



December 24, 2009

Ms. Amy Lind Corbett
Regional Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration - New England Region
12 New England Executive Park
Burlington, MA 01803-5299

Mr. David Drozd
Director, BRAC Program Management Office Northeast
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Installations & Environment)
4911 South Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19112-1303

Subject: Public Benefit Conveyance Request for the Airport Property at NAS Brunswick

Dear Ms. Corbett and Mr. Drozd:

I am pleased to file this Public Benefit Conveyance request for the airport property at Naval Air Station Brunswick in Cumberland County, Maine on behalf of Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority. In addition to the Public Benefit Conveyance Application enclosed with this letter, I have also included a copy of the Airport Master Plan and related Airport Layout Plan for the redevelopment of this airfield into a civilian general aviation airport.

Background

On August 24, 2005, the Federal Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission voted to close Naval Air Station Brunswick and move its aircraft operations to Jacksonville, Florida. On September 15, 2005, the final list was approved by President George W. Bush. Locally known as Naval Air Station Brunswick, the base is a 3,300-acre military enclave within the jurisdictional limits of the Town of Brunswick, in Cumberland County, Maine. The base is the last remaining active-duty Department of Defense airfield located in the Northeast, and was home to five active duty and two reserve squadrons. The base's two 8,000 foot runways and airside support infrastructure and systems (which encompass over 1,300 acres of the base) provide 24-hour, seven day a week, year-round airport services. Flying Lockheed P-3 "Orion" long-range maritime patrol aircraft tasked by Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing Five, active duty squadrons regularly deploy overseas for six months at a time.

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After the BRAC decision to close NAS Brunswick was final, Governor John E. Baldacci, the local legislative delegation, and the Brunswick Town Council established the Brunswick Local Redevelopment Authority (the "BLRA" and our predecessor organization) to redevelop a Reuse Master Plan for NAS Brunswick. The goals of the redevelopment plan established by the BLRA were:

- ❑ Use a forward-thinking and inclusive approach, establish initial community goals and objectives, respecting important community interests and values
- ❑ Provide for public outreach and identify the needs of the community
- ❑ Conduct a market study, addressing national, regional, and local potential for redevelopment
- ❑ Use existing documents, data, plans and other sources of information, and conduct a detailed facility survey of the property to include land area, buildings, infrastructure, and environmental conditions
- ❑ Collate known environmental issues, using existing and such other inventory and other information as may be needed and recommend a reuse master plan that is environmentally acceptable to the Navy, regulators and the community at large
- ❑ Use broad planning principles to develop a series of alternative reuse master plans and property disposition strategies
- ❑ Develop the reuse master plan concurrently and in coordination with an airport feasibility analysis
- ❑ Identify when, how and what disposition methods should be used for property transfer from the Navy and alternatives for the completion of the environmental cleanup, including "early" transfer under CERCLA
- ❑ Assist the community in reaching consensus around a final reuse master plan

As a naval air station, the aviation assets at NAS Brunswick are significant and represent the largest single component of the base. The BLRA, in concert with the Maine Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration, retained Edwards and Kelcey to conduct an Aviation Feasibility Study to evaluate opportunities and constraints for a civilian aviation use on the base. The study, funded by a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), was conducted on parallel tracks with the reuse planning and public participation process. The Feasibility Study used a multi-phased screening process to identify and evaluate potential civilian aviation activities, the likelihood that they could occur at NAS Brunswick, the economic impact of those activities, as well as the potential regional benefits and environmental impacts of civil aviation activity. The goals of the study were to:

- ❑ Provide a comprehensive update of the inventory of base features and significant community attributes that could influence future aviation redevelopment efforts
- ❑ Identify aviation reuse options

- ❑ Identify land use and aviation facility requirements for each aviation alternative
- ❑ Provide a preliminary analysis of the potential revenues, operating and maintenance costs, and necessary capital investment
- ❑ Provide an opportunity for public discussion of aviation reuse that includes a diverse mix of public, private, airport and non-airport perspectives
- ❑ Determine the financial and economic impact of operating a civilian airport, including potential employment and regional benefits
- ❑ Whether environmental issues would impact the surrounding community or prevent civilian aviation activity at BNAS

Through a process involving significant public input from the surrounding communities, and review by the Maine DOT and FAA, the Feasibility Study determined that the re-use of NASB should include the retention of an airport to serve four aviation sectors that could contribute to the economy of the region and the state. Those aviation sectors are:

- ❑ General Aviation (GA)
- ❑ Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO)
- ❑ Defense contracting
- ❑ Research and development

The Reuse Master Plan adopted by the BLRA in December of 2007 designates approximately 500 acres for airport operations and 230 acres for aviation-related businesses.

The Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRRA) was created by the Maine State Legislature in 2005 as a public municipal corporation under 5 MRSA 13083-G to implement the Reuse Master Plan for NAS Brunswick and to acquire and manage the properties within the geographic boundaries of the base. The statute that created the MRRRA also provides broad powers of a municipality to provide services under Title 30-A, chapter 213, which includes operation of an airport. The MRRRA established Bylaws in September 2007, and has been granted federal funds to undertake community economic adjustment activities.

Proposed Public Benefit Conveyance Request

This PBC application incorporates key elements of the NAS Brunswick Airport Master Plan relative to operations, financial strategy, and economic development required to successfully convert the former Navy airfield into a successful general aviation airport. The airport property will be owned by the MRRRA and designated a public-use facility following its transfer. A letter has been filed by the New England Regional FAA Office in support of MRRRA's request to have the airport included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). The airport property is also anticipated to be classified as a Reliever Airport, which is defined as a high capacity general aviation airport in a major metropolitan area.

The large land mass, rural location, and negative impact of closure of the installation to a small community will pose significant challenges as the MRRA assumes responsibility for a complex array of duties, including: business recruitment to create a market for commercial real estate, public works to operate and maintain the airfield infrastructure, property management to protect real estate assets and generate income for reinvestment, and land development to prepare property for civilian aviation reuse envisioned in the Airport Master Plan. A PBC for the airfield, hangars and related income-generating property is necessary to insure the successful operation of a new general aviation airport that will support job creation in the aviation sectors identified in the Aviation Feasibility Study and Airport Master Plan.

The Airport Layout Plan includes a boundary line encompassing 837.5 acres of land and facilities. The airfield surfaces include the runways, taxiways, aprons and ramps which in total comprise the Aircraft Operating Area (AOA). For the first few years, the Airport is expected to be operating with a very limited revenue stream and therefore the goal is to reduce the operating and maintenance costs initially by limiting the buildings being occupied and the pavement being plowed. Runway 1R-19L, because of its proximity to the apron, is expected to be the primary runway for most operations and will be the runway initially intended to have a precision instrument approach developed and certified. It has an existing approach light system and will allow the lowest possible weather landing minimums to be developed. Runway 1R- 19L will also be the runway that is plowed full length and width in the winter.

Runway 1L-19R is the most recently resurfaced runway and is expected to be a secondary runway during fair weather. The runway will be maintained with the intention of having a precision, GPS-based, instrument approach procedure developed and certified. Runway 1L-19R will most likely not be plowed in the winter and will be officially posted with a notice to airmen (NOTAM) that it is closed during the winter months to reduce operating costs.

The existing precision and non-precision instrument approach procedures allowing aircraft to land in poor weather conditions were established by the US Navy and will be decommissioned and out of service when the Airport is opened as a civil field. The need for a precision instrument approach procedure has been discussed with the Navy and FAA and is considered to be perhaps the most critical requirement for the success of the new civil airport.

The MRRA will have to seek funding estimated at \$100k to conduct a new Aeronautical Obstruction Analysis to the current FAA standards before the FAA will design, certify, and commission a new FAA precision or non-precision approach.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Airport Master Plan (computer disk), the PBC application and the following appendices:

- Schedule A - Description of Real Property
- Schedule B - Airport Layout Plan
- Schedule C - Description of Personal Property
- Schedule D - Related Lease
- Schedule E - Notice Pursuant to CERCLA 120(h)(1)
- Schedule F - NPDES Permits
- Schedule G - Report on Air Credits

We will forward a hard copy of the Airport Master Plan within two weeks.

Thank you for your consideration of our request for a public benefit conveyance for the airport property at NAS Brunswick. We look forward to discussing our application with you.

Sincerely


Steven H. Levesque
Executive Director

cc. Ralph Nicosia Rusin, New England Office, FAA
Ralph David Cole, Commissioner MaineDOT
MRRRA Board of Trustees
Jeffrey K. Jordan, Deputy Director, MRRRA