

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
CENTRAL REGION**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/RECORD OF DECISION**

**For the Proposed**

**PASSENGER TERMINAL REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

**MASON CITY MUNICIPAL AIRPORT  
MASON CITY, IOWA**

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This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Record of Decision (ROD) was prepared for a proposed action at the Mason City Municipal Airport (MCW) in Mason City, Iowa. The attached Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA) dated February 2022, was prepared in accordance with the guidelines and requirements set forth by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Presented is a description of the Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action, Proposed Action, Alternatives Considered, and Assessment and Mitigation as discussed in the attached Final EA with Federal Findings regarding the Proposed Action.

**PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION:**

The existing terminal building is inadequate to support current and future operations at the airport and is in need of substantial expansion and modernization. The existing passenger terminal building was constructed in 1965 and has had various alterations, upgrades, and improvements over the years. Prior to the construction of the passenger terminal, the Restaurant was constructed in 1950 and the FAA Tower (Annex) was constructed in 1961. Historically, the primary aircraft using the airport were 9-seaters, eventually increasing to 19-seaters. However, in 2021, 50-seat regional jets began utilizing the airport. The existing terminal is incapable of adequately serving 50-seat regional jets nor the projected 75-seat jet service that is anticipated to be served in the future.

The Airport Commission identified a number of deficiencies within the existing passenger terminal. The configuration of the existing terminal building has areas that are not used due to less-than-ideal locations and out-of-date design. The public lobby, baggage claim, ticketing, security screening, restrooms, and gatehold room are all significantly undersized and lack the required accessibility accommodations. The second floor of the terminal is not accessible per Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Other portions of the terminal building, such as facility restrooms, are also not ADA compliant. The existing gatehold area has only a single unisex restroom, and there is no family restroom or mother's room.

The passenger gatehold area does not meet fire code requirements for the accommodation of passenger numbers associated with larger aircraft. The following code deficiencies have been noted: the existing terminal is not equipped with fire sprinkler system and the second floor knee wall is too short. The building is in need of mechanical, lighting, and plumbing upgrades to meet current requirements. Additionally, there is exterior deterioration at the windows, doors, roof, joints, and architectural finishes. Lead based paint and asbestos are present within the building and will require abatement if the existing terminal is improved.

The purpose of the proposed new replacement terminal is to provide a better customer experience for passengers and ensure continued safe, secure, and efficient airport operations while also upgrading the terminal to meet building code, fire code, TSA security, and ADA requirements.

Section 2.2 of the Final EA describes the purpose and need for the proposed action. This FONSI/ROD addresses the Airport's proposed replacement terminal as described below.

### **PROPOSED ACTION:**

The Proposed Action consists of the development and operation of a replacement terminal as shown on the December 2, 2021, conditionally approved Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and as described in detail in the Final EA. The Proposed Action includes the following major elements:

- Construct a new terminal facility with all public spaces on one level west of the existing terminal;
- Expand the terminal apron to the west for regional and narrow body jet operations;
- Extend the access road to provide curbside service to the proposed terminal;
- Expand the parking areas to increase capacity; and
- Demolish (partial or full) the existing terminal, FAA annex, and restaurant.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

**The No Action Alternative:** Necessary facility maintenance would be completed; however, there would be no material change to or expansion of the terminal facility. The No Action alternative would not meet the purpose and need for addressing the existing terminal building deficiencies in support of current and future operations at the airport.

Although the No Action Alternative does not meet the project purpose and need, in addition to being a Council on Environmental Quality/National Environmental Policy Act (CEQ/NEPA) requirement, it does serve as a baseline for a comparison of impacts to the preferred alternative and is therefore retained for analysis.

**Reasonable Alternative 2 – Preferred Alternative, Replacement Terminal – West Location:** Construct a new terminal immediately west of the existing facility. The new

terminal would have an ADA compliant lobby, restrooms, TSA screening area, gatehold, and luggage areas sized to accommodate the existing need of 50-seat passenger regional jets and allowing for possible expansion to 75-seat passenger regional jets. The new terminal would include private and secure baggage screening and inspection areas. The building would be code compliant with updated mechanical, lighting, and plumbing features. Additionally, the new terminal would provide all office and public meeting rooms on the first floor of the building and there would be the ability to expand the terminal to meet future growth needs. Replacing the existing terminal with a new building would eliminate the exterior deterioration, asbestos, and lead based paint issues found in the existing terminal. This alternative was selected as the Proposed Action because this alternative best meets the purpose and need, is feasible, and results in minimal environmental impacts.

**Reasonable Alternative 3 – Replacement Terminal, South Location:** Construct new terminal immediately south of the existing facility. The new terminal would have the same features as the Preferred Alternative. Although this alternative meets the purpose and need, the larger apron area, larger parking lot, along with substantial challenges maintaining current terminal operations, directing passengers around the construction zone to the existing terminal, and other complex construction phasing and operations issues, it was eliminated from further consideration.

**Reasonable Alternative 4 – Renovate Existing Terminal:** Renovate and expand the existing terminal. The existing FAA Annex building would be demolished and the existing terminal would be expanded to the west and to the north to accommodate larger security checkpoint, gatehold, and baggage claim area. This alternative only partially meets the purpose and need. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration because of difficulties maintaining existing passenger operations while remodeling the existing structure. Additionally, the layout and functionality of the remodeled terminal would not be as efficient as new construction, would not address current energy code requirements, and long-term operation and maintenance costs are anticipated to be more significant.

#### **ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION:**

Section 4.0 of the attached Final EA addresses the applicable environmental impact areas in accordance with FAA Orders 1050.1F and 5050.4B and analyzes the potential for significant impacts. The attached Final EA and associated correspondence were reviewed by the FAA to determine whether each of the affected impact categories exceeded an established threshold of significance.

The sponsor's Proposed Action will not significantly affect environmental resources as discussed and analyzed in the attached Final EA, which contains detailed discussions, analyses, and mitigation measures of all affected impact categories. Statements of consistency with community planning from state and local governments are highlighted in the attached Final EA.

The FAA has assessed the Proposed Action as the preferred alternative. The Final EA addresses the effect of the proposed project on the human and natural environment. The Final EA provides a detailed description of existing conditions and the environmental consequences of the Proposed Action on resource areas.

The Proposed Action will not change flight patterns, altitudes, or aircraft traffic volumes at the Airport. Noise levels will not be affected.

**Resources Not Affected:** As described in Section 4.4 of the Final EA, these resources were considered but not analyzed in detail. Based on the results of site visits and research, the No Action and Proposed Action would not have direct or indirect impacts on the following resources: Air Quality; Biological Resources; Climate; Coastal Resources; Farmlands; Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention; Land Use; Natural Resources and Energy Supply; Noise and Noise-compatible Land Use; Socioeconomic, Environmental Justice, and Children’s Environmental Health and Safety Risks; Visual Effects; and Water Resources.

**Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f) and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act, Section 6(f) Resources:** Section 4.5 of the Final EA describes the impacts for both the No Action and the Proposed Action Alternatives. In addition, FAA developed a Draft Section 4(f) Statement that was made available for public comment between December 30, 2021 and February 10, 2021. The final 4(f) Statement is included in Appendix C of the Final EA.

As stated in Exhibit 4-1 of FAA Order 1050.1F and Paragraph 5.3.7 of the 1050.1F Desk Reference, a significant impact would occur when the action involves more than a minimal physical use of a Section 4(f) resource. A significant impact would not occur if mitigation measures eliminate or reduce the effects of a use below the threshold of significance.

The FAA determined that the Mason City Municipal Airport is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a historic district and therefore would be considered a Section 4(f) resource. There are no public parks, recreation facilities, or wildlife or waterfowl refuges that are protected under Section 4(f) located within the project area. In addition, there are no resources protected under Section 6(f) of the LWCF Act located within the project boundary.

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no development that would cause physical or constructive use to a Section 4(f) resource or to a LWCF Act Section 6(f) resource.

With the demolition or renovation of the FAA Annex, Terminal, and Restaurant, the Proposed Action would constitute a physical “use” of part of the National Register-eligible Mason City Municipal Airport Historic District, which is a Section 4(f) resource. FAA also determined that the Proposed Action would not result in a constructive use of any Section 4(f) resources (see Section 4.5.3 of the Final EA).

Where an action would involve the use of a Section 4(f) property, Section 4(f) requires that prior to approving the action, the FAA must determine that there is no feasible or prudent alternative that would avoid the use of the Section 4(f) property and that the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from the use. As defined in 23 CFR § 774.17,<sup>1</sup> “all possible planning” means that all reasonable measures to minimize harm or mitigate adverse impacts must be included in the project. With regard to historic sites, this means the measures as agreed to by the FAA and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in accordance with the consultation process under the regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106). As the Proposed Action would involve a use, a separate Section 4(f) evaluation was prepared.

The FAA determined that there are no alternatives that address the Purpose and Need of the project and are both prudent and feasible. The FAA has consulted with the Airport Commission, the Historic Commission, and the SHPO under Section 106 to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The MOA outlines the mitigation measures needed to resolve adverse effects of the Proposed Action on the National Register-eligible Mason City Municipal Airport Historic District. Execution of the MOA and implementation of its terms would fulfill the Section 4(f) requirement that the project include all possible planning to minimize harm and reduce the effects of the use of the Section 4(f) resource below the threshold of significance. Execution of the MOA and implementation of its terms is a requirement of the Proposed Action. Therefore the Proposed Action will not result in a significant impact.

The U.S. Department of the Interior concurred with the FAA’s determination.

**Historic, Architectural, Archeological or Cultural Resources:** Section 4.6 of the Final EA describe FAA’s evaluation of the direct and indirect impacts from federal actions on historic, architectural, archaeological, and other cultural resources under Section 106, the principal statute concerning such resources. Section 106 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on properties that are listed in or determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO), and other parties to develop and evaluate alternatives or modifications to the undertaking where necessary to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects on historic properties. The independent federal agency overseeing federal historic preservation and tribal programs, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings subject to Section 106.

Exhibit 4-1 of FAA Order 1050.1F provides that the FAA has not established a significance threshold for Historical, Architectural, and Cultural Resources. A factor to consider is whether the action would result in a finding of adverse effect through the Section 106

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<sup>1</sup> These regulations, issued by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and Federal Railroad Administration, are not binding on the FAA but may be used as guidance to the extent relevant.

process; however, an adverse effect finding is not automatically a significant impact triggering preparation of an EIS.

For this analysis, FAA established both a Direct and an Indirect Area of Potential Effect (APE). These are shown on Figure 4-7 of the Final EA. In order to identify historic properties within the APEs, an architectural and historic properties survey was completed in June 2021 and an archeological survey was completed in December 2021.

With the No Action Alternative, no changes would be made from the existing conditions and the terminal facility would remain as it is today. Therefore, no impacts to historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural resources would occur.

The FAA, after review of the architectural and historic properties survey and input from the SHPO, determined that the Mason City Municipal Airport is eligible for the NRHP as a historic district. The SHPO concurred with this determination. Under the Proposed Action, with the proposed demolition of the terminal facility (FAA Annex, Terminal, and Restaurant) and construction of a new terminal building with associated development, the undertaking would constitute an adverse effect to the historic district. The SHPO concurred with this adverse effect determination. The archaeological survey found no archeological resources or cultural resources within the Direct APE.

To mitigate the adverse effect to the historic district, the FAA, Airport Commission, Historic Commission, and SHPO, engaged in consultation and developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A copy of the executed MOA is included in Appendix I of the Final EA.

The mitigation measures (stipulations) of the MOA are a requirement of the Proposed Action. As stated in the MOA, execution of the MOA and implementation of its terms evidences that the FAA has taken into account the effects of this undertaking on historic properties and afforded the ACHP an opportunity to comment.

Although the Proposed Action will result in an adverse effect, mitigation measures in the MOA are intended to resolve adverse effects. Through implementation of these measures, impacts will be mitigated below the level of significance and therefore the Proposed Action would not result in a significant impact to this category of resources under NEPA.

The mitigation measures in the MOA include:

- A. **PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF TERMINAL COMPLEX:** Prior to the demolition of the existing terminal complex (restaurant, FAA annex, and terminal building), the Airport Commission will create a photographic record of the terminal complex in accordance with the National Register Photo Policy Standards. The SHPO will consult on the selection of images to be printed for archival purposes.
- B. **WEBSITE HISTORY:** Prior to the demolition of the existing terminal complex (restaurant, FAA annex, and terminal building), the Airport Commission, in consultation with the Historic Commission, will create and display on the Airport's

- website the history of the existing terminal complex based on the photographic record (see Mitigation Measure A) and historic buildings survey (see Mitigation Measure C).
- C. HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY: Local architecture firm Waggoner & Waggoner are documented as the lead architecture firm for the terminal complex (restaurant, FAA annex, terminal building). This firm produced a variety of work locally commonly consisting of educational facilities, medical facilities, and office/commercial projects. Prior to demolition of the existing terminal complex (restaurant, FAA annex, and terminal building), the Airport Commission, in consultation with the Historic Commission, will contract with a historic preservation specialist meeting the Secretary of Interior's standards for historian and/or architectural historian with an emphasis in transportation, to complete an intensive level survey of Mason City Municipal Airport's terminal and buildings within the city limits of Mason City designed by the architectural firm Waggoner & Waggoner.
  - D. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS: Prior to demolition of the existing terminal complex (restaurant, FAA annex, and terminal building), the Airport Commission will complete an economic analysis to determine feasibility for the reuse of the terminal and restaurant for other aeronautical purposes.

Fourteen (14) Tribes were invited to participate as consulting parties. One tribe requested that the area be surveyed by a tribal monitor; however, after further coordination, responded that the survey was not needed. Thirteen (13) tribes did not respond.

If construction work uncovers buried archeological materials, cease work in the area of discovery and immediately notify the SHPO and the FAA. The FAA will contact concerned tribes.

**Cumulative Impacts:** The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions were evaluated for cumulative impacts from these actions that could result in environmental impacts from implementation of the Proposed Action.

With implementation of the Proposed Action, the level of cumulative impacts anticipated to occur within these environmental resource categories are not significant due to: the types of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects; the extent of the built environment in which they would occur; the lack of certain environmental resources in the area; and the mitigation measures identified for the Proposed Action. Therefore, as stated in the Final EA, implementation of the Proposed Action would not result in significant cumulative environmental impacts.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH:**

Section 5.0 of the Final EA summarizes the public involvement. Prior to the start of the EA, an Open House was held on October 5, 2021 at the Mason City Municipal Airport to inform and allow the public to provide comment about the Proposed Action and NEPA process. In

addition to the Open House, an Airport Commission meeting was held on October 11, 2021 where the public was again provided the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Action. There were no public attendees to the Airport Commission meeting. Comments received during the October 11, 2021 open house can be found in Appendix J.

Another Open House was held on January 18, 2022 and a Public Hearing was held on January 31, 2022 at the Mason City Municipal Airport regarding the Draft EA, Draft 4(f) Statement, and Draft MOA and allowing the public to provide comment. The public was notified about the meetings through the Mason City Globe-Gazette newspaper, online at <http://flymcw.com>, and via the airport's social media channels. There were no attendees to the January 18, 2022 open house and the only attendees to the public hearing were members of the local press. Proof of publication and display boards from the open house can be found in Appendix J.

The Draft EA, Draft 4(f) Statement, and Draft MOA were made available for public review and comment between December 30, 2021 and February 10, 2022 at the Mason City City Hall, Mason City Airport, Mason City Library, and online at <http://flymcw.com>. Three comments were received during the public comment period. The written comments and responses are summarized on Table 1 in Appendix J.

### **DECISION AND ORDER:**

Based on the information in this FONSI/ROD and supported by detailed discussion in the attached Final EA, the Proposed Action has been identified as the FAA's selected alternative. Applicable federal requirements relating to the proposed airport development have been met.

Under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, I find that the project is reasonably supported. I, therefore, direct that the FAA take the following actions as appropriate to authorize implementation of the Proposed Action:

- Unconditional approval of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) to depict the proposed improvements pursuant to 49 USC §§ 40103(b) and 47107(a)(16).
- Determination under 49 USC § 44502(b) that the airport development is reasonably necessary for use in air commerce or in the interests of national defense.
- Approval of changes to the airport certification manual pursuant to 14 CFR Part 139 (49 USC § 44706).
- Determinations under 49 USC 47106 and 47107 relating to the eligibility of the Proposed Action for federal funding under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and/or determinations under 49 USC 40117, as implemented by 14 CFR 158.25, to impose and use passenger facility charges (PFCs).

- Approval of an airport sponsor's request for release of property pursuant to FAA Order 5190.6, FAA Airport Compliance Manual (49 USC Chapter 471) permitting the sale and disposal of airport property or change in land use from aeronautical to non-aeronautical.

This order is issued under applicable statutory authorities, including 49 U.S.C. §§ 40101(d), 40103(b), 40113(a), 44701, 44706, 44718(b), and 47101 et seq.

**APPROVING FAA OFFICIAL'S STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING:**

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other applicable environmental requirements and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. As a result, FAA is issuing this FONSI and will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this action.

APPROVED:	<p><b>JAMES A JOHNSON</b></p> <hr/> <p>Manager, FAA Airports Division</p>	 <p>Digitally signed by JAMES A JOHNSON Date: 2022.03.02 16:01:11 -06'00'</p> <hr/> <p>Date</p>
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DISAPPROVED:	<hr/> <p>Manager, FAA Airports Division</p>	<hr/> <p>Date</p>
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*RIGHT OF APPEAL:*

*This decision document (FONSI/ROD) is a final order of the FAA Administrator and is subject to exclusive judicial review under 49 U.S.C. § 46110 by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia or the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the circuit in which the person contesting the decision lives or has a principal place of business. Any party having substantial interest in this order may apply for review of the decision by filing a petition for review in the appropriate U.S. Court of Appeals no later than 60 days after the order is issued in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. § 46110.*