

SECTION 1

Introduction

This document is the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the East Airfield Development Area at Orlando International Airport (OIA). For those new to reading environmental assessments, this **Introduction** section provides an explanation of the reason the EA is being prepared, the type of information included in each of the sections of the document, the ways the public can be involved in the EA review process and the ultimate responsibility for approval of the EA document.

The EA is being prepared to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). NEPA requires that an environmental document be prepared for any federal action that may have a significant impact on the environment. The federal action under NEPA review is the environmental approval of the airport's amended airport layout plan (ALP) specific to the revised development plan for the East Airfield Development Area. The EA is being prepared by the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority (GOAA) for submittal to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). During this process, GOAA is referred to as the airport sponsor. The FAA independently evaluates the EA and takes responsibility for its scope and content.¹ There are three main documents used as guidance for the development of an EA with the FAA as the lead agency.

- US Department of Transportation (US DOT) FAA Order 1050.1E “Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures” (Effective Date: March 20, 2006)
- US DOT FAA Order 5050.4B “National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions” (Effective Date: April 28, 2006)
- FAA Office of Airports “Environmental Desk Reference for Airport Actions” (October 2007).

This EA includes nine (9) sections in the main body of the report as well as a series of appendices. The FAA guidelines for preparation of EA documents suggest the main body of the report to be as brief as possible – providing the basic information and results of the analyses conducted. More detailed support and technical information on various environmental topics discussed in the main body of the report are provided in the appendices or can be found on file with GOAA.

Following this Introduction, the second section in the EA is Section 2.0 **Purpose and Need** which describes the reasons the project is being proposed and the needs that the project is expected to fulfill. The next section, Section 3.0 **Proposed Action**, describes the proposed project (both graphically and in text). It also identifies the physical requirements of the project (such as land area needed and runway access requirements, etc.). These sections give the reader an understanding of the proposed project, its purpose, and why it is needed.

¹ 40 CFR 1506.5 (b)

The next section, Section 4.0 **Alternatives**, provides the reader with the development alternatives considered in trying to meet the purpose and need. This section looks at the proposed action from Section 3.0 and other reasonable alternatives that would meet the purpose and need stated in Section 2.0. In addition, all NEPA documents are required to consider the “No Action” alternative. The “No-Action” alternative assumes that the proposed project is not built and provides the baseline to which the impacts of the proposed project are compared. In addition, reasons why certain alternatives were not proposed for detailed evaluation are also presented in the Alternatives section. The result of the alternative analysis determines which alternatives, in addition to the No-Action alternative, warrant being carried forward for detailed environmental review.

Following the Alternatives section is Section 5.0 **Affected Environment** which is the portion of the EA that presents the existing conditions for the study area and the potentially affected environmental resources. A brief description of past, current, and reasonably foreseeable actions is included as background information in this section. This information is used as a basis for the impact analysis presented in the Environmental Consequences section. The Affected Environment section typically includes information on existing natural resources, existing historical or archeological areas, biological descriptions of the flora and fauna of the project area, and provides the types of land uses and communities located within close proximity to the proposed project site. In summary, the Affected Environment section provides the reader with a current-day description of the natural and physical environment of the proposed project site and surrounding areas.

Section 6.0 **Environmental Consequences and Mitigation** provides the environmental analysis portion of the EA document. It is within this section that the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action Alternative, the No Action Alternative, and any other reasonable alternatives that are carried forward from the Alternatives section are evaluated. US DOT FAA Order 1050.1E “Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures” provides the significance thresholds for a majority of the environmental impact categories. Under NEPA, these thresholds are used to determine if a significant impact is expected to occur. Each environmental impact category discussed in this document provides an overview of the significance thresholds, if applicable, for the environmental impact category being evaluated. This section also evaluates mitigation measures or best management activities that are proposed to minimize adverse impacts and, for those measures recommended, explains how each measure would avoid or reduce the adverse environmental effects to below significant thresholds.

Section 7.0 **Agency and Public Coordination** provides the reader with a description of the required coordination with appropriate resource agencies involved in evaluating potentially affected environmental resources. Comments and responses to agency comments are described in summary or listed within the appendices of the document. This section also provides a description of the airport sponsor’s public outreach activities including meeting information, public workshop materials, and public hearing comments (once completed). A majority of the materials and actual comments are provided by reference to appendix items.

The final two sections of the document are Section 8.0 **List of Preparers**, which documents participants involved in the preparation of the document, and Section 9.0 **References**, which details the materials used in conducting the analysis.