

1 CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is the Master Plan Implementation Project (the Proposed Project) at the Charles M. Schulz – Sonoma County Airport (the Airport).

The lead agency for the Proposed Project is the County of Sonoma, 2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95403. **Chapter 2** of this DEIR describes the Proposed Project in detail.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DEIR

Because the Proposed Project would require discretionary approvals by the County of Sonoma and other governmental agencies, the Proposed Project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on the preparation of a detailed Initial Study (see **Appendix A**) in May 2008, it was determined that the Proposed Project may have a significant effect on the environment and that a DEIR should be prepared pursuant to the State and County of Sonoma *CEQA Guidelines*.

The County of Sonoma has commissioned this DEIR for the following purposes:

- to evaluate the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the Proposed Project, as required by CEQA;
- to inform the general public, the local community, and responsible trustee, state, and federal agencies of the nature of the Proposed Project, its potentially significant environmental effects, feasible mitigation measures to mitigate those effects, and its reasonable and feasible alternatives;
- to enable the County of Sonoma decision-makers (i.e., Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors) to consider the environmental consequences of the Proposed Project;
- to provide a basis for preparation of any future environmental documents; and
- to facilitate responsible agencies in issuing permits and approvals for the Proposed Project.

As described in CEQA and the *CEQA Guidelines*, public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental impacts where feasible. Where impacts cannot be mitigated to less-than-significant levels, public agencies have an obligation to balance the project's significant impacts on the environment against other factors, including economic, social, technological, legal, and other benefits.

This DEIR is an informational document, the purposes of which are as follows:

- to identify the potentially significant impacts of the Proposed Project on the environment;
- to indicate the manner in which those significant impacts can be avoided or significantly lessened;
- to identify any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated; and

- to identify reasonable and feasible alternatives to the Proposed Project that would eliminate any significant adverse environmental impacts or reduce the impacts to less-than-significant levels.

CEQA requires the lead agency to consider the information in the DEIR, along with any other relevant information, in making its decision on the Proposed Project. Although the DEIR does not determine the ultimate decision regarding implementation of the Proposed Project, the County of Sonoma is required to consider the information in the DEIR and make findings regarding each significant effect that is identified in the DEIR.

The County of Sonoma must certify the DEIR before approving the Proposed Project. Once certified, the DEIR will serve as the base environmental document for the County of Sonoma and will be used as a basis for decisions on implementation of the Proposed Project. Other agencies may also use this DEIR in their review and approval processes.

This DEIR was prepared in accordance with Section 15151 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, which defines the standards for EIR adequacy as follows:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection; but for adequacy, completeness, and good faith effort at full disclosure.

1.2 EIR REVIEW PROCESS

1.2.1 Notice of Preparation

Responses from identified responsible and trustee agencies, as well as interested parties on the scope of the DEIR, were solicited through Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the DEIR process. The NOP for the DEIR was posted and circulated for a 30-day review period starting on June 9, 2008 and ending on July 9, 2008. A public scoping meeting was also held on July 1, 2008, at the Hilton Sonoma Wine Country, 3555 Round Barn Boulevard, Santa Rosa to solicit input from agencies, individuals, and organizations. A copy of the NOP is included as **Appendix B**. A scoping report that includes the letters received on the NOP, responses to the comments on the NOP, and comments from the public scoping meeting are provided in **Appendix C**.

1.2.2 Environmental Review

The DEIR will be circulated for review and comment by the public and other interested parties, agencies, and organizations for 45 days. During the public review period, the County of Sonoma will hold one or more noticed public hearing(s) before the County of Sonoma Planning Commission, to allow the Commission and interested parties and agencies to voice their opinions regarding the adequacy of the DEIR. Notice of the time and location will be published

before the public hearing(s). All written comments or questions about the DEIR should be addressed to:

County of Sonoma Permit and Resource Management Department
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Attn: Crystal Acker
(707) 565-8357
(707) 565-1103 (fax)
Email to: crystal.acker@sonoma-county.org

1.2.3 Project Approval

After the public comment period closes, the County of Sonoma will respond, in the Final EIR, to all written comments received regarding the project's environmental impacts. The Response to Comments will be prepared as a separate document from the DEIR. The Final EIR will consist of the DEIR and the Response to Comments document. It will be considered by the County of Sonoma at one or more public meeting(s) and be certified if it complies with *CEQA Guidelines*. Upon certification of the Final EIR, the County of Sonoma will consider the merits of the proposed project for approval.

1.2.4 CEQA Findings and Mitigation Monitoring

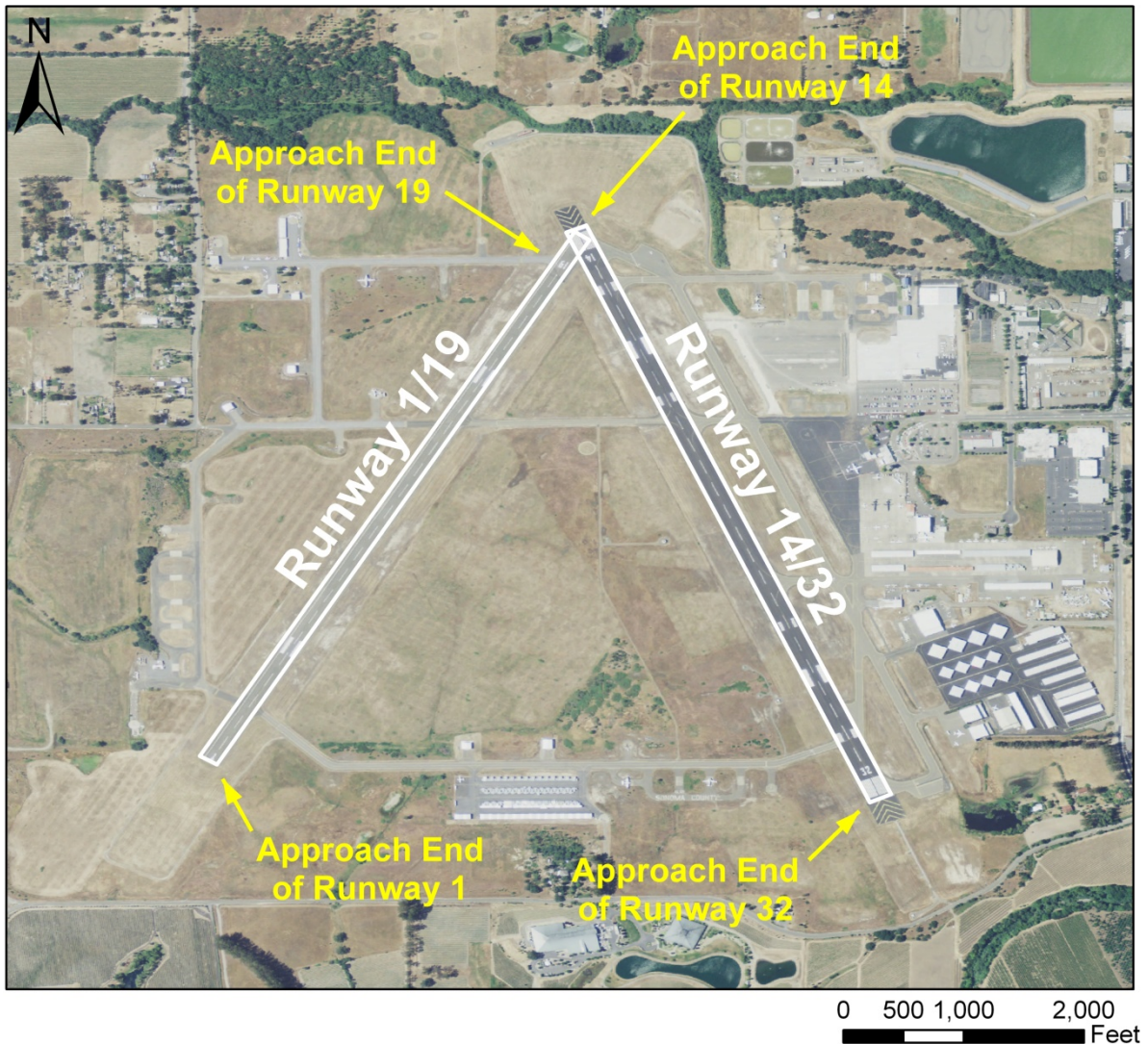
CEQA requires that when a public agency approves a project and finds that changes or alterations have been incorporated into the project in order to mitigate or avoid significant environmental effects identified in an EIR, the agency must also adopt a reporting or monitoring program for those measures that it has adopted or made a condition of project approval. Findings explain the connection between the analysis in the environmental document and the decisions by the decision-makers. The reporting or monitoring program must be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation. The mitigation monitoring program for the EIR will be prepared at the time the Final EIR is prepared and must be adopted concurrently with the certification of the Final EIR.

1.3 PROPOSED PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Proposed Project is the implementation of the 2030 Airport Master Plan. This includes a variety of project elements that would be implemented at the Airport over the course of the next twenty years. The individual project elements included in the Airport Master Plan are organized by those that would occur within the first five years (short-term project elements), and those that are planned to occur after the first five years but within a twenty-year timeframe (long-term project elements). **Figure 1-1** provides an overview of the runways at the Airport and the terms used in describing improvements to the runways that are part of the Proposed Project. The following is a listing of the short- and long-term project elements.

Figure 1-1

RUNWAY CONFIGURATION OF CHARLES M. SCHULZ - SONOMA COUNTY AIRPORT



SOURCE: RS&H, 2011
PREPARED BY: RS&H, 2011

Short-Term Project Elements (within 5 years)

The principal short-term project elements are a northwesterly extension (885 feet) of Runway 14/32 to 6,000 feet, a northeasterly extension (200 feet) of Runway 1/19 to 5,202 feet, construction of connecting taxiways, realigning about 1,500 feet of Airport Creek that includes about 700 feet into a new channel and about 650 feet into a culvert, and related drainage improvements. A detailed listing of the short-term project elements includes the following:

- Extend Runway 14/32 from 5,115 feet to 6,000 feet.
- Extend Taxiway Y.
- Construct 200-foot-long blast pad beyond the approach end of Runway 14.
- Replace run-up apron at the northeast corner of the intersection of Taxiways Y and A.

- Construct new taxiway between Runway 14/32 and Taxiway Y.
- Extend Runway 1/19 from 5,002 feet to 5,202 feet.
- Construct new Taxiway V (partial parallel taxiway for Runway 1/19).
- Reconstruct and widen Taxiway B.
- Remove segment of Taxiway D that connects to Runway 1/19.
- Construct a connecting taxiway to the new approach end of Runway 19 and to Taxiway Y.
- Construct 200-foot-long blast pad beyond the approach end of Runway 19.
- Remove the existing run-up apron on Taxiway Y near the approach end of Runway 32.
- Construct a run-up apron on Taxiway Y near the approach end of Runway 32.
- Place a portion of Airport Creek and the high-water ditch that hydrologically connects Redwood Creek to a segment of Ordinance Creek into a culvert.
- Construct a standard graded Runway Safety Area (RSA) beyond the approach ends of Runways 14 and 32.
- Relocate internal airport service roads.
- Remove trees and bushes to provide required airspace clearance for approach to Runway 14.
- Relocate the instrument landing system localizer associated with the approach end of Runway 32 (this localizer is situated north of the approach end of Runway 14).
- Install new lighting on Runway 1/19.
- Create three stormwater basins.
- Acquire two parcels of land needed for construction of RSA and realignment of access road around the approach end of Runway 14.
- Extend Taxiway D to its intersection with the end of Runway 32.
- Remove the eastern segment of Taxiway D.
- Remove Taxiway Z.
- Improve Airport perimeter fencing.

Long-Term Projects (within 20 years)

The principal long-term project elements include construction of a replacement airline passenger terminal, relocation of the aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) building, and relocation of the air traffic control tower to the west side of the airport. Ongoing activities over the 20-year planning period includes pavement maintenance, construction of new or replacement aircraft storage hangars, and acquisition of property to protect the approaches to the runways. A detailed listing of the long-term project elements includes the following:

- Maintain existing airfield pavement.
- Trim or remove individual trees that grow into the airspace required to be protected.
- Construct a replacement airline passenger terminal.
- Re-use or demolish the existing airline passenger terminal.
- Demolish helipads that are currently not operational.
- Demolish the existing Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) building.
- Construct a replacement ARFF building.
- Construct new taxiways to provide access to new private-use hangars, as needed.
- Construct a new air traffic control tower and supporting infrastructure.
- Re-use or demolish existing air traffic control tower.
- Construct a new air cargo facility.
- Acquire adjacent properties for land use compatibility and other operational and safety reasons, including relocation of residents, demolition of buildings, filling man-made ponds on these properties, and installing new perimeter fencing, as appropriate.

- Relocate or and/or construct aviation support facilities.

1.4 INITIAL STUDY FINDINGS

An Initial Study was prepared in May 2008 (see **Appendix A**) to facilitate public input regarding the issues to be addressed in this DEIR.

Based in part on the Initial Study, the County of Sonoma found that preparation of an EIR was required because the Proposed Project could have potentially significant impacts associated with aesthetics, primarily as a result of new light or glare; agricultural resources; air quality; biological resources; cultural resources; geology and soils (soil erosion); hazardous materials (possible buried ordnance); hydrology and water quality; land use and planning (General Plan Amendment); noise; and traffic (vehicular and aircraft). As more fully explained therein, the Initial Study concluded that the following topics did not require any further analysis in this DEIR:

- mineral resources;
- population and housing;
- public services;
- recreation; and
- utilities and service systems.

1.5 INTENDED USES OF THIS DEIR

The primary uses of the DEIR are (1) to inform decision-makers and the public about the significant environmental effects of a project and the ways to avoid or reduce the significant environmental effects; (2) to demonstrate to the public that the environment is being protected; and (3) to ensure that the planning and political processes reflect an understanding of the environmental cost of a project. The intent of the DEIR also is to provide the information and environmental analysis necessary to assist public decision-makers in considering all of the approvals and permits necessary to implement the project.

1.6 AGENCIES THAT MAY USE THIS DEIR

The EIR is a public information document used in the planning and decision-making process. CEQA requires that all state and local agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority. The following agencies will use this DEIR to base their decision on issuing discretionary approvals for this Proposed Project. The approvals for which these agencies are responsible are listed in **Section 2.4**.

- County of Sonoma;
- Sonoma County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC);
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District;
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE);
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) / Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB); and
- California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

1.7 RELATIONSHIP OF THIS DEIR TO THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

The Proposed Project also requires compliance with federal environmental laws and regulations. A separate environmental review document will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S. Code [USC] §4321 et seq.); Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*; FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*; and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1509). This separate environmental review document is an Environmental Assessment (EA) and will be available for public review.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THIS DEIR

The DEIR is organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter provides an overview of the purpose of the DEIR, a description of the intended uses of the DEIR, the review and certification process, and a description of the organization of the DEIR.

Chapter 2: Proposed Project. This chapter presents the objectives of the proposed project, a description of the proposed project, and a listing of the permits and approvals required prior to the start of construction.

Chapter 3: Existing Conditions, Environmental Impacts, and Mitigation Measures. This chapter provides a description of the environmental effects associated with the implementation of the Proposed Project. This chapter also presents an overview of the background and analytical methodology used in the analysis, provides the regulatory context for the condition or resource, and identifies the thresholds of significance used to determine the level of potential impacts, if any. In addition, if the analysis indicates that a significant impact would occur, mitigation measures are identified to reduce the impact to a non-significant level, if possible. Graphics and tables are included to clarify the analysis presented in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Alternatives Analysis. This chapter presents a description of the alternatives that were considered as part of the development of the Proposed Project. A brief overview of the impacts associated with alternatives that meet the project objectives are included in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Impact Overview. This chapter identifies the significant and unavoidable adverse impacts, the significant irreversible environmental changes, and the growth-inducing impacts that would occur as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Project.

Chapter 6: List of Preparers. This chapter presents the names and qualifications of persons who assisted in the preparation of this DEIR.

Chapter 7: List of Agencies and Persons Consulted. This chapter identifies the agencies and persons that were consulted as part of the preparation of this DEIR.

Chapter 8: References. This chapter identifies the reference materials that have been used to prepare this EIR.

Chapter 9: Glossary and Abbreviations. This chapter provides a list of terms and abbreviations that are used in the DEIR.

Appendices. These sections present relevant material and technical reports that were developed as part of the preparation of this DEIR.