

Federal Aviation Administration

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

for

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT

Condensed Environmental Assessment

at the

Appleton International Airport

Appleton, Wisconsin

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the construction of a geothermal heating and cooling system for the Appleton International Airport passenger terminal expansion project at the Appleton International Airport (ATW). In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, and based on the evaluation in the Condensed Environmental Assessment (CEA), dated July 15, 2024, there are no significant impacts associated with the proposed action. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared and a FONSI is being issued.

1. Purpose and Need

The Appleton International Airport (Airport) is located in Appleton, Wisconsin. The Airport is owned and operated by Outagamie County.

The Airport is in the process of constructing a 66,000 square foot addition to the existing passenger terminal area. The additional gates will accommodate current and projected passenger usage as well as enable carriers to transition to larger aircraft. The terminal expansion project was previously reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and was approved on February 28, 2022. The new passenger terminal area is projected to be operational in 2025.

The addition to the passenger terminal building required a new heating and cooling system which provided an opportunity for the Airport to upgrade the existing heating and cooling system to one that is more energy efficient. Upgrading the system aligns with the Airport's sustainability initiatives and assists the Airport in supporting the goals set forth in the 2021 Aviation Climate Action Plan. The Airport is proposing to construct a geothermal system as an energy efficient means of heating and cooling the existing passenger terminal building and the new addition. The NEPA review completed on the passenger terminal addition did not specify that the heating and cooling system would be a geothermal heat pump system. This CEA only evaluated the construction of the geothermal heat pump system.

2. Alternatives Considered

The Condensed EA identified and evaluated reasonable alternatives. The alternatives in the CEA for evaluation included:

- Proposed Action: The proposed Airport action would construct a geothermal system to heat and cool the existing and new addition to the passenger terminal building. The proposed geothermal system would consist of a vertical closed loop heat exchange system connected to a modular heat recovery chiller (a type of water-to-water heat pump) to produce hot water and chilled water for the passenger terminal building. The location of the proposed geothermal vertical heat exchange borehole field would be on approximately 2.6 acres of Airport property, southwest of the

passenger terminal building. The borehole field will be located in a grassy area between taxiway E, taxiway A, taxiway C, and the terminal apron.

- Do Nothing: The sponsor would not construct the geothermal system at the proposed location and the project site would remain in its current condition which is primarily a mowed grass field. This alternative does not meet the stated purpose and need and was eliminated from consideration.

3. Environmental Consequences and Mitigation

After careful analysis and consultation with various state and federal resource agencies, the Airport selected the Proposed Action as the preferred alternative. This alternative satisfies the purpose and need for the project while causing minimal environmental impacts. The CEA discusses the environmental consequences of the Proposed Action. No mitigation will be required for this project.

The following permits will be required:

- WDNR – Letter of Concurrence, Transportation Construction General Permit (Erosion Control Plan and Stormwater Management Plan), WDNR Final Concurrence, Erosion Control Implementation Plan.
- Federal Aviation Administration – FAA Form 7460-1 Obstruction Evaluation/Airport Airspace Analysis, buildings and cranes permit.
- Prior to the start of drilling activities, the heat exchange driller would obtain a well notification permit from the WDNR.

4. Public Review and Comment

Public involvement is a vital component of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. On May 14, 2024, a Notice of Availability of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment and Notice of Opportunity for a Public Hearing was published in the Appleton Post-Crescent newspaper. Copies of the Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) were provided to agencies/organizations and made available to the public at the Airport, the Outagamie County Administration office, Appleton Public Library, and Wisconsin Department of Transportation Bureau of Aeronautics office. No requests for a public hearing were received and no public hearing was held. No comments were received from the Public and no comments were received electronically. Three comments were received from other agencies which are summarized below:

- The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources stated that Preliminary EA was reviewed, and no comments were provided.
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation – Environmental Process & Documentation Section stated that the document was received and that they would inform if there were any comments.
- The Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 NEPA team stated that the document was received and that it would be assigned to staff. The correspondence also noted that due to current staffing constraints, not all EAs would be reviewed.

5. 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. Having met all relevant requirements for environmental considerations and consultation, the proposed development/actions are authorized to be undertaken at such time as other requirements have been met.

These decisions are taken pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 40101 et. seq., and constitute an order of the Administrator which are subject to review by the courts of appeals of the United States in accordance with the provisions of Section 1006 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, as amended, 49 U.S.C. 46110.

FAA-CHI-ADO
Rob Esquivel, Acting Manager
Federal Aviation Administration

Date