

Airport Feasibility Study
James City County
Chapter 6, Alternatives Evaluation Results
Response to FAA Comments dated January 20, 2009

FAA Comment	Response
<p>Exhibit 6-1: <u>Environmental</u></p> <p>1. Is it safe to assume that there will be no environmental impacts with Alternative B for potential recreation, wildlife, historic, wetlands or flood plains if the existing airport is brought up to standards (i.e. runway safety areas, widen runway, tree clearing, remove top of landfill, aircraft parking apron relocation, etc.). It would appear that some projects would have some environmental impacts associated with them.</p>	<p>The text in the matrix has been changed to more clearly reflect the findings of our Environmental Overview, which indicates that there are some potential endangered species, floodplain, and wetland issues, and that further environmental study is required to determine potential impacts. This change in text does not impact the related scoring in the matrix.</p>
<p>2. Land Acquisition-The chart shows that a total of 106 acres would be acquired from the existing airport versus 416 acres for the new Greenfield site. Does the existing airport have sufficient land in fee simple or easements to protect the airspace surrounding the facility? If not, additional land, preferably in fee simple, would be needed to bring the airport up to FAA standards. Please quantify the amount of land required and update table accordingly.</p>	<p>The 107 acres we present on Exhibit 6-1 is the acreage documented in the current Airport Master Record. In the Narrative Report that accompanied the latest approved Airport Layout Plan, there was a lengthy discussion regarding various properties owned by the Waltrip family, including the airport. The Report indicated the need for various easements and land transfers between the airport and Waltrip Recycling, to accommodate proposed development, as well as to address identified access road issues. No total acreage needed for the Airport was presented. Further, during the course of developing the Study, it was determined that, if public acquisition of the existing facility was the preferred alternative, a new Airport Master Plan would be in order at which time a more accurate determination of required acreage could be developed taking all proposed development and associated airspace requirements into consideration. Based on our evaluation of the improvements necessary to meet FAA design standards, we estimated a need for approximately 46 acres of aviation easements at various locations and included them in the cost estimates. We have added that acreage to Exhibit 6-1. It should also be noted that, according to James City County GIS records, the airport property is listed as 126.63 acres. This change in text does not impact the scoring matrix.</p>

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<p><u>Engineering</u> 3. Exhibit 6-1 states that the non-sanitary landfill cap may need to be lowered for the existing airport under special airport needs. The new airport site states that only minor special engineering needs will be required. Is this an “apples to apples” comparison? Would be better to state that special engineering needs will be considered during the site selection process?</p>	<p>The text in Exhibit 6-1 has been changed as you have suggested.</p>
<p><u>Operational</u> 4. Exhibit 6-1 states that the existing site may require some modification to FAA standards. Previous correspondence and communication to the study indicated that no modification to FAA standards would be considered for the existing airport site. Please update the exhibit and narrative.</p>	<p>The exhibit and the appropriate sections of Chapter 4 have been changed.</p>
<p>5. Exhibit 6-1 addresses obstruction removal. Are existing obstructions located on airport property? If not, how much additional land would be required to remove the existing obstructions?</p>	<p>In Chapter 4 of the Study, specifically Exhibits 4-12 through 4-16, we have depicted the obstructions to various runway end siting and Part 77 surfaces. Some obstructions are on airport property and some are not on airport property. As indicated in our response to Item 2, above, we identified the need for approximately 46 acres of various aviation easements to address those obstructions.</p>
<p>6. Both airport sites are evaluated on the ability to meet user needs. The existing site is listed as “would” meet needs to a high degree versus “could” meet needs to a very high degree with the Greenfield site. It would be helpful to reword this section to provide a bit more clarity to better compare the two sites.</p>	<p>Both statements have been changed to provide additional clarity.</p>
<p>6A. It might be helpful to include another major category called Support of Aviation Demand or something similar. There is a risk of the possibility of the current facility closing to aviation traffic. If this were to happen, then the residents of James City County would be required to drive outside of the immediate area to have access to a general aviation facility. This might be an important point to consider in the evaluation.</p>	<p>The potential impact regarding the closure of the existing airport was originally included in the scope of work, however it was subsequently removed.</p>

<p>7. The total estimated cost for each alternative is a bit misleading. Our office recently held a teleconference with the study team to discuss how the costs for each alternative were derived. It is our understanding that the cost for the existing airport includes only the costs for bringing the airport up to FAA standards and does not include acquisition costs. These acquisition costs of the existing airport site could easily double the figure from 3.2 million to 6.4 million dollars or greater. The costs for the Greenfield site were derived from recently completed new Greenfield airports in Virginia. The costs were then factored up to include potentially higher land costs in James City County. This office would suggest adding some additional documentation to describe the assumptions made for the cost estimates in the narrative report. Would it be reasonable to either obtain the current assessment by James City County of the current airport facility or have some discussions with the owner to provide a potential range of costs to acquire the facility? While this office understands a detailed appraisal of the current facility is outside of the current scope of services, a potential range of possible acquisition costs should be obtainable.</p>	<p>We will contact James City County to determine if they are in discussions with the present airport owner regarding the asking price of the facility, and the appropriateness of publishing an estimated value/cost range at this time.</p>
<p>8. Under the economic benefits. It is highly unlikely that a new airport would be constructed outside of the service area evaluated as part of this study. Please update the narrative in the table.</p>	<p>The narrative has been revised.</p>
<p>9. The FAA concurs with the recommendation of Alternative "C" as the preferred option with the caveat that the local government must first review and adopt the findings of the report. Similar to the request by the Virginia Department of Aviation, please provide this office with a copy of the resolution of the adoption of this report by the James City County Board of Supervisors.</p>	<p>Your request is noted.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Thank you for your helpful comments.</p>