

**Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
Finding of No Significant Impact**

LOCATION

Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT)
Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania 15231

PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTION

Allow approval by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of modifications to the Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) Airport Layout Plan (ALP) to incorporate the proposed project; specifically the development of micro-grid consisting of an on-site natural gas-fired electric power plant and a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) array.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Refer to Section 2 of the Environmental Assessment)

The proposed project would consist of a 20 megawatt (MW) natural gas-fired electric power plant that would generate electricity through the combustion of natural gas to provide electricity to PIT. This part of the proposed project would consist of five generators, distribution equipment, an electrical building, and a mechanical building on a 0.9-acre site located outside of the Air Operations Area (AOA), approximately 2,000 feet east of the airside terminal and 800 feet east of Taxiway T. Electrical distribution lines would run from the natural gas-fired electric power plant to the existing substation. Approximately 1,300 linear feet of new underground conduit would be installed from the substation to existing duct banks. Additionally, approximately 450 linear feet of natural gas lines ranging in diameter from 8 inches to 12 inches, would be installed to provide gas to the generators.

The proposed project also includes a 3.0 MW Alternating Current (AC) solar PV array that would be located outside of the AOA on the southwest corner of airport property on a former landfill, approximately 1,600 feet south of the extended centerline of Runway 10R-28L and north of Interstate 376. The solar PV array would consist of 9,360 3.3-foot by 6.5-foot, 390-Watt solar panels covering approximately 13 acres. The panels would face south away from approaches to the east-west parallel runways.

PURPOSE AND NEED (Refer to Section 3 of the Environmental Assessment)

The Purpose of the proposed project is to ensure greater power reliability and energy sustainability, and to enhance public safety at PIT. The Need for the project is to prevent power outages such as those that have affected major airports across the nation, including Los Angeles International Airport and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. This project will provide power redundancy and resiliency at PIT to ensure greater power reliability and uninterrupted operations for the airport and its passengers. In addition, this project will improve sustainability at the airport by providing a renewable energy source.

ALTERNATIVES (Refer to Section 5 of the Environmental Assessment)

Various sites on PIT were considered for the proposed project. Sites considered for the natural gas generators needed to be in close proximity to the existing electrical substation in order to provide a connection to the existing electrical utilities. The site also had to be outside the AOA and not disturb other airport or tenant facilities. No other sites were found to be suitable or feasible for the natural gas generators. The land where the solar PV array would be located is the only portion of PIT property that can accommodate the proposed solar PV array. As such, the proposed project is the only reasonable alternative that would provide power redundancy and resiliency to ensure greater power reliability and uninterrupted operations for the airport.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, an airport micro-grid would not be constructed and energy operations would continue to be provided by the existing power grid. The airport would remain vulnerable to power outages and operations disruptions. This alternative does not meet the project Purpose and Need and is not the FAA selected alternative.

Alternative 1- Proposed Project

The proposed project, as described in the Project Description, meets the Purpose and Need, would not affect airport operations, facilities or tenants and does not result in significant environmental impacts. It is the sponsor's preferred alternative and FAA's selected alternative.

DISCUSSION

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) addresses the effect that the proposed project would have on the human and natural environment. The following impact categories highlight the analysis provided in the EA.

Assessment (Refer to Section 6 of the Environmental Assessment)

The impacts of the proposed federal action on noise, land use compatibility, social, indirect socioeconomic, air quality, water quality, DOT Section 4(f), historic and archaeological resources, biotic communities, endangered species, wetlands, floodplains, coastal zones, coastal barriers, wild and scenic rivers, prime and unique farmland, energy supply and natural resources, light emissions, solid waste impacts, hazardous materials, environmental justice, and cumulative impacts were evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The results of these environmental studies are summarized below. It is the FAA's finding that the proposed project will not have any significant environmental impacts.

Air Quality

In accordance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), Allegheny County is in marginal nonattainment area for 8-hour Ozone and moderate nonattainment for PM_{2.5}. The County also has partial SO₂ nonattainment. The proposed project site falls within the SO₂ nonattainment area. Construction and Operations Emission inventories were conducted and concluded that the project would not result in a net total of direct or indirect emissions that exceed the threshold of the regulated air pollutants.

Climate

The proposed project would result in the net decrease of Green House Gases (GHG). The micro-grid would utilize energy from solar PV array in addition to a natural gas-fired electric power plant. This would emit fewer emissions than the No Action alternative, which relies upon the electrical grid.

Biotic Resources

The proposed project would occur in portions of the airport that are currently disturbed and graded land and consist of maintained lawn and soil that was formerly used for construction staging and a closed, capped landfill. There would be no long-term or permanent loss of unlisted plants or wildlife species.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The project will not impact any federally or state-listed or proposed, threatened or endangered species of flora or fauna, nor will it impact any critical habitat. The project will not affect any species protected under the Migratory Bird Act.

Coastal Resources

The project is not located within the Coastal Barrier Resource System or designated coastal zone.

Section 4 (f) Resources

The proposed project would not have an impact on any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or an historic site of national, state, or local significance. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Section 4(f) Resources on PIT property and around PIT include:

- The Great Allegheny Passage Montour Trail, including the Airport Link Trail;
- Clinton Community Park;
- Leopold Lake Park;
- Robin Hill Park;
- Moon Township Park;
- Moon Township Golf Club; and

Aten Road and Westbury Ballfields.

None of these resources are within the proposed project areas, or will indirectly be affected by the project. Therefore, there will be no use of a Section 4 (f) resource.

Farmlands

The proposed project does not involve acquisition of farmland, or use of farmland, that would be converted to non-agricultural use and is protected by the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Hazardous Materials

The proposed solar PV array component of the proposed project would be developed at the closed landfill site; however, this component would minimally disturb the soil cap of the landfill. The site would be closed to public access. The following permits would be obtained prior to any construction:

- Building Permit for the solar PV array from Findlay Township
- Landfill Minor Modification Permit from PA Department of Environmental Protection

Historical, Architectural, Archeological or Cultural Properties

Within the proposed project area, all of the historic farm structures that existed prior to the construction and operation of the existing airport no longer exist. Records and previous site work indicate there are no archaeological resources known to exist within the proposed project area.

Compatible Land Use

The project is located on airport property and will not disrupt communities or require any relocation of residents or businesses. The project will not create a wildlife hazard.

Energy Supply, Natural Resources, and Sustainable Design

The project will have minimal consumption of energy and other natural resources. It will not affect local public utility supplies. Operations of the proposed project would not change energy consumption of airport facilities. No increase in airport operations would occur as a result of implementation of the proposed project. Under the proposed project, PIT would shift some current energy consumption from existing energy resources to the proposed natural gas-fired electric power plant and solar PV array. This would result in a decrease in energy demand on local public utility suppliers.

Noise

This project will not cause noise sensitive areas to experience a permanent increase in the noise Day-Night-Level (DNL). The proposed project would occur in the middle of the PIT airfield. The area is adjacent to highway and undeveloped land. The nearest residential area is located approximately 4,000 feet north of the project area, and the nearest school is located approximately 1.3 miles northeast of the project area. Due to the distance of the project area to sensitive noise receptors, no noise impacts are anticipated. The increase in noise levels resulting from construction would be short term and minor in duration, and would not exceed applicable standards.

Socioeconomic, Environmental Justice, and Children's Health and Safety Risks

The Proposed project would be located entirely on existing PIT property, so there will be no disruption to communities. There will be increased traffic associated with construction related trips, however this will be temporary and will not affect the existing Level of Service.

Lighting Emissions and Visual Effects

There are no light-sensitive areas or residences in close proximity to the project site. The closest neighboring residences is about 4,000 feet from the project area. The natural gas-fired power plant would not be visible from any surrounding communities and the solar PV array will only be visible from Interstate 376.

Wetlands

To determine the presence or absence of wetlands, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) was used and a wetland investigation was conducted (March 2020) in accordance with the US Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual. No watercourses or areas of hydric soils or indicators of hydrology were observed in the natural gas-fired electric power plant portion or the solar PV array portion of the proposed project area. As such, no wetlands, or Waters of the U.S., were identified within the proposed project area. The

proposed project does not involve federal or state regulated wetlands or non-jurisdictional wetlands; therefore, no impacts to wetlands are anticipated.

Surface Water

There are no surface waters located within the proposed project area. The site is previously disturbed and consists entirely of graded land and maintained lawn.

Ground Water

No public groundwater sources are located within PIT property. Within PIT property, groundwater is monitored for evaluation of contamination at the closed landfill and other locations where soil contamination is present. The proposed project would not include construction or operational activities that would have the potential to impact groundwater.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers located within or near the project area.

Floodplains

Based on review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps, the proposed project is not located in or does not encroach upon any 100-year or 500-year floodplain.

Cumulative Impacts

The environmental analysis considered projects completed in the past five years, on-going projects, and planned projects for the next few years. As documented in the EA, the proposed project will not result in significant construction or operational impacts. Past projects also did not result in significant impacts and where needed, mitigation has taken place. Since the envisioned development is not yet planned, funded, or otherwise formalized, any potential impacts associated with development would be speculative and thereby were not considered. When considered cumulatively with other projects, this project will not result in significant environmental impacts.

PERMITS (Refer to Section 7 of the Environmental Assessment)

The following permits and approval are anticipated:

- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Individual Permit- Allegheny County Conservation District
- Findlay Township Building Permit-Solar PV Array
- Findlay Township Building Permit- Electric Power Plant
- Air Permit- Installation- Allegheny County Health Department
- Air Permit- Installation- Allegheny County Health Department
- Glint/Glare Analysis-FAA
- Hazardous/Residual Waste- PA Department of Environmental Protection
- Landfill Minor Modification Permit- PA Department of Environmental Protection

MITIGATION MEASURES (Refer to Section 8 of the Environmental Assessment)

There are no significant impacts associated with this project, so no mitigation measures are required. Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations and permit requirements will ensure no environmental impacts.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT (Refer to Section 9 of the Environmental Assessment)

Since the proposed project does not involve a new airport location, a new runway, or a major runway extension, and does not involve any special purpose laws, the requirement for “the opportunity for public hearing” of Chapter 4, “Public Participation”, paragraphs 402 and 403, of FAA Order 5050.4B, does not apply. The FAA has determined that a public hearing is not appropriate for this action since the proposal does not have substantial environmental controversy. A copy of the EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be made available for public review.

CONCLUSION AND APPROVAL

I have carefully and thoroughly considered the facts contained in the attached EA. Based on that information, I find the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives of Section 101 (a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other applicable environmental requirements. I also find the proposed Federal action with the required mitigation referenced above will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or include any conditions requiring consultation pursuant to section 102(2)(c) of NEPA. As a result, FAA will not prepare an EIS for this action.

Recommended: _____
Susan L. McDonald
Environmental Protection Specialist
Harrisburg ADO
Date _____

Approved: _____
Rick Harner
Manager, Harrisburg ADO
Date _____

Disapproved: _____
Rick Harner
Manager, Harrisburg ADO
Date _____