Atlanta is reviewing one bid for the supply of fill material. As currently planned, the placement of fill material will occur in two phases. The first phase will involve the site preparation inside I-285, and the second phase will involve site preparation beyond I-285. The total duration for the transport of fill material for the 9,000-foot runway is anticipated to be 3.5 years, with approximately 6 months of overlap between the two phases.

The Sponsor's contract provisions do not require or restrict use of a particular borrow site. However, a number of permitted borrow sites exist within a three-mile radius south of the airport. Special provisions will be followed to cover the fill to minimize dust and sedimentation. Consistent with typical activities at a quarry or other borrow site, periodic blasting and use of heavy digging and loading equipment will be anticipated. Due to the large quantity of fill required, a conveyor belt system is proposed to transport material from one or more of the borrow sites to the construction area. This method will minimize the use of dump trucks on surrounding roadways.

In evaluating the overall impacts of the construction phase, the FAA has determined that the known impacts will be adverse during the four years of construction. The impacts will be unavoidable but reasonable in comparison to the extensive benefits to ATL and the National Airspace System that will occur by reducing airport delay. Furthermore, the Sponsor has incorporated specific measures to minimize harm during the construction of the proposed project. The measures will be monitored as required by state and Federal law.

Additional details of the construction phase are still being developed and expected to be finalized over the next months. Should those details lead to substantial impacts not anticipated in the FEIS, further evaluation and disclosure of such impacts will be required by the FAA.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

In accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the EIS considered the cumulative impact of the proposed project and the consequences of subsequent related actions. To further determine the overall cumulative changes from recent past and existing conditions, the EIS included the 4-Runway Alternative for comparative purposes along with the No-Action Alternative. In addition, independent projects in the proposed project area were reviewed, and the impacts of these projects were included as appropriate in the analyses for traffic, noise, and air quality. As described in Section 5.23 of the FEIS, all known projects and proposals at ATL were reviewed, most of which have undergone independent environmental analysis and approval by the FAA. The projects include taxiway and runway improvements; terminal expansion, modifications, and additions; on-site support facilities to support airport tenants; and off-site facilities, including the upgrade of terminal area roadways and construction of a consolidated rental car facility.

In addition, private development proposals by others were evaluated for their potential cumulative impacts in the vicinity of the airport. Those projects included three mixed-used developments (Manchester, Princeton Village, and Gateway) as well as recommendations from the Southport land use study. The projects at ATL and off-site are proposed for implementation between 2001 and 2010.

The analysis included impacts both directly associated with ATL and impacts occurring within the surrounding communities. The FAA has determined that the impacts that could be anticipated for these other development projects will consist of minor water quality concerns (increase in impervious surfaces), minor increases in traffic that are already included in the modeling for the proposed project, and very few relocations. Future projects at or in the vicinity of ATL with no environmental analyses to date will require separate evaluation by FAA or other appropriate agencies when they reach the appropriate level of planning.

One additional project was identified by FAA subsequent to circulation of the FEIS. The Sponsor has recently requested that the FAA modify its air traffic departure procedures at ATL to utilize GPS-based Area Navigation (RNAV) instead of the current radar vectors to position aircraft on flight tracks. RNAV will allow aircraft to fly flight tracks more precisely than the current system. Modification of departure procedures for the various flight tracks at the airport will be phased in over a period of several years.

The GPS-based RNAV flight tracks will be overlays of existing departure flight tracks. The number of operations on each track will remain the same. FAA Air Traffic regulations specify that GPS overlays of existing procedures do not require noise analysis since noise impacts will not change. These Air Traffic actions will undergo appropriate environmental review and may be categorically excluded from additional environmental analysis as they are implemented.

Through the analyses completed as part of the EIS, the FAA has determined that construction and operation of the proposed project will have unavoidable and adverse impacts. Impacts to natural resources will include wetland and floodplain encroachment and removal of areas of forested communities. Social impacts will include displacements, new or increased noise exposure, and motorist inconvenience and occasional disruption of traffic flow during the four-year construction period. Mitigation measures have been either incorporated or committed to by the Sponsor to minimize adverse effects. In addition to the irretrievable commitment of natural resources and relocations, the project will require a substantial commitment of public funds to complete.

Upon completion, the proposed project will immediately begin to benefit not only operations at ATL, but the National Airspace System as well. With current conditions and even the future conditions with a commuter runway, every minute of delay will result in costs borne by the airport, airlines, their customers, and the FAA. The annual cost of delay to airlines serving ATL has been projected to increase from \$192 million in 1998 to approximately \$767 million in 2005 with the 6,000-foot commuter runway. By completing the proposed project to add a 3,000-foot extension to the previously approved 6,000-foot fifth commuter runway, the Sponsor will be able to reduce delay for both arrivals and departures at ATL. By reducing delay, the proposed project will enable ATL to remain a critical component of local and regional economic growth. Moreover, reduced delay at ATL will result in many benefits to the National Airspace System, including fewer flow control delays by aircraft bound for ATL, quicker emptying of holding patterns, improved airline competition, reduced weather dependency, cost savings, and balanced airfield operations during runway maintenance and airfield emergency situations. The FAA has determined that those impacts that can be mitigated, will be mitigated to less than significant and that those impacts that are unavoidable are reasonable in light of the benefits that will be provided as a result of the proposed project.

## **VIII. AGENCY FINDINGS**

The FAA makes the following determinations for this project, based upon appropriate information and analyses set forth in the FEIS and other portions of the Administrative Record:

### **A. Federal Funding Findings and Determinations**

The FAA understands the Sponsor may apply for Federal grant-in-aid funding or Passenger Facilities Charges ("PFC") approvals in conjunction with its decision to proceed with the implementation of the project components and mitigation measures identified in this ROD. There are numerous findings and determinations prescribed by statute and regulation that must be made by the FAA as preconditions to agency approvals or airport project funding applications. Any grant-in-aid or approval will also reflect appropriate statutory and regulatory assurances and other terms and conditions for FAA's action. While this ROD provides the environmental study basis needed to proceed with making those findings and determinations, in the absence of application under the clearly defined decisionmaking procedures, it would be premature to consider the bases for them at this time. The agency will make any necessary findings and determinations in connection with its consideration of appropriate applications for Federal funding aid or authorization.

### **B. The Proposed Project will Comply with the SIP in Accordance with Section 176 of the Clean Air Act Amendments**

The City of Atlanta and the airport are located in a serious non-attainment area for ozone. Temporary, short-term net increase in emission levels will occur due to construction activities for the proposed project in the years 2000 through 2006. As indicated by Georgia EPD, all airport construction emissions are accounted for in the most recently developed SIP budget for future construction in the Atlanta ozone nonattainment region. The proposed project will cause a net decrease in the total regulated emissions due to the decrease in aircraft queue delay time. Therefore, the proposed project conforms to the Georgia SIP and fulfills the FAA's responsibility under 40 CFR Part 93, Subpart B, General Conformity. The Governor of Georgia has certified that there is a reasonable assurance that the project will meet all applicable air quality standards. Based on the air quality analysis, the FAA finds that the airport improvements proposed in the EIS will not:

- Cause or contribute to any new violation of any standard in any area;
- Interfere with provisions in the applicable implementation plan for maintenance of any standard;
- Increase the frequency or severity of any existing violation of an standard in any area; or
- Delay timely attainment of any standard or any required interim emission reductions or other milestones in any area including, where applicable, emission levels specified in the applicable implementation plan for purposes of a demonstration of reasonable further progress, a demonstration of attainment, and a maintenance plan.

### **C. The Proposed Project Conforms to the Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Compensation of Harm to Wetlands in Accordance with Executive Order 11990 and the Clean Water Act**

The Sponsor has obtained a Section 404 fill permit for the construction of the 6,000-foot commuter fifth runway approved by the FAA in 1994. A request was made by the Sponsor for a Letter of Modification (LOM) to this permit to include impacts on wetlands resulting from the 3,000-foot extension to the 6,000-foot fifth runway. The Sponsor's mitigation plan to compensate for the additional 0.37-acre of wetland and 1,520 linear feet of stream as a result of the 3,000-foot extension was reviewed and accepted by resource agencies and the USACE. Consequently, the Sponsor was issued a LOM for the 3,000-foot extension on September 14, 2001. The FAA has

determined there is no practicable alternative to the proposed project's use of 0.37 acre of wetlands and 1,520 linear feet of stream located in the project area.

**D. There is No Use or Taking of Resources Subject to Section 303(c) [49 U.S.C. Subtitle I, Section 303(c)]**

As discussed in Section 5.8 of the FEIS and this ROD, no publicly owned parks, recreation areas, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges protected under 49 U.S.C. Section 303(c) were identified within the limits of the proposed project. One architectural historic resource that was not previously identified during the 1994 EA would experience high noise levels with the No-Action Alternative. The proposed project is considered to be a prudent and feasible alternative that will avoid the high noise impact to the historic resource currently being experienced and that would continue under the 2005 No-Action Alternative. Therefore, the proposed project will not have an impact on any DOT Section 303(c) resources, and no mitigation measures are warranted.

**E. Involuntary Displacement of Persons and Businesses are Governed by the Requirements for Relocation Assistance**

Title II of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Acts of 1970 (42 U.S.C. Section 4601 *et seq.*) and implemented by the Secretary of Transportation under 49 CFR Part 24, require that state or local agencies that undertake Federally-assisted projects, which cause an involuntary displacement of persons or businesses, follow the prescribed procedures and provide relocation benefits to those displaced. The displacement impacts of the proposed project are discussed in detail in Chapter 5, Section 5.4 of the FEIS. Mitigation of those impacts is necessary and required; mitigation for the approvals given under this ROD relating to displacement impacts caused by the proposed project will be accomplished through that relocation assistance whether or not the project receives Federally-funded assistance.

**F. There are Disproportionate Adverse Environmental Effects of the Project on Minority and/or Low-Income Populations [Executive Order 12989].**

Section 5.5 of the FEIS and this ROD address the environmental justice concerns of the proposed project. It is concluded that minority and low-income groups would be disproportionately affected by the impacts of the project. Specifically, displacements and noise exposure will affect minority and low-income populations at a greater percentage than are living within the overall project area and the average of the adjacent counties. Short-term noise impacts during construction will occur at only one residential area, which is a minority neighborhood as defined in the *U.S. Department of Transportation Order on Executive Justice*. The Sponsor has included in its mitigation plan specific commitments to assist displacees with measures that go beyond Federal requirements. In addition, the Sponsor has committed to expand its noise abatement program to include residents of multi-family housing. Construction activities near the minority neighborhood will be prohibited during nighttime hours. Accordingly, the FAA finds that no feasible alternative exists to the disproportionate impacts and that appropriate measures have been incorporated into the mitigation for the proposed project.

**IX. DECISION AND ORDER**

As documented in the FEIS and ROD, the FAA, with the cooperation and participation of the City of Atlanta Department of Aviation has engaged in a lengthy and extensive process relating to the screening of a range of reasonable alternatives and selection of an alternative that best fulfilled the identified purpose and need for development of the Sponsor's airport. The environmental review process included FAA's selecting a consultant to assist in its conducting and preparing the environmental documents to disclose and analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed project and the necessary Federal actions. The process also has included appropriate planning

and design for the avoidance, minimization, and/or compensation of impacts, as required by NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality's implementing regulations, other special purpose environmental laws, and appropriate FAA environmental directives.

The FAA decision is based on a comparative examination of environmental impacts for each of the alternatives studied during the environmental review process. The FEIS has disclosed the potential environmental impacts for all of the alternatives, and it provides a fair and full discussion of any significant impacts.

The FAA has determined that environmental and other relevant concerns presented by interested agencies and private citizens have been addressed sufficiently in the FEIS hereby acknowledged and incorporated into this ROD by reference. The Federal Aviation Administration believes there are no outstanding environmental issues to be resolved with respect to the proposed project which are within the mission capabilities of this agency.

The FAA has the choice of either approving the agency actions that are necessary to implement the project or not approving them. Approval will signify that applicable Federal requirements relating to airport development planning have been met and will permit the Sponsor to go forward with the proposed project and apply to receive Federal funds for eligible development items. Not approving these agency actions will prevent the Sponsor from proceeding with Federally-supported and approvals.

The No-Action Alternative fails to meet the purpose and need for the proposed project. For reasons summarized earlier in this ROD, and supported by disclosures and analysis detailed in the FEIS, the FAA has determined that the Sponsor's proposed project, Alternative 2, is a reasonable, feasible, practicable and prudent alternative for a Federal decision in light of the Sponsor's established goals and objectives. An FAA decision to take the actions and approvals required by the Sponsor is consistent with its statutory mission and policies and supported by the findings and conclusions reflected in the environmental documentation and this ROD.

After reviewing the Final EIS and all of its related materials, I have carefully considered the FAA's goals and objectives in relation to various aeronautical aspects of the proposed development actions discussed in the FEIS, including the purpose and need to be met by this project, the alternative means of achieving them, the environmental impacts of these alternatives, the mitigation necessary to preserve and enhance the environment, and the costs and benefits of achieving the purpose and need in terms of efficiency and fiscally responsible expenditures of Federal funds.

Therefore, under authority delegated to me by the Administrator of FAA, I find that the projects described in this ROD are reasonably supported and I therefore direct that action be undertaken to carry out the agency actions previously discussed and described as follows:

- Determinations under 49 U.S.C. Section 47106 and 47107 pertaining to FAA funding of airport development (including approval of a revised Airport Layout Plan [ALP]; 49 U.S.C. Section 47107(a)(16);
- Determination under 49 U.S.C. Section 47101, *et seq.* and of project eligibility for Federal grant-in-aid funds under Section 47104 and determination under 49 U.S.C. Section 40117 (a) to approve use of Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) funds;
- Determination and actions, under 49 U.S.C. Section 44718 (14 CFR Part 77) evaluating obstructions to navigable airspace;
- Determinations and actions under 49 U.S.C. Sections 40103(b), and 44701 designing, developing, approving and implementing new flight procedures, including airspace determinations, visual and instrument procedures, missed approach procedures, providing for establishment of modified flight procedures, and other rules or terms and

- conditions for the safe and efficient use, as well as management, of the navigable airspace;
- Certification under 49 U.S.C. Section 44502(b) the proposed improvement is reasonably necessary for use in air commerce or for national defense.

While this decision does not approve Federal funding for the proposed airport development and does not constitute a Federal funding commitment, it does provide the environmental approval for proceeding to funding determinations in accordance with the established procedures and applicable requirements upon receipt of a timely application for Federal grant-in-aid from the Sponsor.

This ROD presents the Federal Aviation Administration's final decisions and approvals for the actions identified, including those taken under the provisions of Title 49 of the United States Code, Subtitle VII, Parts A and B. These actions constitute 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. Section 46110.

Issued in College Park, Georgia

***original signed by***

***9/27/01***

Carolyn  
Regional Administrator

Blum

Date

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## **X. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 FEIS Comment Letters and Responses**

This Appendix contains the comments received by the FAA on the FEIS followed by FAA's responses to the environmental issues on matters within its jurisdiction and authority raised by those comments.

#### **Department of Health & Human Services - Public Health Service (Letter 1)**

##### Comment #1

Comment noted.

#### **United States Department of Interior – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Letter 2)**

##### Comment #1

Comment noted.

#### **Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Environmental Protection Division (Letter 3)**

##### Comment #1

Total emissions from the aviation industry tend to increase as activity level rises. However, efforts such as the proposed 9,000-foot fifth runway can be implemented to minimize growth in emissions. The Georgia EPD is correct in summarizing that the operational activity associated with the 9,000-foot fifth runway is not subject to a General Conformity Determination because the emissions are less than the total emissions from the No-Action (6,000-foot commuter runway) and the 4-Runway alternatives. This will not be confused with the statements that the temporary construction activities are above the de minimis threshold of 50 tons per year, and therefore are presumed to conform because they are reasonably accounted for in the Atlanta ozone State Implementation Plan (SIP).

The FAA acknowledges that the Georgia EPD is charged with maintaining the ozone air quality standard in Atlanta beyond the attainment year. Therefore, Georgia EPD has the opportunity to work directly with the Sponsor to ensure that future airport projects are planned to reduce the emissions of ozone precursors. One specific opportunity for such joint efforts would be the coordination of ATL's future Master Plan Updates (MPU) with EPD's Maintenance SIP to ensure that both airport and air quality goals are achieved in the future. Through the environmental review process of the proposed 9,000-foot fifth runway, the FAA, EPD and Sponsor have demonstrated the ability to work together to improve the Atlanta region's air quality. The FAA encourages EPD and the Sponsor to continue this relationship in the future.

##### Comment #2

The Sponsor will request an amendment to the existing General Permit (GAR 1000000) for the commuter runway to include the construction efforts for the proposed fifth runway pursuant to *Part 1.C.1.a* of the General Permit. Accordingly, the Erosion, Sedimentation, and Pollution Control Plan and the Comprehensive Monitoring Plan will be amended.



Comment #3

Comment noted. See response to Comment #1.

Comment #4

The Sponsor has performed a yearly evaluation/inspection of its Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) as required by the permit. During the past 3-4 years, there have been no major design, operational, or construction changes at ATL requiring the SWPPP to be amended. The reference in the FEIS (Section 6.10.2) to a review in 2002 provides the Sponsor's commitment to thoroughly review and subsequently amend the SWPPP to include the construction activities for the proposed fifth runway.

Comment #5

Comment noted. At such time as necessary, the Sponsor will submit a new Notice of Intent for the facility.

Comment #6

It has and will continue to be the Sponsor's policy to ensure that all planes utilizing the de-icing facilities are thoroughly dried prior to exiting the facilities.

Comment #7

Comment noted.

Comment #8

Comment noted. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be addressed in the Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution Control Plan in the Construction General Storm Water Permit.

Comment #9

Section 6.20.2 of the FEIS states that, "a water quality component will be included in the design of each retention facility." Furthermore, the Sponsor has committed to the following BMPs, for both its current and future activities. The Sponsor has committed to meeting the obligations of full compliance with the terms and conditions of the permits, with the intent to protect water quality in the proposed project area.

Comment #10

Comment noted. The Sponsor intends to fully comply with the terms and conditions of such permits.

Comment #11

All hazardous materials within the proposed acquisition and construction areas will be subject to compliance with Chapter 391-3-19 of the Georgia Hazardous Site Response Act (HSRA).

Comment #12

Comment noted. The second sentence should read “hazardous materials which are not fuels are stored...”

Comment #13

EPD is apparently referring to Table 5-51, not 5-1 (noise). Any assessment/remediation of contaminated soil or leaking Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) will be performed in compliance with requirements set forth in the Georgia HSRA and other applicable Federal, state, and local environmental laws. Additionally, only Georgia licensed professionals will perform such work. The Sponsor will follow the HSRA for parcels requiring Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) and any subsequent remediation.

Comment #14

Comment noted. Impacts discussed under Section 5.17 included those regulated under the Georgia HSRA. All applicable data bases and contaminated site lists were consulted and subsequent phases of remediation will adhere to procedures under HSRA.

Comment #15

The sponsor will ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to remediate any regulated substances encountered on parcels to be acquired for the proposed project consistent with HSRA.

Comment #16

Page 5-133, Section 5.17.22, second paragraph of the FEIS references not only Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACMs) and Lead Based Paint (LBP), potential leaking USTs. Additionally, the number of properties includes the sum of Alternatives 1 and 2. The 52 sites referred to on page 6-22, paragraph 5 of the FEIS reflect only the ACM and LBP properties for the preferred alternative, Alternative 2.

The Georgia Rules and other applicable laws will be adhered to for asbestos inspection and abatement, including inspections by asbestos inspectors accredited in accordance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) and prior notification by the Sponsor of any abatement needed.

Comment #17

The locations for potential disposal of hazardous materials were identified by the Sponsor based on procedures being followed for the acquisition within the 6,000-foot commuter runway area. Alternatively, hazardous materials (if found) could be shipped to closer locations such as Emmelle, Alabama.

Comment #18

Comment noted. The Sponsor will apply Georgia’s Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste Rules prior to disposal of LBP if structures are not demolished.

Comment #19

The FEIS will not be revised to reflect the request by EDP, however, the FAA acknowledges and agrees that the wording as suggested by EPD in the first paragraph of Section 2.1.3 in Appendix J (Volume II of the FEIS should read as follows:

Asbestos-containing materials (ACM) were not sampled as part of the EIS process. However, a comprehensive asbestos survey must be performed by an AHERA accredited asbestos inspector prior to demolition of any structure within the acquisition areas. Asbestos-containing materials must be removed in accordance with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Rules as enforced by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Lead-Based Paint and Asbestos Program, which includes the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) standard for asbestos prior to demolition of any structure. Further, appropriate notification must be given to EPD for all asbestos abatement projects and all demolition projects for all structures. Only Georgia licensed asbestos contractors will perform abatement of asbestos at any of these structures, and who will be responsible for payment of applicable fees.

#### Comment #20

The apparent discrepancies in numbers relate to the various ways in which the sites with recognized environmental concerns were either grouped together or separated by type of concern, as explained in response to Comment #15.

#### Comment #21

Comment noted.

#### Comment #22

The potential to encounter LBP during demolition will be carefully monitored by the Sponsor. Removal of LBP is included in the overall estimates for possible remediation costs as described in Section 6.9.

#### Comment #23

For parcels within the proposed acquisition area for the fifth runway, timetables for corrective action/closure are not yet available. Once the Sponsor has made the determination to purchase the properties, timetables with regards to investigations and corrective action/closures will be developed and coordinated with EPD and other appropriate agencies.

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Letter 4)**

#### Comment #1 (Air Quality)

Comment noted. FAA appreciates the mutual coordination between the Georgia EPD and EPA regarding FAA's General Conformity determination for the Fifth Runway project.

#### Comment #2 (Response 10-2-1)

Paragraph 1 – The FAA, Sponsor, GDOT, FHWA, and other agencies will continue coordination to address airport and interstate safety in conjunction with the I-285 structures.

Paragraph 2 – Take-offs and landings of airplanes to the existing four runway system at ATL are closer to Interstate 85 or Interstate 285 than would be operations on the 9,000-foot fifth runway. FAA is not aware of higher accident rates on these segments of Interstates 85/285. No visual

screening of the approaches to the structure has been proposed. The need for variable message signs at each end of the structure will be discussed with FHWA and GDOT based on the need for information dissemination to drivers entering the structure.

Comment #3 (Response 1-2-3)

As previously documented, the year 1998 was used as the current condition in the FEIS for a number of reasons. While it is reasonable to expect that a year 2000 noise contour may be smaller than the 1998 noise pattern, it is not necessary for the 2000 contour to be included in the document for the reader to gain a general understanding of the 2000 noise.

A comparison of the 2005 and 2010 No-Action noise patterns was presented in Figure 5-7 of the FEIS. As that comparison indicates, despite a six percent increase in operations, both noise patterns are of similar size and shape. The 2005 contour is just slightly larger resulting from the higher proportion of hush-kit aircraft expected in the fleet mix for 2005 as compared to 2010. In the year 2000, there were approximately 2,502 average daily operations at ATL based on FAA published data. This is an operational level about 15 percent below the 2005 projection. Despite this lower operational level, it is expected that the proportion of hush-kit aircraft would be higher in 2000 than what was forecast for 2005. Consequently, it is expected that the 2000 noise contour pattern would be similar in size and shape to that of the 2005 No-Action noise pattern as presented in the FEIS. Furthermore, the inclusion of the 2005 4 Runway Alternative provides the reader with a noise contour associated with the same airfield geometry that existed in 2000. This contour provides a general understanding of the 2000 noise pattern at ATL.

Comment #4 (Response 1-1-5)

Paragraph 1 - As noted on page 6-3 of the FEIS, the Sponsor intends to involve the public in the Part 150 program through the Noise Mitigation Advisory Council (NMAC).

Paragraph 2 – Comment noted.

Comment #5 (Responses 1-1-6 and 1-1-10)

Paragraph 1- Comment noted.

Paragraph 2 - The Sponsor's proposed timing of mitigation is listed in Table 6-1 of the FEIS and is based on FAA guidance for acquisition. There is no requirement for acquisition of residences in the 70 DNL or 65 DNL contours, and therefore, no federal funding program for such acquisitions.

Paragraph 3 - In the context of the Sponsor's mitigation priorities, the No-Action Alternative refers to area within the proposed project (entire 9,000-foot runway) that is common to the 6,000-foot commuter runway. These common portions of the contour area were identified as a priority regardless of the outcome of the Record of Decision.

Paragraph 4 - The Sponsor will continue to review community boundaries as acquisition proceeds, and will maintain flexibility to allow acquisition of whole communities, regardless of their location relative to the 75 DNL contour. The current noise abatement program includes flexibility for communities dividing by the 75 DNL contour. Residents in such a neighborhood just outside the 75 DNL would have the option to receive relocation assistance or acoustical treatment. While the likelihood of encountering new neighborhoods on the 75 DNL border will be small, the noise abatement program for the proposed project will include this flexibility.

Paragraph 5 - The Sponsor will provide updated noise data, contours maps, and other relevant information to local governments for their use in land use planning.

Paragraph 6 - As noted above, the Sponsor will provide relevant noise information to local governments. The 2000 Census will yield valuable information about the population and relevant characteristics within the contours. The primary update of demographics will occur in mid-2002 when the block level data are anticipated from the U.S. Census Bureau. The discussion in Chapter 6 includes commitments to update the contours biannually; thus resulting graphics will be made available to local jurisdictions upon completion.

Local community concerns will be considered through two means. Members of the NMAC will be the primary means for making the Sponsor aware of noise concerns in their local areas. This information will be supplemented by communication directly between members of the public and the Department of Aviation.

Comment #6 (Response 1-1-8)

The FEIS does provide actual data for the development of the "Existing Condition" noise analysis. By definition, it is impossible to simulate future conditions with "actual operational data" since the future is not yet known. While it is possible to run a simulation of a future project using the current operational data, this approach has the potential to underestimate, or perhaps, overestimate the future noise pattern. Furthermore, as the comparison of the 2005 and 2010 No Action conditions in the FEIS indicate, the noise pattern does not exhibit wholesale changes as a result of fleet mix changes. The Sponsor has committed to updating noise contours every two years. These contours will be based on the most current available data.

Comment #7 (Responses 7-3-12 and 1-1-32)

Paragraph 1 - The four mitigation alternatives included in the DEIS were eliminated from further consideration in the FEIS. Those alternatives are typical of measures considered in Part 150 studies. If the measures are included in the Part 150 update to which the Sponsor has committed, demographic data (such as the number of people residing in each contour) would be available for comparing the mitigation measures.

Paragraph 2 - The Sponsor's noise mitigation hotline number is 770/43-NOISE.

Comment #8 (Response 2-2-14)

The assumptions are correct. From an operational perspective, the proposed 9,000-foot fifth runway would reduce aircraft ground delay and departure queue times across ATL's airfield, which translates to improved air quality in 2005 and 2010.

Comment #9 (Response 2-2-17)

Paragraph 1 – Comment noted.

Paragraph 2 - The referenced October 20, 2000 letter was included as the last piece of correspondence in Appendix B of Volume II of the FEIS, preceding the copies of the newsletters, *ATL News*.

Paragraph 3 - Section 5.22.1.4 of the FEIS describes the Sponsor's commitment to maintaining a 55 miles per hour (mph) design speed during the construction phase of the structures over I-285. The current posted speed limit on I-285 is 65 mph. Table A presents the EPA emission factors

that would be used to conduct an air quality analysis during the structural construction phase over I-285. The emission factors are listed according to vehicle type for two temperatures: 1) Atlanta's average annual temperature is approximately 65° Fahrenheit, and 2) Atlanta's typical summertime temperature of 90° Fahrenheit. For the critical pollutants that contribute to the ozone nonattainment problems in the Atlanta region, namely carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC), and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), all emission factors related to the 65 mph speed are higher than the corresponding emission factor at 55 mph. This indicates that for the same volume of traffic on I-285, the overall traffic emissions would decrease during the construction phase of the structure over I-285.

**Table A. EPA Traffic Emission Factors**

VEHICLE TYPE	SPEED (MPH)	Emission Factor CO (GM/M)	Emission Factor HC (GM/M)	Emission Factor NOX (GM/M)	Emission Factor SOX (GM/M)	Emission Factor PM (GM/M)
<b>AVERAGE YEARLY TEMPERATURE = 65 F</b>						
LDV*	55.0	11.140	1.820	2.750	0.113	0.099
HDV**	55.0	12.250	2.070	2.710	0.113	0.099
LDV	65.0	21.850	2.100	3.590	0.113	0.099
HDV	65.0	23.910	2.360	3.540	0.113	0.099
<b>SUMMERTIME TEMPERATURE = 90 F</b>						
LDV	55.0	13.140	3.730	2.680	0.113	0.099
HDV	55.0	14.430	4.230	2.630	0.113	0.099
LDV	65.0	25.810	3.970	3.500	0.113	0.099
HDV	65.0	28.220	4.470	3.450	0.113	0.099

LDV = Light Duty Vehicle  
 HDV = Heavy Duty Vehicle

Source: EPA Mobile5 emission factors for the year 2004 incorporated in the Emissions Dispersion Modeling System (EDMS), version 3.11, FAA & USAF, 1998.

Based on current plans, construction will occur year-round, and maintenance of traffic for the 55 mph speed will also be in place year round for approximately 24 months. If traffic is stopped for construction activities, it is expected that those stoppages would occur late at night or very early morning, and not during peak traffic periods.

Comment #10 (Response 3-4-29)

Comment noted.

Comment #11 (Responses 1-1-30 and 1-1-34)

Paragraph 1 - A primary factor in the Sponsor's new commitment to include multi-family housing in its noise abatement program has been the determination that high percentages of minority persons and low-income persons live in apartment communities within the 65+ DNL noise contour. Multi-family housing accounts for 30-60 percent of the households in the various Census tracts. Furthermore, eligible residences within the area of the 65+ DNL contour will be included in the appropriate levels of the noise abatement program regardless of race or income level. Many of the identified EJ areas will be covered in the mitigation priorities identified in the FEIS.

Paragraph 2 - Using procedures agreed upon by FAA and EPA, the minority and low-income populations were identified at the Census tract level within the noise contours. Of the total number of Census tracts in the overall demographic project area (defined in Chapter 4, with 25 tracts), 23 are partially or entirely located within the Alternative 2 contour boundaries. While minorities and low-income persons live in all of the Census tracts within the demographic project area, 19 tracts meet the agreed upon percentages to be considered EJ areas (described in both Section 4.5.2 and Appendix G of the FEIS). Those tracts are indeed shown in Figures 5-41 and 5-42, including color coding for each type of population and boundaries for all of the Census tracts within the noise contours. Table 5-23 shows the detailed estimates of minority persons and low-income persons inside the 65+ DNL contour, specifically for the EJ areas. Only 18 tracts were included instead of 19, because the most current data for Alternative 2 showed its northern contour boundary only touching Tract 109, with no nearby residences. (A footnote to this effect would have clarified the difference in number of Census tracts.)

A sentence introducing Table 5-23 in the FEIS explains that 2005 data were in the analysis because that year (based on newest available data for occupancy rates and other variables) would affect the most persons. Furthermore, as identified in this ROD, the noise contours for 2010 will vary no more than one percent for minority persons and low-income persons. In light of other comments related to updating contours more frequently, the 2005 contours also were used for the EJ comparison as a realistic look at the first year of operations.

Paragraph 3 - Responses to the comment on paragraph 2 above clarify the apparent discrepancies in the number of EJ areas (EJ Census tracts within the 65+ DNL contour). The main point is that, within the contour boundary, residences of all 19 tracts will be included in the Sponsor's noise abatement program. Many (more than 90 percent in several tracts) of the single-family residences have been treated in the current program, while the multi-family residences will now also be addressed. To the southwest, south, and southeast, residential areas will be added to the abatement program due to the extension of the contour boundaries to accommodate the flight paths of the fifth runway. These areas consist almost entirely of Census tracts considered to have high percentages of minority residents.

Relocations will have impacts, but the Sponsor has developed several approaches to minimize the disruption and facilitate the transition into new residential or business locations. Those approaches are outlined in Chapter 6 of the FEIS, detailed booklets are available through the Department of Aviation's land acquisition office. In particular, the remaining residential relocations consist mostly of Brandon Towne Apartments and the Woodland Hills Mobile Home Park. The Sponsor has committed to creative assistance for relocatees at both locations.

The Sponsor has committed to implementing a wide range of measures to minimize temporary construction impacts. Chapter 6 of Volume 1 of the FEIS and the Sponsor's formally documented mitigation plan in Appendix M in Volume 2 of the FEIS, identify measures related to noise, limiting construction during nighttime hours nearest the residential area, reducing emissions, and protecting water quality through Best Management Practices. The feasibility of hush houses was considered and described in other responses to comments in Volume 3 of the FEIS. The Sponsor will consider practical methods to further minimize noise during construction.

#### Comment #12 (Response 2-2-23)

As referenced in Section 2.5 of the FEIS, the Sponsor was awarded FAA's Inherently Low Emission Airport Vehicle (ILEAV) grant which will help fund a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station on airport property. This will promote the conversion of non-construction airport vehicles to cleaner fuels than conventional diesel and gasoline.

#### Comment #13 (Response 7-3-41)

The introduction of the 4-Runway Alternative, at the request of EPA, provided a useful basis to understand the overall magnitude of impacts from the existing airfield to a 9,000-foot fifth runway. This alternative is hypothetical because even an unfavorable Record of Decision would have allowed construction of a fifth commuter runway to continue. The 4-Runway Alternative also was reviewed for any other relevant impact categories – both for consistency and to identify for the reader that even stopping short of a commuter runway would have consequences. Certain steps have already occurred that have resulted in the irrevocable and irretrievable commitment of resources, therefore resulting in impacts. For relocations, considerable efforts were made subsequent to the DEIS to coordinate with the Sponsor's acquisition program, to update land use inventories, and to update occupancy rates. In the process, all of the acquisitions completed to date were identified as impacts of the 4-Runway Alternative (completed activities for the commuter runway), as well as the other alternatives. The No-Action Alternative would still require acquisition of additional parcels to fully accommodate the commuter runway, so the two alternatives were not determined to have the same displacements. The difference in displacements between the 4-Runway Alternative and Alternative 2 represents the *remaining or incremental* impacts of the extension itself.

The area within the No-Action Alternative changed slightly due to more current assumptions used during the 4-Runway Alternative noise analysis. In a few sections of the DEIS, the previous square mileage/acreage was not updated. Efforts were made during the FEIS preparation to update this number more consistently.

Comment #14 (Response 10-1-42)

The Sponsor can encourage but not require use of specific landfills by the contractor. The landfill in question has been a speculative project approved by Clayton County but apart from any planning by DOA staff. The site has been proposed as an inert landfill to handle debris for the fifth runway construction. However, the type of landfill is more a function of its proximity to an existing airport (no non-inert landfills are permitted within 10,000 feet of a runway) than of any relationship to the fifth runway. Moreover, approximately 50 percent of the debris removal for the proposed project has already occurred as part of the commuter runway construction. The debris has been taken to other readily available landfills in the vicinity. Even if the EPD were to permit the landfill and it were to be used in part to handle debris for the runway construction, the site would likely become a public inert landfill due to the limited amount of debris that requires removal to accommodate the proposed project.

**U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration (Letter 5)**

Comment #1

Comment noted.

**Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Historic Preservation Division (Letter 6)**

Comment #1

Comment noted.



Appendix 2 Governor's Air and Water Quality Certifications ***[paper copy only available]***

Appendix 3 Figure 1, 2010 Environmental Justice Areas ***[paper copy only available]***

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[1] Georgia EPD. February 16, 2000. Rules for Air Quality Control. Section 39-3-01.2, Provisions.

[2] Atlanta Regional Commission. March 2000. "Transportation Solutions for a New Century", Volume II: 2001-2003 Transportation Improvement Program.

[3] 40 CFR Part 93, Subpart A.