DRAFT FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
WESTERLY AIRPORT
WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

This Environmental Assessment has been prepared to document potential impacts associated with the acquisition of avigation easements and the removal of trees obstructing protected airspace at Westerly Airport.

December 2022

Prepared for:
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Project Number:
179450268

This Environmental Assessment becomes a Federal document when evaluated, signed and dated by the responsible FAA official.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Acronyms / Abbreviations

AC	Advisory Circular
BMP	Best Management Practice
CATEX	Categorical Exclusion
CEQ	Coastal Zone Management Act
CZMA	Council of Environmental Quality
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GPS	Global Positioning System
ILS	Instrument Landing System
INM	Integrated Noise Model
L&WCFA	Land & Water Conservation Fund Act
LSCS	Light Signal Clearance Surface
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
PAPI	Precision Approach Path Indicator
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office(r)
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPIAS	National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems
PAL	Public Archaeology Laboratory
ROD	Record of Decision
RIAC	Rhode Island Airport Corporation
RIDEM	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
RIHPHC	Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
RISHPO	Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Officer
TERPS	United States Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
WST	Westerly Airport

1 Introduction

The Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) to address the potential environmental impacts associated with a safety improvement project proposed for construction at Westerly Airport located in Westerly, Rhode Island. In 2020 RIAC prepared an airspace analysis at the airport to determine the presence of obstructions (trees and/or constructed objects) encroaching protected airspace above the airport. Results of the airspace analysis identified trees obstructing Runway 7-25 and the Runway 14-32 approach surfaces. Obstructions to the runways and navigational aid approaches, identified on and off airport property, must be removed to facilitate the safety of operations conducted on at the airport and for the airport to comply with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant assurances requiring the airport to conform with FAA safety standards. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, the potential environmental impacts associated with the removal of obstructions off airport property must be reviewed within the context of an EA. The proposed safety improvement projects subject to this EA include the acquisition of avigation easements and the associated removal of trees obstructing Runways 7-25 and 14-32 protected air surfaces.

1.1 Purpose and Need

Westerly Airport is a public use general aviation facility. The airport is operated by the Rhode Island Airport Corporation. The FAA is responsible for ensuring safe and efficient use of navigable airspace by aircraft. RIAC has completed a comprehensive analysis aimed at achieving this goal at Westerly Airport. The recent airspace obstruction survey identified trees growing within protected airspace at the airport. The purpose of the project proposed in this EA is to improve the safety and efficiency of aircraft operations conducted at the airport and to satisfy Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) safety standards regarding the maintenance of protected navigable airspace.

The need for this project is derived from the analysis of aerial survey data collected during the summer of 2019 that identified trees penetrating runway airspace. Obstructions (trees) identified on and off airport property must be effectively managed to comply with FAA regulations to provide the highest achievable degree of safety to aircraft operations conducted at the airport.

1.1.1 SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to inform regulatory agencies and the public of the likely environmental consequences associated with the proposed actions and their reasonable alternatives. The EA provides the FAA with information necessary to determine whether the impacts associated with the proposed project have the potential to significantly impact the environment. Based on this determination, the FAA will either issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or the agency will require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to further analyze the proposed project and its associated impacts. This EA has been developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the federal Council of Environmental Quality's (CEQ) NEPA regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §§ 1500-1508), FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*

and FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*. According to NEPA, all major projects and/or actions funded by the federal government fall into one of three categories: those normally requiring an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); those normally requiring an EA; and those that are categorically excluded from environmental review. In summary, projects requiring an EIS are those that are likely to significantly impact the environment. Projects requiring an EA are those that have the potential to impact the environment. Projects that are categorically excluded include those projects that are unlikely to impact the environment. Typically, obstruction removal activities, including tree cutting, stump grubbing or grinding, and land grading, on airport property are categorically excluded from FAA environmental review within the context of an EA as long as those actions do not involve extraordinary circumstances and/or substantial impacts to resources protected under "special purpose" laws. Special purpose laws are defined as those federal laws and regulations outside the scope of NEPA, including federal wetland regulations, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This project, however, cannot be categorically excluded as the airport sponsor (RIAC) is proposing the acquisition of avigation easements to facilitate the removal of trees located off airport property. In accordance with NEPA and FAA regulations, off-airport tree removal projects utilizing federal funding are subject to review within the context of an environmental assessment. This EA has been prepared to assess potential environmental impacts associated with the acquisition of avigation easements required for the mitigation of off-airport obstructions to Runways 7-25 and 14-32 protected navigable airspace at Westerly Airport.

2 Description of Proposed Actions

This project has been proposed to address existing safety hazards associated with trees penetrating established navigable airspace at Westerly Airport (for the purposes of this document, trees within 15 feet of affected surfaces have been recommended for removal to provide a safety buffer between tree canopy height and the height of regulated air surfaces and thus are included in references made to "obstructions" in this EA). One of the FAA's primary responsibilities includes avoiding adverse impacts to the safe use of the airspace above the Nation's public-use airports. FAA regulations, including but not limited to 14 CFR Part 77- *Safe, Efficient Use, And Preservation Of The Navigable Airspace* and FAA Order 8260.3D *United States Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS)* establish air surface dimensions and identify measures to enhance safe air navigation. Design alternatives presented in this EA have been prepared in accordance with FAA regulations to ensure the proposed safety improvement projects provide the highest degree of safety for aircraft operations conducted at the airport.

This Environmental Assessment considers the potential environmental impacts of removing obstructions identified on and off airport property. The majority of obstructions identified in the airspace analysis occur within the Runway 7 approach obstacle clearance surface (OCS) and the Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) OCS and PAPI Light Signal Clearance Surface (LSCS), surfaces defined in FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 150-5300-13B and FAA Order 6850.2C respectively, the Runway 14 OCS and the Runway 32 OCS. In order to effectively manage those obstructions identified off airport property, avigation easements, if not already in place for a specific parcel, must first be obtained to secure the right to manage off-airport vegetation identified as obstructions. The following sections discuss the processes of easement acquisition and on and off-airport tree removal.

2.1 Avigation Easement Acquisition

The identification of required avigation easements is the result of a comprehensive analysis of the protected airspace above this airport. Aerial photogrammetry of the airport and outlying areas provides elevations of trees and other structures including buildings, utility poles, fences, etc. This data is compared with air surface elevations to determine the extent of objects penetrating specific regulated air surfaces. Once the obstructions have been identified, obstruction locations for which the airport does not own the land or the rights to manage trees or structure height are determined. In most instances, land is either purchased or easements are obtained granting the airport rights to maintain, in perpetuity, unobstructed airspace achieved through vegetation management or, when allowed, marked obstructions using FAA approved obstruction lighting.

Once the appropriate parcels have been identified, boundary surveys of each parcel are conducted, and easement boundaries are designed based on the airport's needs. Utilizing the survey plan, legal description, and tax assessment information, an independent professional land appraiser then performs an appraisal of the parcel and easement area. The appraiser then prepares a report of the parcel(s) which includes a fair market value of compensation for the easement(s). Appraisal reports are then provided to an independent "review appraiser" to verify the initial appraisal and recommendation for just compensation. Upon agreement between appraisers of fair market value for the easement(s),

negotiations between the airport and landowner(s) for the purchase of the land or easement(s) commences. After the terms of easement acquisition and compensation have been agreed upon, the property or easement is purchased and is recorded with the registry of deeds. The easement acquisition process, as outlined above, must be conducted in accordance with 49 CFR Part 24 - *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition For Federal and Federally-Assisted Programs Act of 1970*, as amended.

Aerial photogrammetry obtained in 2019 was used to perform the airspace analyses of Runways 7-25 and 14-32. The airspace analysis evaluated applicable regulated air surfaces at the airport that must be maintained free of obstructions.

These surfaces have been established by the FAA, based primarily on the type of aircraft using the runway and the navigation aids in place to assist pilots on approach to a particular runway. Trees growing within these surfaces (or within 15 feet of affected surfaces) have been identified as obstructions that pose hazards to an aircraft and its passengers. Additionally, an airport's failure to adequately address obstructions to protected airspace jeopardizes the airport's eligibility to receive federal funding for future improvement projects and may lead to imposed restrictions that limit runway use and airport operations.

Based on the results of the 2020 airspace analysis, Westerly Airport requires the acquisition of as many as 44 avigation easements for the removal of off-airport trees penetrating protected air surfaces associated with the runway approaches to maintain unobstructed airspace upon completion of the tree removal project. This includes the purchase of easements located southwest of Runway 7 that are necessary to restore the Runway 7 threshold to its original location. Due to off-airport obstructions identified in the airspace analysis, the Runway 7 threshold (the point beyond which approaching aircraft can land on the runway, often the edge of pavement) was displaced by 374 feet to the northeast. As a result of the displacement, aircraft landing on Runway 7 can no longer utilize the entire length of the runway (4,010 feet). Instead, aircraft must land beyond the displaced threshold, marked by a thick white stripe across the width of the runway and the number 7 at a point 374 feet north of the original end of the runway, limiting runway length available for landing to 3,636 feet. The runway threshold displacement was necessary to provide aircraft landing on Runway 7 with a clear approach path, free of obstructing trees. Similarly, easements are required to remove off-airport obstructions located to the west of the Runway 14 end to re-establish the temporarily displaced Runway 14 threshold. The Runway 14 threshold was displaced by 587 feet to provide an object-free approach to the Runway 14 end. This temporary displacement decreases usable runway length from 3,960 feet to 3,373 feet when landing on the Runway 14 end.

The acquisition of all required easements grants the airport the right to remove or manage the height of trees within the boundaries of each easement. Trees located on airport property that have been identified as penetrations to runway approach surfaces have also been proposed for removal.

2.2 On and Off-Airport Tree Removal

The obstruction analysis identified approximately 250 acres of trees, located on and off airport property, penetrating existing Part 77 runway airspace. To limit the environmental impact and the cost of the

project, one alternative discussed in this document proposes tree removal only within those surfaces deemed most critical, per runway end, by the FAA including the 20:1 slope approach OCS and the PAPI OCS and LSCS. Vegetation proposed for removal occurs primarily within forested uplands and residential parcels adjacent to Runways 7, 14, and 32. Wetland vegetation identified as obstructions to airspace is proposed for removal from on and off-airport locations adjacent to the Runway 14 end as well as within an area on airport property located to the east of the Runway 32 end.

The obstruction removal project is expected to be conducted in two phases. On-airport obstructions are proposed for removal during winter months of 2023-24. On airport property, tree obstructions located in uplands are proposed to be cut, and where necessary to facilitate future vegetation management efforts (mowing), stumps are proposed to be grinded and the affected areas seeded with grass. Obstructing vegetation located in wetlands will be cut to ground level and all woody debris will be removed from project areas. Stump grubbing or grinding will not be conducted within wetlands. Trees will be removed from wetlands during frozen ground conditions to avoid disturbances to wetland soils.

After the necessary easements have been acquired and the applicable environmental permits obtained, the off-airport obstruction removal component of the project can commence. Construction of this phase of the project is scheduled to begin during winter months of 2024-25. Off airport property, trees will be removed from established project limits within each easement. In residential upland locations within easement areas, obstructing trees are proposed to be cut to ground level, stumps grinded and affected areas restored to blend with existing landscapes. Off-airport tree removal in wetlands will be conducted in a similar fashion as outlined above for tree removal from within on-airport wetlands. Timber and woody debris shall be removed from all project locations.

3 Project Alternatives

The objective of the following analysis is to identify alternatives that are determined to be reasonable and practicable for achieving project goals. Reasonable alternatives that meet the needs of Westerly Airport have been developed and evaluated based on operational, engineering, environmental, and economic considerations. Chapter 1 of FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions* states a primary objective of NEPA is to "disclose to the interested public a clear and accurate description of potential environmental impacts that proposed federal actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions would cause." This EA has been prepared to satisfy NEPA requirements by presenting the potential environmental impacts associated with the acquisition of avigation easements for the removal of on and off-airport obstructions necessary to provide the highest possible degree of safety to operations conducted on Runways 7-25 and 14-32 at Westerly Airport.

3.1 Description of Alternatives

RIAC has identified three alternatives associated with the proposed easement acquisition and obstruction mitigation necessary to enhance the safety of aircraft operations conducted at Westerly Airport. Each alternative will be evaluated based on consideration of the proposed actions described Section 2.0 of this EA.

3.1.1 ALTERNATIVE 1 EXISTING CONDITIONS: NO ACTION

The "No Action" alternative is prescribed by CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA to serve as a benchmark against which proposed federal actions can be evaluated. This alternative proposes that airport operations continue with the identified safety hazards associated with trees obstructing Runways 7-25 and 14-34 airspace, see Figure 3-1 *Alternative 1–No Action.*

Consideration of the "No Action" alternative is based on the assumption that RIAC and Westerly Airport would not pursue the acquisition of easements necessary to mitigate off-airport obstructions to runway approach surfaces. Furthermore, the "No Action" scenario assumes the airport will not remove penetrations to the protected airspace currently located on airport property. There are no environmental impacts or costs from construction associated with the implementation of the "No Action" Alternative. This alternative restricts the use of the runways to day-time operations only and could potentially restrict certain aircraft from using the runways. Additionally, the implementation of this alternative assumes the Runway 7 and Runway 14 approaches will not be cleared and their corresponding thresholds will remain displaced, effectively reducing available runway length for aircraft landing on Runways 7 and 14. Implementation of the "No Action" alternative also jeopardizes the airport's ability to obtain future FAA Airport Improvement Project funding due to the failure to honor existing grant assurances requiring the airport to maintain a safe operating environment.

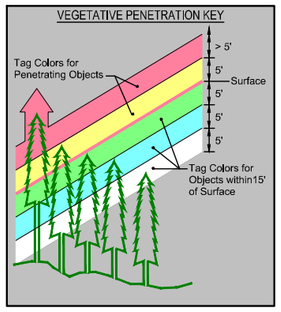
LEGEND

- AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE
- ABUTTERS PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING EASEMENT
- EXISTING FENCE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE
- VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (REFER TO VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY)
- WETLAND BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OBSTRUCTION LIGHT

NOTES:

1. ALL ELEVATIONS LISTED ARE MEAN SEA LEVEL (MSL) NAVD88 VERTICAL DATUM.
2. ELEVATIONS AND RUNWAY END COORDINATES SUPPLIED BY BRAYANT ASSOCIATES, INC.
3. TREE TOP SURVEY CONDUCTED AUGUST 2019 BY WOOLPERT, INC.
4. PROPERTY LINES ARE APPROXIMATE.

VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY



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ALTERNATIVE 1 - NO ACTION

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
LRK	LRK	GAC	GAC

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FIGURE: 3-1

3.1.2 ALTERNATIVE 2 – FULL CLEAR

Obtaining the necessary easements identified in this analysis enables the removal of all off-airport obstructions to the most conservative approach surfaces. Alternative 2 proposes the removal of approximately 250 acres of vegetation, including roughly 29 acres of wetland vegetation, identified as obstructions located both on and off-airport property to 14 CFR Part 77 protected air surfaces. A total of 162 easements are required to implement this alternative. The removal of trees penetrating 14 CFR Part 77 approach, primary and transitional surfaces provides the highest possible degree of safety to aircraft utilizing the runway, see Figure 3-2 *Alternative 2 – Full Clear.*

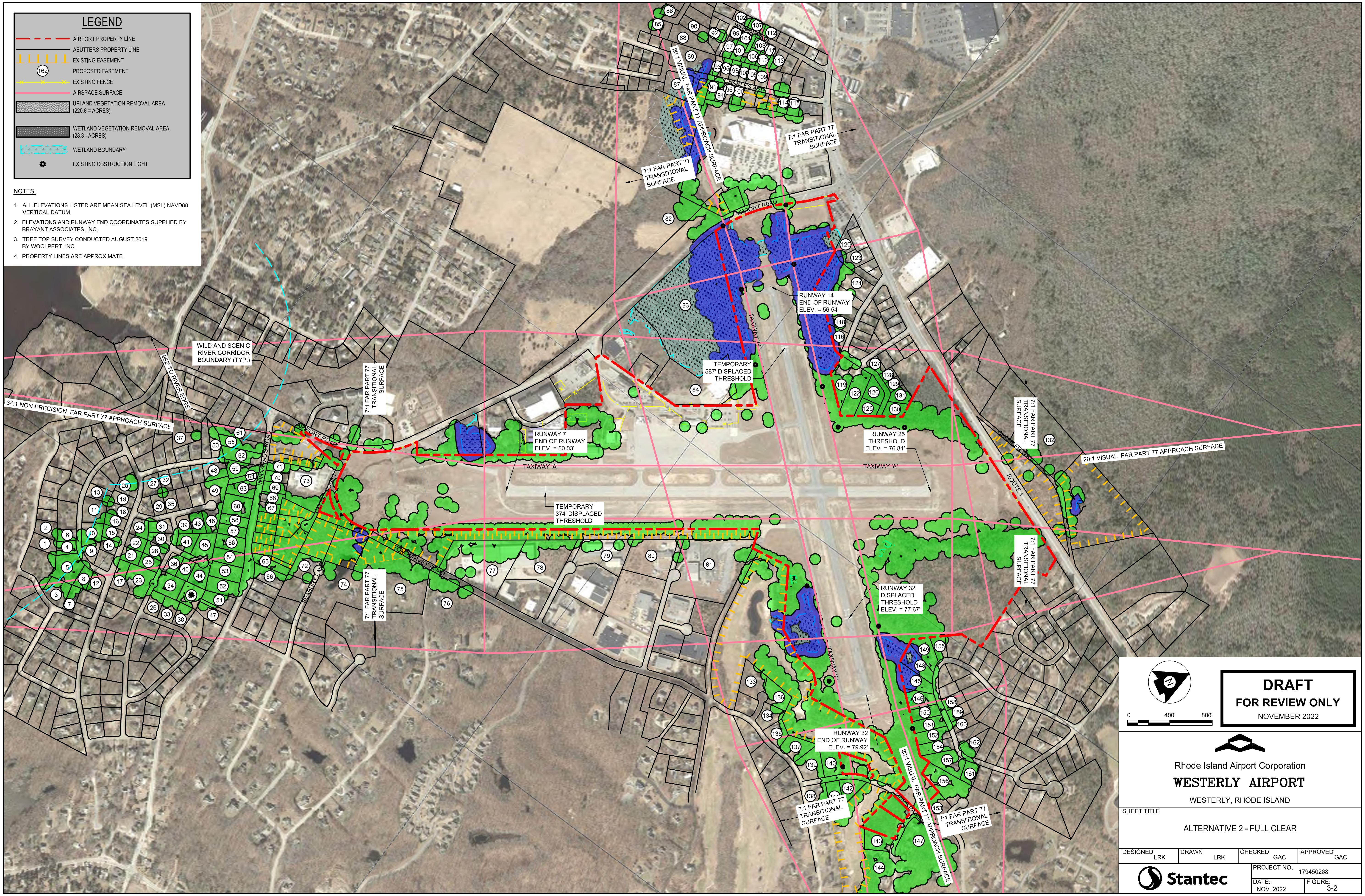
The implementation of Alternative 2 rectifies existing safety deficiencies identified in Section 1.2 *Purpose and Need* by improving the safety of aircraft operations conducted on Runway 7-25 and Runway 14-32 and meeting FAA design and safety standards. This alternative effectively mitigates identified obstructions to the critical runway approaches, transitional and primary surfaces and enables the runways to accommodate current levels of operation without restriction or alteration to existing visibility minimums. This alternative also re-establishes the Runway 7 and 14 thresholds to their original locations, increasing the available runway length to aircraft landing on Runways 7 and 14.

In this development scenario, within forested and wetland areas trees are proposed to be cut as close to ground level as possible and all timber and woody debris are proposed to be removed from the site. Within off-airport residential settings where selective removal is required, trees are proposed to be removed, stumps may be ground, all woody debris is to be removed, and the disturbed area is to be restored to blend with the existing landscape. A cost of approximately $2,600,000.00 has been estimated to design, permit, and construct Alternative 2. This preliminary cost estimate does not include costs associated with coordinating the acquisition and purchase of avigation easements necessary to remove off-airport obstructions due to the factors involved with easement appraisals and negotiations.

Alternative 2 actions shall be conducted during frozen-ground conditions in winter months to avoid impacting wetland soils. A time-of-year restriction to working between the dates of November 1st and May 1st also complies with the Section 4(d) Rule, to avoid impacts to the Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) a species federally designated as threatened in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

3.1.3 ALTERNATIVE 3 – PARTIAL CLEAR

This alternative proposes acquiring the easements necessary to remove trees identified as obstructions to Runway 7-25 and Runway 14-32 Obstacle Clearance Surfaces defined in FAA's Advisory Circular 150/5300-13B *Airport Design*, Table 3-2 (Visual Approach Surfaces) and Table 3-3 (Non-Precision and IFR Circling Approach Surfaces), and the Precision Approach Path Indicator Obstacle Clearance and Light Signal Clearance Surfaces (PAPI OCS and PAPI LSCS) associated with the Runway 7 approach as defined in FAA Order JO 6850.2C *Visual Guidance Lighting Systems*. PAPIs are ground mounted light assemblies that provide pilots with visual slope information. The PAPI system provides the appropriate glide path to the runway touchdown point based on a sequence of horizontal red and white lights visible to a pilot on final approach.



LEGEND

- AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE
- ABUTTERS PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING EASEMENT
- 162 PROPOSED EASEMENT
- EXISTING FENCE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE
- UPLAND VEGETATION REMOVAL AREA (220.8 = ACRES)
- WETLAND VEGETATION REMOVAL AREA (28.8 =ACRES)
- WETLAND BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OBSTRUCTION LIGHT

NOTES:

1. ALL ELEVATIONS LISTED ARE MEAN SEA LEVEL (MSL) NAVD88 VERTICAL DATUM.
2. ELEVATIONS AND RUNWAY END COORDINATES SUPPLIED BY BRAYANT ASSOCIATES, INC.
3. TREE TOP SURVEY CONDUCTED AUGUST 2019 BY WOOLPERT, INC.
4. PROPERTY LINES ARE APPROXIMATE.

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ALTERNATIVE 2 - FULL CLEAR

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FIGURE: 3-2

This alternative substantially reduces the number of trees to be removed and the number of easements necessary to remove trees located off airport property. Alternative 3 requires the removal of approximately 21 acres of trees (including 3.6 acres of wetland vegetation) and requires the acquisition of up to 44 easements for the mitigation of existing and future obstructions in off-airport areas, see Figure 3-3 *Alternative 3 – Partial Clear*. This alternative improves the safety of aircraft operations, satisfies FAA design and safety standards and FAA grant assurances, continuing the airport's eligibility to receive Airport Improvement Program funding.

The tree removal methodology outlined above in Alternative 2 is proposed to be implemented in Alternative 3. In forested areas trees are proposed to be cut as close to ground level as possible and all timber and woody debris are proposed to be removed from the site. Forest understory vegetation shall be preserved to the greatest extent possible. Within newly acquired easement areas where trees are proposed for removal from residential and commercial areas, stumps will be ground in place and the grindings will be removed, and the disturbed areas will be restored to reflect existing landscape characteristics. A cost of approximately $420,000.00 has been estimated to construct Alternative 3. This preliminary cost estimate does not include costs associated with coordinating the acquisition and purchase of avigation easements necessary to remove off-airport obstructions.

Alternative 3 proposed actions shall be conducted during a period between November 1st and May 1st, optimally during a period of frozen ground conditions, to avoid impacts to wetland soils and to the Northern Long eared bat.

3.2 Summary of Alternatives

As stated previously in Section 3.2.1 *Alternative 1 - Existing Conditions: No Action*, the "No Action" scenario is provided to serve as a benchmark against which proposed federal actions and associated impacts can be evaluated. The *No Action* alternative does not address existing safety deficiencies associated with existing penetrations to protected air surfaces at the airport. Additionally, by not adequately addressing airspace obstructions, use of the runway nay be restricted to daytime operations and the airport will not meet the requirements of FAA's grant assurance program, jeopardizing eligibility for FAA funding for future infrastructure improvement projects until all safety deficiencies have been adequately rectified. There are no environmental impacts associated with implementing Alternative 1.

Alternative 2-*Full Clear* requires the removal of approximately 250 acres of trees, including approximately 29 acres trees located in wetlands, from on and off-airport locations. This alternative also requires the acquisition of up to 162 easements necessary to remove trees located off airport property. The cost of constructing Alternative 2 is estimated at $2,600,000.00. The implementation of Alternative 2 improves the safety of operations conducted at the airport and satisfies FAA design and safety standards. Time-of-year restrictions for construction are necessary to minimize wetland impacts and to avoid impacts to the Northern long-eared bat, listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as threatened and requiring consideration when planning projects of this nature. Impacts to other natural and/or socio-economic resources are not anticipated.

LEGEND

- AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE
- ABUTTERS PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING EASEMENT
- (44) PROPOSED EASEMENT
- EXISTING FENCE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE
- UPLAND VEGETATION REMOVAL AREA (18.6 ± ACRES)
- WETLAND VEGETATION REMOVAL AREA (3.6 ± ACRES)
- WETLAND BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OBSTRUCTION LIGHT

NOTES:

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2. ELEVATIONS AND RUNWAY END COORDINATES SUPPLIED BY BRAYANT ASSOCIATES, INC.
3. TREE TOP SURVEY CONDUCTED AUGUST 2019 BY WOOLPERT, INC.
4. PROPERTY LINES ARE APPROXIMATE.

20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (OCS) NO.3
WOODS AVE
PEARL ST AVE
ROUTE 1
AIRPORT ROAD
RUNWAY 14
END OF RUNWAY
ELEV. = 56.54'
TAXIWAY 'F'
TEMPORARY
587' DISPLACED
THRESHOLD
WILD AND SCENIC
RIVER CORRIDOR
BOUNDARY (TYP.)
PAPI LIGHT SIGNAL CLEARANCE SURFACE (LSCS)
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (OCS) NO.4
PAPI OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (OCS)
150' TO RIVER EDGE
RUNWAY 7
END OF RUNWAY
ELEV. = 50.03'
TAXIWAY 'A'
RUNWAY 25
THRESHOLD
ELEV. = 76.81'
TAXIWAY 'A'
ROUTE 1
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (OCS) NO.3
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (OCS) NO.3
WINNAPAUG ROAD
SHAMROCK COURT
TEMPORARY
374' DISPLACED
THRESHOLD
TOM HARVEY ROAD
PAPI OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (OCS)
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (OCS) NO.4
PAPI LIGHT SIGNAL CLEARANCE SURFACE (LSCS)
RUNWAY 32
DISPLACED
THRESHOLD
ELEV. = 77.67'
TAXIWAY 'F'
RUNWAY 32
END OF RUNWAY
ELEV. = 79.92'
JENKS PASSAGE
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (OCS) NO.3

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SHEET TITLE

ALTERNATIVE 3 - PARTIAL CLEAR

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FIGURE: 3-3

Alternative 3 requires the removal of approximately 21 acres of trees located on and off airport property, including 3.6 acres of trees located in wetlands, and the acquisition of up to 44 easements are necessary to remove obstructing trees located off airport property. The cost of constructing Alternative 3 is estimated at $420,000.00. This alternative lessens by 229 acres the extent of trees to be removed and also reduces the number of easements required (from 162 to 44), at a cost $2,180,000.00 less than that of Alternative 2. The implementation of Alternative 3 improves the safety of operations conducted at the airport and satisfies FAA design and safety standards by clearing those surfaces deemed critical by FAA. Similar to Alternative 2, time-of-year restrictions for construction are necessary to minimize wetland impacts and avoid impacts to the Northern long-eared bat. Impacts to other natural and/or socio-economic resources are not anticipated. Due to the overall reduction in scale of the project in general, and reduced impacts to wetlands specifically, Alternative 3 – *Partial Clear* is acknowledged as the preferred alternative. Alternative 3 minimizes environmental impacts to greatest extent practicable and meets the stated purpose and need of the project by removing identified obstructions to Westerly Airport runway approach surfaces and meeting FAA safety and design standards.

Impacts to the Northern long-eared bat and other natural and human resources are not anticipated as a result of actions presented in this EA. However, a more thorough analysis of potential environmental impacts resulting from proposed actions is provided in the following sections of this document.

4 Affected Environment

Westerly Airport is one of five general aviation facilities in the state of Rhode Island which are owned and operated by the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC). The town is located in southwest Rhode Island and is bordered by the Pawcatuck River to the west and north, Little Narragansett Bay and Block Island Sound to the south, and the town of Charlestown, Rhode Island to the east. The airport began as a grass strip in the 1920s and occupies approximately 326 acres. The airport may be accessed via Airport Road using Post Road/Route 1 from the north or from Tom Harvey Road from south, see *Westerly Airport Location Map*, Figure 4-1. This section of the EA describes the environmental conditions of the potentially affected geographic area(s), in consideration of the environmental impact categories established by NEPA for the review of federally funded actions.

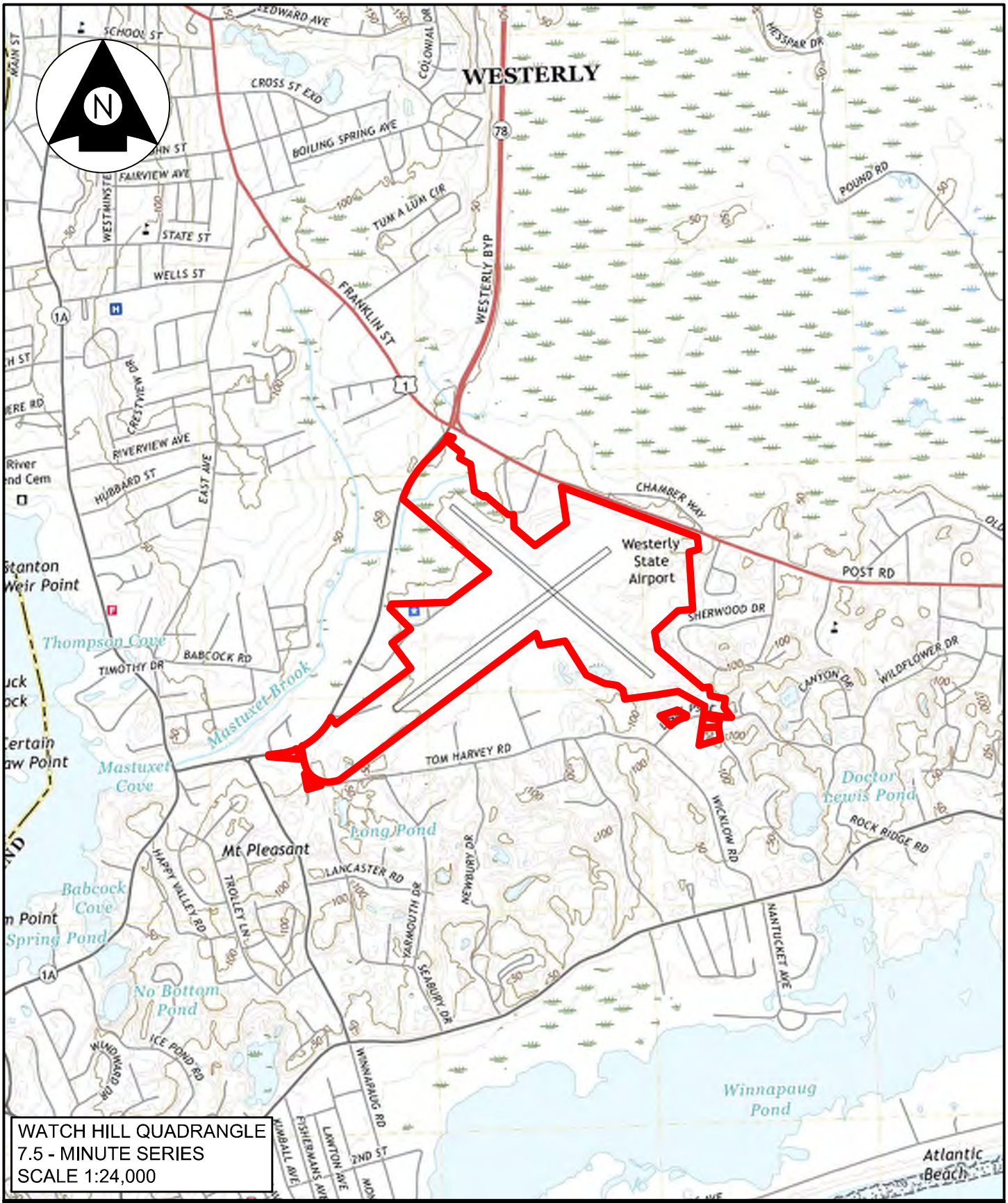
4.1 Natural Environment

Westerly Airport and surrounding environs is characterized by several distinct ecological communities and land uses. The airport itself is characterized primarily by regularly mowed urban grass—maintained field located adjacent to aircraft operating areas (i.e., runways, taxiways and aircraft parking aprons). North of the airport, Crandall Swamp, a 1,500-acre undisturbed forested swamp is bound by Route 78 to the west, Route 91 to the north, Dunns Corner Road to the east and Post Road to the south of the swamp. Medium-density development is the major land use to the east and west of the airport, while open space, characterized by upland forest, recreation (hiking and golfing), and low-density residential development comprise land uses to the south. Sandy beaches stretch along the Atlantic seashore approximately 1.5 miles south of the airport. Winnapaug Pond, a saltwater pond, and a series of salt marsh are located approximately one mile south of the airport and form the northern border of the beaches. The Pawcatuck River, which forms the western and northern borders of the town of Westerly (as well as the western border with the state of Connecticut) is located approximately 3,600 feet to the west of airport property. Stormwater from the eastern region of the airport drains to the north, through forested wetlands before ultimately discharging to the Pawcatuck River. Runoff from the western and southern regions of the airport drain to Mastuxet Brook, located on the west side of Airport Road, which also discharges to the Pawcatuck River.

Wetlands are located primarily in the northwestern region of airport property, north and west of Runway 14. Forested/shrub wetlands are the dominant wetland type on and adjacent to the airport. Smaller isolated open water and forested/shrub wetlands are located in depressions on each side of Runway 32. Tree removal associated with project alternatives are proposed within forested/shrub wetlands located west of the Runway 14 end, on and off airport property, as well as within the small isolated wetlands adjacent to Runway 32.

4.2 Biological Resources

Correspondence with state and federal regulatory agencies have identified the presence of several protected species potentially occurring within proposed project locations. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management has identified the Upland Sandpiper (*Ammodramus savannarum*) a state-



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Client/Project
RHODE ISLAND AIRPORT CORPORATION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project No.
179450268

Title
WESTERLY AIRPORT LOCATION MAP

Date
2022.11.10

Figure No.
4-1

listed threatened bird and the Sickle-leaved Golden Aster (*Pityopsis falcata*), a plant species of concern as two species historically observed within the vicinity of the airport. The Sickle-leaved golden Aster was most recently observed in 2012 while the Upland Sandpiper has not been observed since 1984. The Upland Sandpiper is a tall slender bird with a short thin bill and a long neck. Coloring is mottled brown above with brown spotting on the flanks and neck. Considered a shorebird, this sandpiper nests in native prairie, cropland, meadows and dry tundra. The bird forages through shortgrass habitats picking insects and seeds from the ground and vegetation. The upland sandpiper migrates to similar grasslands in South America, where it spends up to eight months of the year. Tree removal at airports, when conducted during winter months, is typically not regarded as a threat to this species or its habitat. Removing trees, particularly along tree/turf lines often allows native bunchgrasses, preferred by this sandpiper to expand its range at an airport, potentially increasing habitat for the bird, depending on the scale of the project.

The Sickle-leaved Golden Aster has a highly restricted range and is only found on the sandy glacial deposits along the coastal plain of southern New England, New York and New Jersey and thus is considered rare in New England. However, due to ideal sandy conditions, this plant is common in open areas of sandy woodlands and around the edges of cranberry bogs on Cape Cod. This plant grows in small mounds, typically no higher than 12 inches. Slender, stiff, curved, sickle-like leaves are attached to a wooly stem that may have 8-12 flower heads at the top of the plant. Each flower head is approximately ¾ inches in diameter and is characterized by golden yellow flower rays radiating from the center of the flower head. Sickle-leaved Golden Asters are perennials with rhizomes, a horizontal underground stem with roots growing from it. It is not known if this species occurs on-airport or within proposed project locations. Proposed tree removal methods do not involve ground disturbances from skidding or grubbing stumps and roots and will be conducted during winter months when the plant is dormant, reducing the possibility of impacting this species if present.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has also identified the Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) Red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa)* as two animal species potentially occurring within or near proposed project locations. The Northern long-eared bat is a wide-ranging bat species found throughout much of central and eastern regions of the United States. This bat typically overwinters in caves or mines and spends the remainder of the ear in forested habitat. Although there are many threats to the species, white-nose syndrome is the predominant threat and the principal reason for listing the species as threatened under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Since symptoms were first observed in 2006, it's estimated bat numbers have declined by 95-100% across the species' range. Due to the rapid decline of the Northern long-eared bat populations, many mid-western and eastern states are subject to the Section 4(d) rule, requiring tree removal projects to adhere to specific criteria prior to initiating a project. Tree clearing activities are prohibited where it involves clearing of known, occupied maternity roosts or any trees within 150 feet of those roosts during the pup rearing season (June 1st -July 31st) or within 0.25 miles of a known hibernacula. The agency further recommends delaying tree cutting and forestry activities until after October 31st which marks the end of the active season for the bat. Correspondence with the RIDEM Natural Heritage Division did not identify any known roost trees or hibernacula in the vicinity of project locations. As the project is not intended to begin prior to November 1st, vegetation management and removal activities proposed in this EA also complies with Section 4(d) requirements intended to avoid impacts to the Northern long-eared bat.

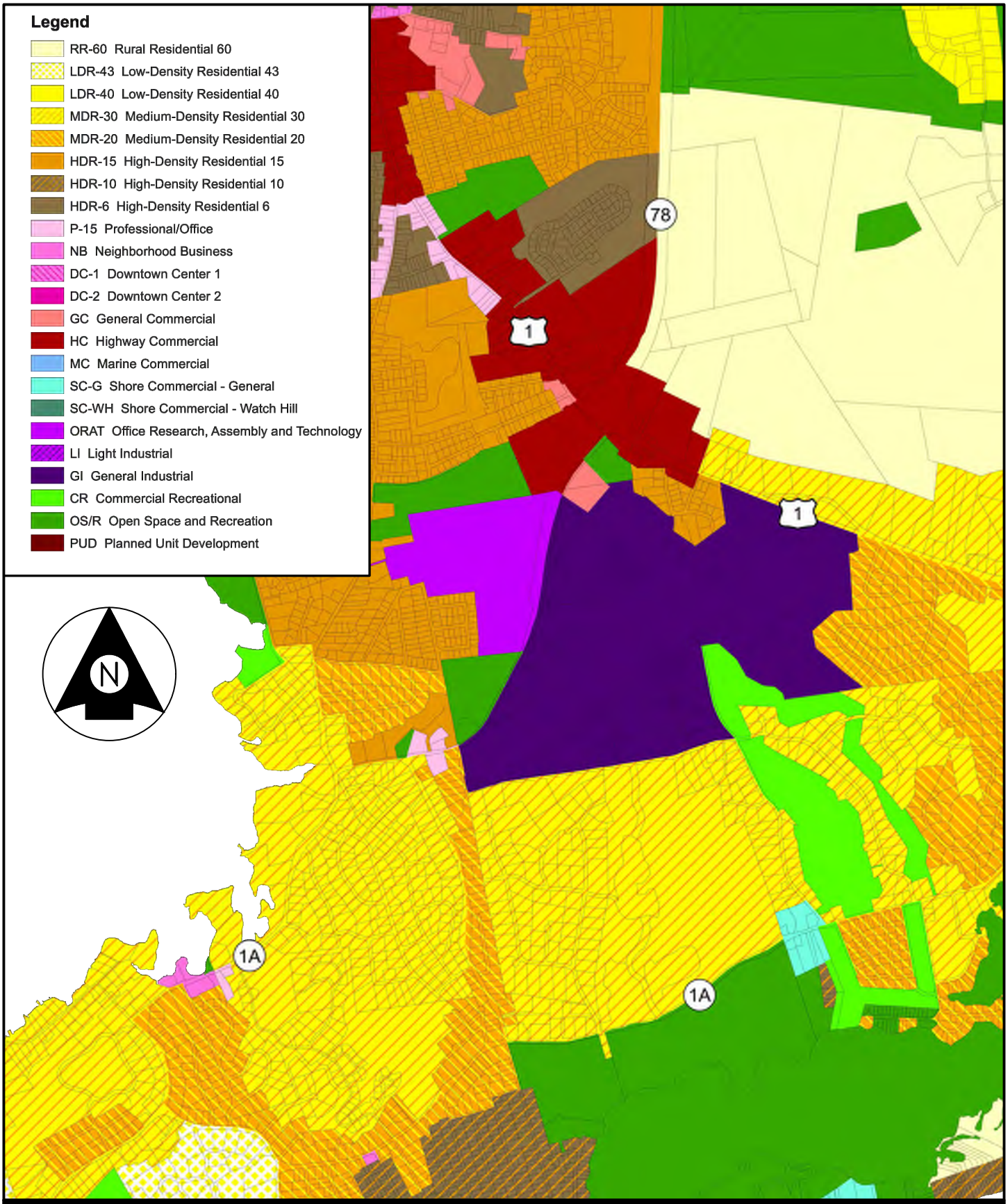
The Red Knot is a stocky, medium sized migratory shorebird that breeds in the arctic region and winters primarily in South America and the Gulf of Mexico, but use utilize coastal marine habitat like sandy beaches, estuaries and mudflats for foraging along the Atlantic coast during migration to and from breeding grounds. The most significant factor in the decline of red knot numbers is the over-harvesting of horseshoe crabs, as horseshoe crab eggs have historically comprised the bulk of their diet (coastal development is also a contributing factor in decreasing population numbers). The Red Knot is most likely to occur along the sandy shores of Westerly beaches and within the abundant salt marsh and saltwater ponds during the winter when tree removal activities are proposed, as the bulk of their winter diet consists of small invertebrates living in mud, such as small mollusks, marine worms and crustaceans. Red Knots have been observed in inland areas away from the coast but typically inhabit areas close to streams or ponds where they prey on aquatic insects and freshwater mollusks. Impacts to the Red Knot are not anticipated as proposed project actions are removed from their preferred coastal habitat as well as the freshwater habit which they sometimes utilize while overwintering (freshwater wetlands altered by actions considered in this EA consist primarily of forested/scrub wetlands).

4.3 Vicinity Land Use and Zoning

The airport is located within the General Industrial (GI) zoning district. Zoning districts to the east and south of the airport consist of Medium-Density Residential (MDR-20 & MDR-30). Adjacent zoning districts to the south of the airport also include an Open Space and Recreation (OS/R) district. High-Density (HDR-15), Commercial Recreational (CR) and General Commercial (GC) districts border the airport to the north, while Office Research, Assembly and Technology (ORAT), CR, MDR-20 districts border the western region of airport property, see Figure 4-2, *Westerly Airport Zoning Map*. Allowable uses in adjacent zoning districts are generally not in conflict with airport use. Residential districts may not be compatible with aviation land uses due to noise levels associated with aircraft operations. A more detailed discussion of airport and adjacent land uses is provided in Section 5.10 of this EA.

4.4 Planned Development

Aside from the on and off-airport tree removal projects considered in this EA, only a perimeter security and wildlife fencing upgrade project has been forwarded in the airport's short-term capital improvement program (through years 2025-26). This is a maintenance project intended to rehabilitate existing perimeter fencing at the airport. Environmental impacts associated with the proposed developments are not anticipated.



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Project No.
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Title
WESTERLY AIRPORT ZONING MAP

Date
2022.11.10

Figure No.
4-2

5 Environmental Consequences

This section identifies and evaluates the potential environmental consequences of implementing the proposed actions described in Section 3.0. The environmental impacts involving "extraordinary circumstances" typically requiring the preparation of an EA and identified in Chapter 6 of FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*, are utilized as a baseline for determining potential environmental impacts associated with federally funded airport improvement projects. The following evaluation will also assist with determining the environmentally preferable alternative pursuant to NEPA for achieving project goals.

5.1 Air Quality

In 2015 the FAA published the Aviation Emissions and Air Quality Handbook to establish the scope of air quality assessments for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, and other associated regulations. The Handbook attempts to provide consistency and quality of aviation related air quality assessments for aviation related projects. The Handbook identifies criteria pollutants to be analyzed in relation to National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The criteria pollutants include Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2), Sulfur Dioxide (SO2), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ozone (O3), particulate matter (PM), and Lead (Pb). Regions in which one or more of the criteria pollutant levels exceeds air quality standards are referred to as nonattainment or maintenance areas. FAA actions proposed in nonattainment or maintenance areas are subject to various levels of NAAQS assessment, including quantitative and qualitative modeling analysis, to determine conformity with the Clean Air Act and NEPA regulations. The EPA Green Book provides detailed information about area NAAQS designations, classifications, and nonattainment status.

According to the most recent version of the Green Book (reviewed at https://www.epa.gov/green-book), Washington County which includes the Town of Westerly is not in nonattainment or maintenance status for any of the criteria pollutants established in the Handbook.

Based on Washington County's attainment status of current standards for criteria pollutants and the premise that the proposed tree removal project at Westerly Airport will not result in or contribute to a reasonably foreseeable increase in aircraft emissions, a qualitative emissions inventory and analysis is not required. The No Action Alternative (Alternative 1) discussed in Section 3 of this EA has no emissions associated air quality impacts as no tree removal or easement acquisition is proposed.

The Full Clear option presented in Alternative 2 results in more emissions from equipment than does Alternative 3 Partial Clear, the preferred alternative, due to the greater extent of tree removal identified for removal in Alternative 2. Alternative 3 limits construction, reducing the potential for air quality impacts and is thus the preferred alternative for implementation with regard to air quality. Any emissions from construction equipment will be limited to typical daytime periods of construction and emissions from equipment during construction will not significantly add to NAAQs pollutant levels.

5.2 Biological Resources

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has been consulted, pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, to determine the presence of federally listed threatened or endangered species within the boundaries of Westerly Airport or adjacent properties. Correspondence with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service advises there is no critical habitat listed in the airport project area. However, the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and the Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa)* are listed as federally threatened species that may occur within the vicinity of the airport, see USF&WS correspondence dated February 2, 2022 in Appendix A of this EA.

The federal Northern Long-eared Bat 4(d) Rule prohibits incidental take that may occur from tree removal activities within 150 feet of a known occupied maternity roost tree during the pup season (June 1 to July 31) or within a 1/4 mile of a hibernation site (hibernacula), year-round. Tree removal should also be planned after October 31st when possible to avoid working during the active period of the bat. Neither the FWS nor the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program overseen by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) have identified known roost trees or hibernacula in the vicinity of proposed project locations. It should be noted the FWS is proposing the change of status for the bat from Threatened to Endangered. The agency has indicated that such a change will revoke the 4(d) rule that permits tree removal during conducted outside the pup rearing season and no known hibernaculum are present in the vicinity of the project. Should the bat's status change to Endangered prior to condcuting tree removal actitivies, additional coordination with FWS will be required.

The red knot, a migratory bird that breeds in the central Canadian Arctic and winters primarily in South America, Florida, and the adjacent Gulf Coast. Red knots also utilize Atlantic coastal areas during migration to and from breeding arctic breeding grounds. This bird species typically inhabit beaches, mudflats, estuaries and coastal shorelines and feed on horseshoe crab eggs, mollusks and invertebrates buried in mud and sand. Though less common, red knots have been observed inland during migration, utilizing stream, pond and marsh habitat. Due to the lack of suitable red knot habitat within project locations, impacts to this species are not anticipated.

The RIDEM Natural Heritage Program has also been contacted regarding the status of state-listed species and exemplary natural communities occurring within the vicinity of activities proposed in this EA. Correspondence with RIDEM identified the Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), a state-listed threatened species, and the Sickle-leaved Golden Aster (*Pityopsis falcata*), a state-listed species of concern, potentially impacted by actions considered in this EA. The Upland Sandpiper, once common throughout native New England grasslands, have declined in numbers in the region as grassland habitat has been lost to development. Sightings in New England and the Northeast are often at or near airports, as the combination of regularly mowed turf and less frequently mowed tall grasses simulates historic grassland habitat. This species migrates from North America in late July and August after breeding is complete. The Upland Sandpiper migrates to South America, where they may spend up to eight months of the year, returning to their North American breeding grounds in April.

The Sickle-leaved Golden Aster is a perennial. This species is typically found in upland meadows and fields on sandy glacial deposits left behind from the Wisconsin glaciation which ended about 10,000 years

ago. Although this plant is considered rare in Rhode Island and New England, it can be locally abundant if conditions are right. Correspondence from RIDEM Natural Heritage dated February 16, 2022 is located in Appendix A.

The implementation of the preferred Alternative, Alternative 3, will be conducted in accordance with the federal Northern Long-eared Bat 4(d) Rule and minimizes the extent of vegetation removal, reducing impacts on wildlife habitat. Tree removal is generally not regarded as an impact to Upland Sandpiper habitat and often allows native bunch grasses to spread once trees have been removed from bordering grasslands. Time-of-year restrictions on clearing, to prevent impacts to the bat and to minimize disturbance within wetlands will help ensure no birds or active nests are adversely impacted. In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C.§ 1531 et seq.) there will be no adverse effects on wildlife habitat or state and federally-listed threatened or endangered species resulting from actions proposed in project alternatives.

5.3 Climate

Scientific research indicates increased greenhouse gasses emitted from the combustion of fossil fuels affect global climate. Estimates suggest that aviation accounts for approximately four percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. In response to recent initiatives and regulations, FAA has integrated the effects of aviation projects upon climatic conditions with the NEPA review process. Carbon in a forest is stored both above ground and below ground. Above ground carbon is stored in trees, plants, dead trees and leaf litter. Below ground carbon is stored in roots and in soil. A forest's storage level is influenced by factors including soil properties, woodlot age, and past management practices. Carbon sequestration is the process of using carbon dioxide (CO_2) during photosynthesis for tree and plant growth and upkeep. Older mature trees tend to have large carbon storage above and below ground but these trees may not be sequestering carbon at a particularly high rate. By removing a portion of the forest's overstory trees, subcanopy shrub and sapling species will undergo vigorous growth due to increased sunlight reaching the forest floor. Quickly growing understory species have lower storage capacities than older trees but have higher sequestration rates and remove more atmospheric carbon, thus providing a balance between carbon storage and capture.

Implementation of Alternative 1 - No Action would have no impacts upon climate regimens, nor would it affect current rates of carbon storage and sequestration. Alternative 2 – Full Clear proposes over 10 times as much tree removal (250 acres) as Alternative 3 (21 acres). Each of the development alternatives ultimately results in the temporary loss of carbon storage and reduced sequestration, which should be recovered as herbaceous and shrubby growth colonizes areas where trees have been removed. Neither of the development alternatives considered would significantly impact local or regional carbon capacity, particularly over the long term. However, Alternative 3 minimizes tree loss to the greatest extent practicable and is thus the preferred alternative regarding the minimization of potential impacts to local and or regional climate regimens.

5.4 Coastal Resources

The Rhode Island Coastal Management Program, approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 1978 is administered by the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council. The primary authority for the coastal management program is the Coastal Resources Management Act of 1971. Rhode Island's coastal zone encompasses the entire state, although the inland extent of the coastal management program's regulatory authority is generally 200 feet inland from any coastal feature. In accordance with FAA Order 5050.4B *Airport Environmental Handbook*, federal actions such as those proposed in this EA must be consistent with the objectives and purposes of the approved State coastal zone management program. Although located just 1.5 miles from the shores of Block Island Sound, Westerly Airport is not within the designated coastal zone. Impacts to coastal resources are not anticipated as a result of the project considered in this EA.

5.5 Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(F)

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act requires the Secretary of Transportation investigate all alternatives before impacting any publicly owned lands designated as public parks, recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges of national, state, or local significance, or land having national, state, or local historical significance.

There is one publicly owned park located near the airport. Rotary Park, owned by the town of Westerly is located on the west side of Airport Road, across the street from the airport near the Runway 7 end. Rotary Park consists of tennis and volleyball courts and playground areas. Though not publicly owned, the Dr. John Champlin Glacier Park, owned by the Westerly Land Trust, is located south of Tom Harvey approximately 1,000 feet to the south of the airport. This park has a trail system through approximately 135 acres of recessional moraine kettle and kame topography. Neither of the proposed development alternative require tree removal from nor will they adversely impact these recreational areas.

The Winnapaug Golf Club, a semi-private 18-hole golf course, abuts the southern region of Westerly Airport property. Alternative 2 *Full Clear* requires the removal of several acres of trees located on the golf course and within residential parcels abutting the golf course. Alternative 3 *Partial Clear* requires the select removal of several trees obstructing the Runway 32 approach. An easement exists for the tree removal required on the golf course to implement Alternative 3. No alternative presented in this EA proposes tree removal activities within or adjacent to Section 4(F) lands and impacts are not anticipated as a result of the easement acquisition and tree removal project.

5.6 Farmlands

The Farmland Protection Policy Act authorized the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop criteria for identifying effects of federal programs on the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. The guidelines developed by the USDA became effective August 6, 1984, and apply to federal activities involving the undertaking, financing, or assisting in the construction of improvement projects or acquiring, managing, or disposing of land that is deemed to have prime or unique farmland qualities.

Farmland is broken into the following categories by the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act: prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. Airport soils are comprised primarily of Udorthents/Urban land complex (UD) which are coarse sand and gravels used to construct the airport. Other soils include Gloucester-Hinckley (GhC), very stony loamy sands; Scarboro mucky fine sandy loam (Sb); Windsor loamy sand (WgB), considered farmland of statewide importance; and Merrimac fine sandy loam (MmB), considered a prime farmland soil. However, Windsor and Merrimac soils occur on land designated for aviation use and undeveloped forested areas respectively. Neither of these locations are used nor have they been designated for agricultural purposes. None of the alternatives considered in this EA will result in the conversion of farmland soils currently in use for agricultural purposes. The locations of these soils at and adjacent to the airport are shown in Figure 5-1, *Westerly Airport Soil Survey Map Soil.*

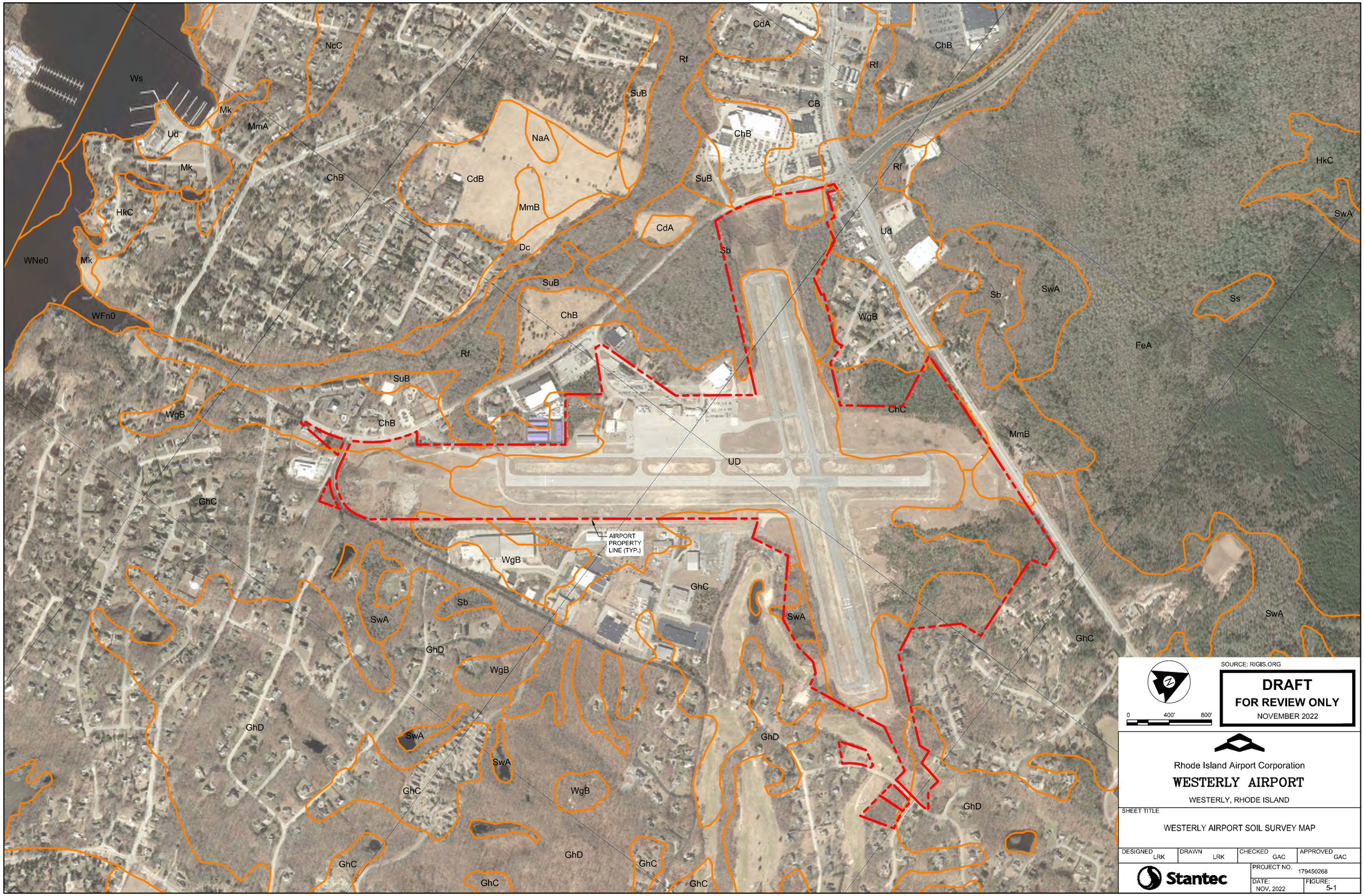
5.7 Floodplains

Floodplains are defined in Executive Order 11988 as “the lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters including, at a minimum, that area subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year, or in other words, the area that would be inundated by a 100-year flood.” This Order directs federal agencies to “take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impacts of floods on human safety, health, and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural beneficial values served by floodplains.”

An on-line review of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood insurance rate maps prepared for the town of Westerly was conducted and it was determined that the designated FEMA flood hazard area, Zone AE (100-year flood zone) extends into the southwestern region of airport property, see Figure 5-2, *Westerly Airport FEMA Floodplain Map.* This flood zone is associated with Mastuxet Brook which flows along the west side of Airport Road and discharges into the Pawcatuk River. Alternative 2 – *Full Clear* proposes on-airport tree removal from within the Zone AE flood hazard area. Alternative 3 – Partial Clear does not Propose work in the Zone AE flood hazard area. Alternatives 2 and 3 propose tree removal from wetlands located north, south and west of the Runway 14 end. This area has been designated by FEMA as a 0.2% annual chance flood hazard area, (500-year flood, Zone X).This zone is used to designate base flood plains of lesser hazards such as areas protected by levees from a 100-year flood or shallow flooding areas with average depths of one foot or drainage areas of less than one square mile. Alternative 3, the preferred alternative, avoids tree removal from within the Zone AE flood hazard area and will not contribute to the impacts of floods on human safety, health and welfare nor will it compromise the beneficial values served by floodplains, including flood retention & detention and/or ground water recharge.

5.8 Hazardous Material, Solid Waste and Pollution Prevention

The proposed easement acquisition and associated vegetative obstruction removal project will not involve the use of hazardous materials nor will the project generate a significant volume of solid waste. Designated equipment fueling locations will be established prior to construction and equipment will be required to maintain on-board spill kits. Felled trees and all wood debris resulting from the project will be removed from the site. Construction bid documents shall require trees and any woody debris to become the property of the contractor to be processed or disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local



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NOVEMBER 2022

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Rhode Island Airport Corporation

WESTERLY AIRPORT

WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

SHEET TITLE

WESTERLY AIRPORT SOIL SURVEY MAP

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
LRK	LRK	GAC	GAC

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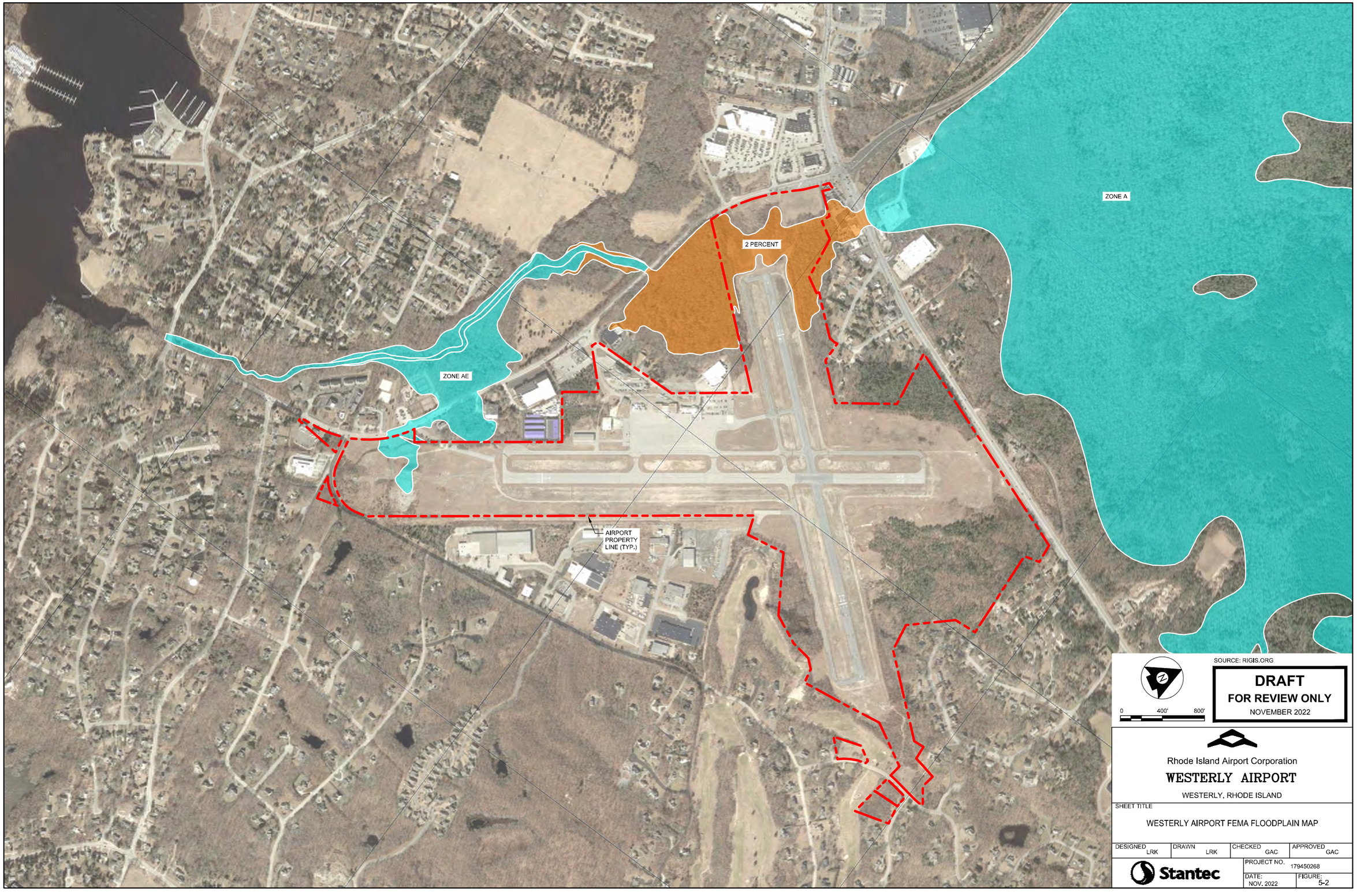
PROJECT NO. 179450268

DATE: NOV. 2022

FIGURE: 5-1



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NOVEMBER 2022

Rhode Island Airport Corporation

WESTERLY AIRPORT

WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

SHEET TITLE

WESTERLY AIRPORT FEMA FLOODPLAIN MAP

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
LRK	LRK	GAC	GAC

Stantec

PROJECT NO. 179450268

DATE: NOV. 2022

FIGURE: 5-2

regulations. No changes in the quantity or type of solid waste generated at the airport, or changes in the method of collection at the airport are anticipated.

5.9 Historical, Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Resources

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended, and the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended, require federal agencies to consider impacts of their actions to resources of historic, cultural, or archeological significance. Section 106 of the NHPA requires consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer(s) (THPO) to determine potential adverse effects of a federal action to culturally significant resources and/or historic properties on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL), a private cultural resources management corporation based in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, was retained by RIAC to prepare a due diligence survey intended to assess the potential for the presence of significant archaeological sites within proposed off-airport obstruction removal locations and to make recommendations for additional archaeological investigations if warranted. PAL identified archaeological sites within their study area but determined project alternatives would not impact potentially sensitive cultural resources if ground disturbances from grading and stump grubbing are avoided. Furthermore, PAL recommends that if stump grinding is necessary, grinding should be conducted on stumps only and not on tree roots. PAL's report indicated that if proposed protective measures are adopted during construction, no further archaeological investigations are required.

PAL's findings have been shared with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) as part of the Section 106 SHPO consultation process. The RIHPHC has responded in support of PAL's finding, indicating that as long as tree removal does not involve grubbing or grading and that any stump grinding activities, if needed, conform with PAL's recommendations, the project will have no adverse impact on historic properties. PAL's report and the RIHPHC correspondence dated February 25, 2022 have been included in Appendix A *Agency Correspondence* of this EA. In accordance with Section 6 of the NHPA, the preferred alternative, Alternative 3 proposes the least amount of tree removal, minimizing the potential for impacts to archaeological resources would not adversely affect any NRHP-listed or eligible archaeological sites or architectural resources if recommended mitigation measures are implemented during construction. Therefore, impacts to NRHP-eligible or listed historic, archaeological or cultural resources are not anticipated.

5.10 Land Use

The compatibility of existing and planned land uses in the vicinity of an airport is usually associated with the extent of potential aircraft-noise impacts from the airport, as well as safety concerns with the land located beneath protected airspace. Land uses occurring adjacent to and within the bounds of airport property involve residential, recreational and airport use. Commercial and industrial land uses are typically considered compatible with airport operations. Residential development within the proximity of an airport is not typically regarded as compatible due to the noise associated aircraft operations. The airport occurs within the General Industrial zoning district. The General Industrial district is intended for

manufacturing and industrial uses that must be segregated because of their incompatibility with other uses. Adjacent land uses include Low and Medium-Density Residential, Office Research, Assembly and Technology, Commercial Recreational, and Open Space and Recreation. The Town's Zoning Ordinance has also adopted an Airport Area Overlay District (AAOD). This overlay district is intended to identify airport hazard areas, divide them into zones and regulate and restrict the height to which structures and trees may be erected or allowed to grow. Confliction Areas have been designated within the Airport Area Overlay District to identify those areas where the ground elevation plus the maximum height restriction under current zoning (35 feet above grade) penetrates Part 77 approach surfaces. The Westerly Zoning Board is responsible for the administration and enforcement Airport Area Overlay District matters. Designated Confliction Areas capture most of the obstruction areas identified in Alternative 3, however, the Runway 14 Confliction Area does not capture obstructions identified west of Airport Road and Charles Avenue. The town may wish to revise the Runway 14 Confliction Area as the terrain increases in elevation northwest of the airport and the trees identified as obstructions generally exceed 35 feet in height.

Neither of the development alternatives proposed in this EA will affect the number or size of aircraft currently using the airport, thus the exposure to airport abutters from noise associated with the airport will not increase. The proposed easement acquisition and tree removal projects are critical to maintaining the safety of aircraft operations conducted at the airport and are not expected to contribute to land use incompatibility issues beyond those associated with tall trees occurring on residential parcels located near the airport. The "No Action" alternative does not result in any land use incompatibility issues as no trees are proposed for removal. Alternative 1, does not however, address existing safety issues at the airport. Alternative 2 – *Full Clear*, addresses existing safety hazards but requires over 160 additional easements to remove all obstructions to Part 77 surfaces, substantially increasing the potential for conflict between aviation and residential land uses. Alternative 3 – *Partial Clear* substantially reduces the number of easements required (44) and the extent of off-airport tree removal, further limiting potential conflict with residential land uses. Alternative 3, the preferred alternative also improves the safety of aircraft operations to levels in accordance with FAA safety and design standards.

5.11 Natural Resources and Energy Supply

Energy requirements associated with a proposed airport improvement project generally fall into two categories: (1) those that relate to changed demands for stationary facilities (i.e., airfield lighting and terminal building heating), and (2) those that involve the movement of air and ground vehicles. The proposed actions in this EA will not result in increased demand for energy at the airport nor will the proposed actions require the use any rare materials or natural resources in short supply for the removal of obstructions to protected airspace at the airport.

5.12 Noise

As indicated in FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures,* a noise analysis can be prepared using the FAA's Integrated Noise Model (INM) in order to assess noise impacts resulting from airport improvement projects to noise sensitive areas (e.g. densely populated residential areas, historic sites, national parks and national wildlife refuges). The FAA has determined that for aviation noise

analysis, the cumulative noise exposure of individuals to noise resulting from aviation activities must be established in terms of yearly day/night average sound level (DNL) as FAA's primary metric. According to Order 1050.1F, a significant noise impact results when the INM analysis demonstrates the proposed project will create an increase of DNL 1.5 decibel (dB) or more at or above DNL 65dB noise exposure in noise sensitive areas.

As stated above in Section 5.10 *Land Use*, the acquisition of avigation easements and the removal of trees on and off airport property proposed in this EA will not lead to larger aircraft using the airport nor will it lead to an increase in the number of operations conducted at the facility, therefore a noise analysis is not required.

The obstruction removal activities proposed at various locations on and off-airport property adjacent to Runways 7-25 and 14-32 are not expected to alter existing noise contours established for the airport. Short-term noise impacts typically associated with construction activities (from the use of construction equipment) may be experienced by abutters in close proximity to the airport. However, these impacts will be limited to normal daylight working hours for the duration of the obstruction removal project. Alternative 3 – Partial Clear requires less construction and a shorter period of noise exposure to airport abutters than Alternative 2 – Full Clear. Long-term noise impacts resulting from the proposed easement acquisition/tree removal projects are not anticipated.

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

Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations*, was issued on February 11, 1994. This Order established procedures for the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to "achieve environmental justice as part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects, of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States."

In preventing disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations, it is USDOT policy to "actively administer and monitor its operations and decision-making to assure that nondiscrimination is an integral part of its programs, policies, and activities." USDOT currently administers policies, programs, and activities that are subject to the requirements of NEPA, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and other USDOT statutes that involve human health, environmental matters or interrelated social and economic impacts. These requirements are administered to identify, early in the development of the activity, the risk of discrimination so that positive corrective action can be taken.

According to the EPA, Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EPA defines fair treatment to mean that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative

environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations or policies.

Based on a review of the RIDEM Environmental Justice program (RIDEM has adopted the US Environmental Protection Agency's [EPA] Environmental Justice evaluation and designation criteria), there no Environmental Justice communities located in Westerly or within other surrounding communities.

Neither of the development alternatives considered for construction in this EA (Alternatives 2 or 3) on and off-airport property will impact existing socioeconomic conditions or contribute to the creation of significant noise impacts, the disruption of any municipal services, traffic impacts, social impacts, induced socioeconomic impacts, or disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations.

FAA is also encouraged to identify and evaluate potential environmental health and safety risks that could disproportionately affect children. Such risks are typically attributable to materials (such as food, drinking and recreational water, soil, and air) children may come in contact with or ingest. Such impacts or consequences will not result from implementation of the any of the alternatives proposed in this EA. Alternative 3, the preferred tree removal alternative, has the most limited extent of construction and therefore is the least likely to contribute to adverse impacts.

5.14 Visual Effects

The FAA requires consideration of the extent to which any lighting associated with an airport action will create an annoyance or disturbance among residents in the vicinity of the installation. The proposed actions in this EA for the obstruction mitigation project will not increase light emissions from the airport therefore significant visual impacts from lighting are not anticipated. Construction of the project will be conducted during daylight hours therefore lighting impacts from equipment is not anticipated.

The Environmental Assessment must also consider impacts of an airport improvement project to visual resources and the visual character of an area. Although there are no resources within the project area with designated light or visual protections, the visual character of an area must also be considered to determine whether a project could adversely affect the uniqueness or aesthetic quality of an area. When considering potential impacts from existing light sources, *Alternative 2 – Full Clear* alters the visual character of dozens of residential lots, primarily to the south of Runway 7 and to the east of Runway 32, where the removal of all trees is necessary to achieve compliance with Part 77 requirements. Alternative 2 also eliminates visual buffering from the airport provided to residences by landscape trees located in these areas. Alternative 3 affects 120 fewer airport abutters and reduces tree removal by approximately 230 acres, substantially reducing visual impacts to residential communities located near the airport. Tree removal proposed in Alternative 3, the preferred alternative, will not significantly alter the aesthetic character of these neighborhoods, which have all previously been subject to past airspace obstruction removal activities.

5.15 Water Resources

5.15.1 WETLANDS

Federal wetland regulations, implemented by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are based on Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. The federal definition of a wetland found in the Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual (1987), characterizes federal wetlands using a three-parameter approach based on vegetation, hydrology, and soils. Wetlands are also regulated in accordance with provisions of the *Rhode Island Fresh Water Wetlands Act* and *Rules and Regulations Governing the Administration and Enforcement of the Fresh Water Wetlands Act*. RIDEM, which has jurisdiction over wetlands at Westerly Airport, and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CMRC) are responsible for the oversight and implementation of wetland regulations in Rhode Island (CRMC has jurisdiction over wetlands within the coastal zone).

Wetland areas are present on and within the vicinity of airport property. Wetland types occurring on and off-airport project locations include freshwater forested/shrub and open water/pond habitat. Wetland boundaries used in this review are based on a combination of past field-delineations and the use of existing mapping and available on-line data. To accomplish project goals, *Alternative 2 – Full Clear* results in the removal of approximately 29 acres of trees and saplings from forested/shrub wetlands while *Alternative 3 – Partial Clear* requires removing 3.6 acres of obstructions from wetlands. An updated wetland field delineation will be required on airport property and within proposed new easement locations to verify the presence (or absence) of wetlands within proposed project locations once easements have been obtained by RIAC.

Best management practices including the designation of haul routes and staging areas well removed from wetlands and the installation of erosion controls where needed to protect adjacent wetlands will be utilized to avoid unintentional construction impacts.

Due to the reduction of tree removal proposed, Alternative 3, the preferred alternative for construction is the least likely of the alternatives to contribute to unintended wetland impacts.

5.15.2 SURFACE AND GROUND WATERS

The potential to degrade the water quality of ground water sources and local surface water bodies must be assessed when evaluating project alternatives presented in this EA. As discussed in previous sections of this EA, alterations to freshwater wetlands associated with proposed development alternatives reviewed in this EA range between 3.6 and 29 acres.

The majority of on-airport wetlands and wetland project locations occur in the northern end of airport property and north of Airport Road. These wetlands are primarily associated with drainage to Mastuxet Brook. Mastuxet Brook flows from the north, then parallel to the west side of Airport Road, prior to discharging to the Pawcatuck River at a point roughly 2,130 feet northwest of the airport. Water quality impacts to Mastuxet Brook are not anticipated as a result of proposed project alternatives. Pawcatuck River is designated as a Wild and Scenic River, protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act administered by the National Park Service. Discussion of the Pawcatuck River in relation to proposed

project alternatives is discussed in the following section of this document. Chapman Pond, a 180-acre pond is located approximately 1.6 miles north of Westerly Airport.

Potable water available to the residents and businesses of Westerly via public water supply or private wells. According to the Westerly Geographic Information System (GIS) website (https://westerly.mapxpress.net), the northeast region of airport property occurs within the Local Aquifer Protection and the Local Wellhead Protection Zones, see Figure 5-3, Aquifer and Wellhead Protection Zones. The development alternatives presented in this EA do not propose the addition of impervious surfaces nor are major ground disturbances anticipated as a result of proposed actions. Construction activities are not expected to result in the siltation or pollution of wetlands or adjacent water bodies. In order to avoid potential surface and groundwater quality impacts associated with the construction activities, obstruction removal activities will be conducted in winter months when the ground may be frozen to minimize soil disturbances. Additionally, temporary erosion and pollution control measures will be specifically designed and implemented throughout the duration of construction activities pursuant to federal, state, and local jurisdictional authorities.

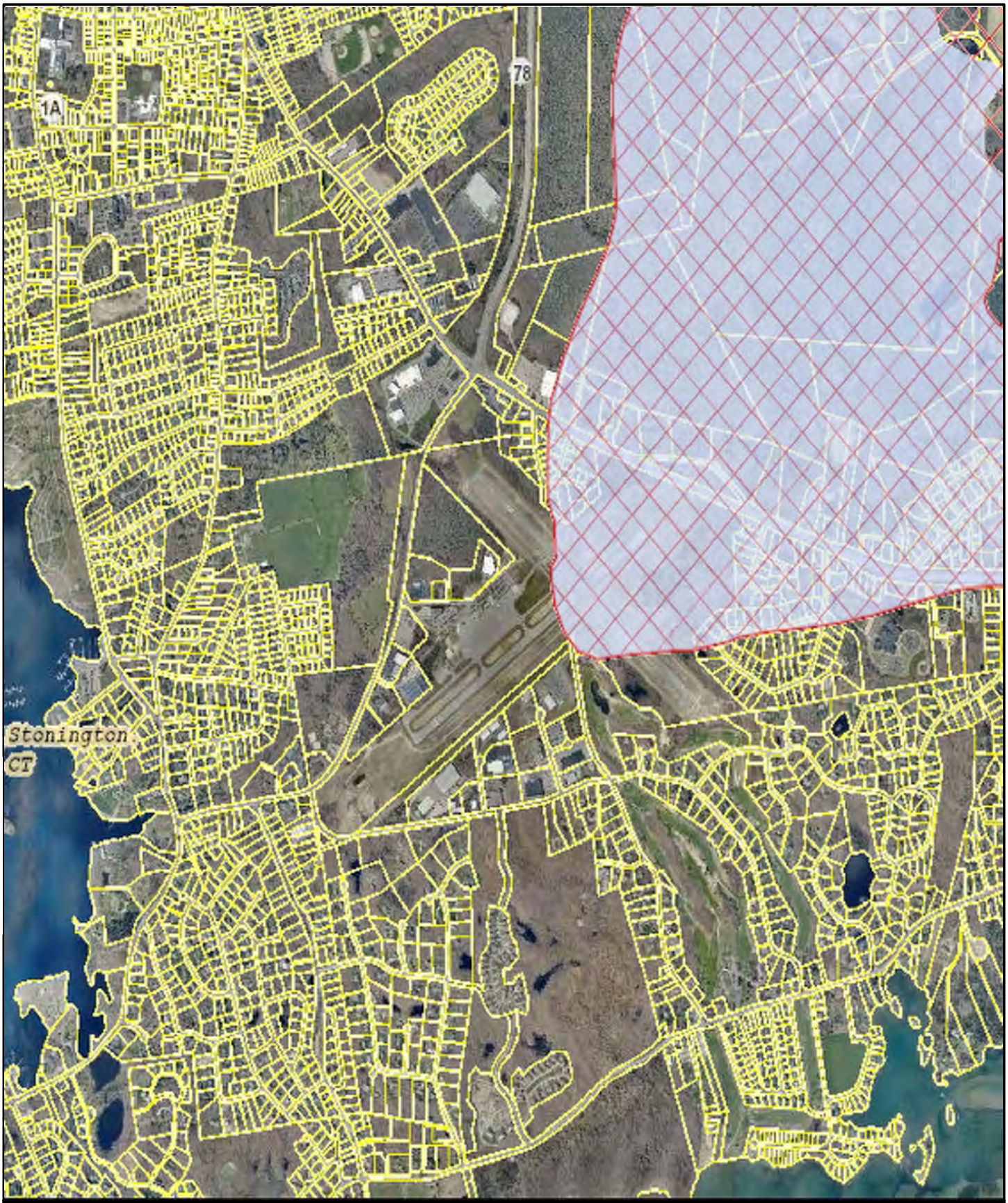
Predetermined sites for equipment and material staging and equipment refueling will be established in locations removed from wetland areas and freshwater ponds in order to reduce the risk of potential surface and groundwater impacts. Contractors will be required to provide spill containment equipment to prevent the discharge of pollutants from construction equipment such as fuels, lubricants, or any other harmful or potentially harmful material into wetlands or any other water body within the vicinity of the project area. Adverse impacts to the water quality of surface or groundwater resources are not anticipated as a result of actions proposed in this EA.

5.15.3 WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

Per review of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System website (www.rivers.gov), there are 110 miles of river in Rhode Island designated wild and scenic rivers. This includes the Pawcatuck River, which flows along the western border of Rhode Island, through the town of Westerly. The Pawcatuck River has been designated for its recreational value. The Wild and Scenic Rivers program is administered by the National Park Service. For any project affecting a designated Wild and Scenic River, consultation with the appropriate land management agency must be conducted. Actions considered in this EA (tree removal) will not impact the Pawcatuck River in any fashion. Default boundaries of Wild and Scenic Rivers as defined in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act extend to one-quarter mile from the ordinary high water mark on each side of the river.

The southwestern limit of tree removal activities associated with *Alternative 2 – Full Clear* is approximately 985 feet east of the eastern shore of the Pawcatuck River. The western-most limit of Alternative 3 tree removal is located approximately 1,950 feet east of the river, see Figures 3-2 and 3-3 respectively. Alternative 3 (preferred alternative) project limits are well outside the defined river corridor boundary. Alternative 2 requires over 71 acres of tree removal from the Runway 7 end while Alternative 3 requires on 6.6 acres of obstruction removal from the Runway 7 end project locations. No earth grading or ground disturbance is associated with either Alternative 2 or Alternative 3. Erosion and sedimentation controls will be installed prior to tree removal as a precautionary best management practice. Cutting trees

Courtesy of Town of Westerly Geographic Information System (GIS)



Stantec

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2211 Congress St Suite 380
Portland, ME 04102
Tel: (207) 883-3355
www.stantec.com

Client/Project
RHODE ISLAND
AIRPORT CORPORATION
ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT

Project No.
179450268

Title
WESTERLY AIRPORT
AQUIFER & WELLHEAD
PROTECTION ZONES

Date
2022.11.10

Figure No.
5-3

2022.11.10 3:56:15 PM

to ground level and grinding stumps where necessary, topsoiling and seeding affected areas will have no adverse impact to the water quality, wilderness, aesthetic or recreational values of the Pawcatuck River.

5.16 Cumulative Impacts

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations define a cumulative impact as "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions" (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] § 1508.7). Cumulative impacts can be viewed as the total combined impacts on the environment of the proposed action under consideration in the EA and other known or reasonably foreseeable actions. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions must be considered in determining whether there are potential cumulative impacts. This includes actions initiated by any entity (i.e., other federal agencies, state, tribal, or local governments, or private entities).

Over the past several decades, Westerly Airport has completed few safety and improvement projects. Most projects completed since 1995 have included vegetative obstruction removal and lighting, pavement rehabilitation and hangar construction. There has been little impact to natural & human resources at or adjacent to the airport. A private residence located within the Runway 32 protection zone (RPZ) was purchased by RIAC and demolished in conjunction with an obstruction removal effort which removed several acres of deciduous upland forest in 2009.

The easement acquisition and obstruction removal project considered in this EA will not result in significant environmental impacts. Although Alternative 3 proposes removing approximately 3.6 acres of wetland vegetation, mostly northwest of the Runway 14 end, impacts will consist of habitat conversion, as small trees and tree saplings will be removed and lower growing shrub species encouraged (*Alternative 2 – Full Clear* requires the removal of almost 29 acres of wetland vegetation—a principal factor in selecting Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative). There will be no direct or fill impacts to wetlands or other water freshwater resources and impacts to federal and state listed species will be avoided by adhering to time-of-year restrictions, requiring construction to occur between November 1st and May 1st. Similarly, proposed actions will not impact identified archaeological resources utilizing tree removal methods that avoid significant ground disturbance. Finally, the actions considered in this EA will not adversely impact local air quality, nor will the project negatively impact local socioeconomic conditions. Similarly, as stated previously in Section 4.3 *Planned Development*, within the next several years the RIAC and the airport are considering for construction perimeter security and wildlife fence upgrades at the airport. When considering the impact of future actions, proposed obstruction removal will not create significant impacts when viewed as a stand-alone project or within the historical context of development at the airport.

6 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are actions that will be implemented during project design and construction to avoid and minimize environmental impacts to the greatest extent possible. Ultimately, mitigation must conform with the necessary permitting requirements provided in Section 6 of this document. Mitigation measures generally include the following:

- Avoiding the effect altogether by stopping or modifying the action.
- Minimizing the effect by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and the activities associated with its implementation.
- Rectifying the effect by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- Reducing or eliminating the effect over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- Compensating for the effect by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Compensatory mitigation will not be required as a condition of environmental permitting associated with construction activities.

Based on safety, operational, environmental, and economic considerations, it has been determined that the preferred alternative for achieving projects goals is *Alternative 3 – Partial Clear.* This alternative improves the safety of operations conducted on the runway and satisfies FAA airspace safety standards and meets the Purpose and Need goals established in the EA.

6.1 Water Quality Mitigation

Impacts to ground and surface water resources are not anticipated as a result of the project proposed in this EA. The proposed safety improvement projects will not result in an increase of impervious surface on or adjacent to the airport. Increased stormwater runoff from the airport and off-airport project locations is not expected.

Erosion and sedimentation are unlikely to result as soil disturbances will be minimized to the greatest extent possible through the implementation of appropriate BMPs. No stump grubbing or land grading is associated with project alternatives. In limited locations where stump grinding may be required in upland residential locations, affected areas will be treated with topsoil, graded to match existing topography and seeded with grass or an appropriate conservation seed mix to provide final stabilization of disturbed upland areas.

6.2 Construction Mitigation

In order to avoid potential water quality impacts associated with the construction of the proposed project, temporary erosion and pollution control measures will be specifically designed and implemented throughout the duration of removal activities pursuant to federal, state, and local jurisdictional authorities.

Best management practices, including the implementation of erosion, sedimentation and pollution prevention controls, the operation of equipment during day-time hours only, and the implementation of dust control measures will be required to minimize impacts associated with fugitive dust. Central locations for all equipment refueling and staging will be established in upland areas removed from any wetland locations to minimize the risk of ground and surface water quality impacts. Gravel pads may also be installed at site access/egress points to prevent off-site sediment tracking.

7 Jurisdictional Authorities, Actions and Permits

The following discussion outlines the jurisdictional authorities, actions, and permits that apply to the project proposed in this environmental assessment to be constructed at the Westerly Airport. All permits required for construction shall be obtained prior to initiating construction activities.

7.1 Federal Jurisdiction

7.1.1 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

NEPA is this nation's basic charter for protection of the environment. NEPA was enacted with two primary objectives in mind: (1) preventing environmental damage and degradation, and (2) ensuring that federal agencies consider environmental factors with regard to federal actions. NEPA also established the federal Council on Environmental Quality, which is responsible for promulgating NEPA regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508).

NEPA regulations mandate environmental protection for all federal agencies (excluding Congress, the judiciary, and the President). They also require federal agencies to assist in implementing the CEQ's NEPA regulations by adopting policy and procedures consistent with NEPA. The FAA has two such documents: FAA Orders 1050.1.F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures* and 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*.

The analysis and documentation provided in this EA enables the FAA to either issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or, if additional analysis is necessary, require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

7.1.2 STATE JURISDICTION

Impacts associated with the alteration of wetland resulting from removal of vegetation requires a freshwater wetlands permit issued by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The project will be designed in accordance with RIDEM erosion and sedimentation control best management practices. No stump grinding, grubbing, or other soil disturbances are proposed within wetlands (as such the project does not require an individual permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).

Should the project result in over one acre of ground disturbance (**not anticipated**), a Construction General Permit for Stormwater Discharge will be required from RIDEM in accordance with the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) program.

8 List of Preparers

Gregg Cohen: Stantec, Sr. Environmental Analyst, 23 years experience. MS, Natural Resource Management and Administration, Antioch University New England. EA Task Manager, lead author, agency collaboration.

Jacob Aaron: Stantec, Environmental Scientist, eight years experience. BS, Wildlife Biology, University of Maine. EA author, agency collaboration.

Lance King: Stantec, Sr. CAD Technician, 21 years experience. Airspace Analysis, EA document figure preparation.

9 References

Federal Aviation Administration. 2015. *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*. Order1050.1F.

Federal Aviation Administration. 2020. *1050.1F Desk Reference, Version 2*.

Federal Aviation Administration. 2006. *National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*, FAA Order 5050.4B.

Federal Aviation Administration. 2022. *Visual Guidance Lighting Systems*, FAA Order JO 6850.2C.

Federal Aviation Administration. 2020. *United States Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS)*, FAA Order 8260.3E.4B.

Federal Aviation Administration. 2022. AC 150/5300-13B: *Airport Design*

14 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77, Safe, Efficient Use, and Preservation of the Navigable Airspace, July 21, 2010.

Westerly Airport Layout Plan Update. April 2009, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (WSS), https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm.

FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/national-flood-hazard-layer

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Map Room, www.dem.ri.gov/maps/

Appendix A AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

Old State House 150 Benefit Street Providence, RI 02903

Telephone 401-222-2678 Fax 401-222-2968
TTY 401-222-3700 www.preservation.ri.gov

February 25, 2022

Via email: Jacob.aaron@stantec.com

Jacob Aaron
Environmental Scientist
Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
2211 Congress Street, Suite 380
Portland, ME 04102

Re: RIHPHC Project No. 16287
Westerly State Airport Vegetation Removal
56 Airport Road
Westerly, Rhode Island

Dear Mr. Aaron:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) staff has reviewed the information that you provided for the above-referenced project. The Rhode Island Airport Corporation is proposing to remove trees and vegetation identified as obstructions to Runways 7-25 and 14-21 at the Westerly State Airport in Westerly, Rhode Island.

A cultural resources assessment, prepared by the Public Archaeology Laboratory and submitted with the consultation request, identified archeological sites and historic cemeteries within the study area. Based on our review of available information, it is the conclusion of the RIHPHC that the project will have no adverse effect on historic properties if the recommendations outlined in the cultural resources assessment are followed – specifically, those outlined under "Recommendations" on page 4 of the report.

These comments are provided in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Act and Rhode Island General Laws. If you have any questions, please contact RIHPHC Project Review Coordinator Elizabeth Totten at 401-222-2671 or elizabeth.totten@preservation.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Totten
FOR

Jeffrey Emidy
Interim Executive Director
Interim State Historic Preservation Officer

220225.04est

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
2211 Congress Street Suite 380, Portland ME 04102-1955

February 2, 2022
File: 179450268

Attention: Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, Acting/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State Of Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
Old State House
150 Benefit Street
Providence, R.I. 02903-1209

Dear Mr. Emidy,

Reference: Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission Section 106 Review
Vegetation Obstruction Removal Westerly State Airport
Westerly RI

The Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) is proposing the removal of trees identified as obstructions to protected approach surfaces associated with Runways 7-25 and 14-32 at Westerly Airport located in Westerly, Rhode Island. Obstruction removal activities are proposed adjacent to the two runway ends in locations on and off airport property.

RIAC is presently preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate potential impacts associated with the obstruction removal actions. In upland locations, trees will be removed, stumps will be cut to ground level and may be grinded on airport property and within easement areas off airport property to facilitate maintenance. Wood chips from stump grindings (grinding will not include tree roots) will be removed from the site and the disturbed areas will be top-soiled and seeded with grass. In wetland locations, trees will be cut as close to ground level as possible in such a manner that avoids disturbances to wetland soils. Stump grinding will not be conducted in wetland locations. On-airport obstruction removal efforts for the runways are anticipated to begin in Winter 2022.

A study of the project area prepared by Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL) has been prepared and has concluded no aboveground or archaeological historic properties will be adversely affected by the proposed obstruction removal. PAL's report recommendations did indicate, however, that should stump grinding be required, limiting grinding to tree stumps and not grinding roots avoids the need for additional archaeological investigation. A copy of PAL's report has been included with this submission. A USGS topographic location map and site plan illustrating the obstruction removal locations proposed at Westerly State Airport has also been included with this letter to assist with your review. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or if additional information is required.

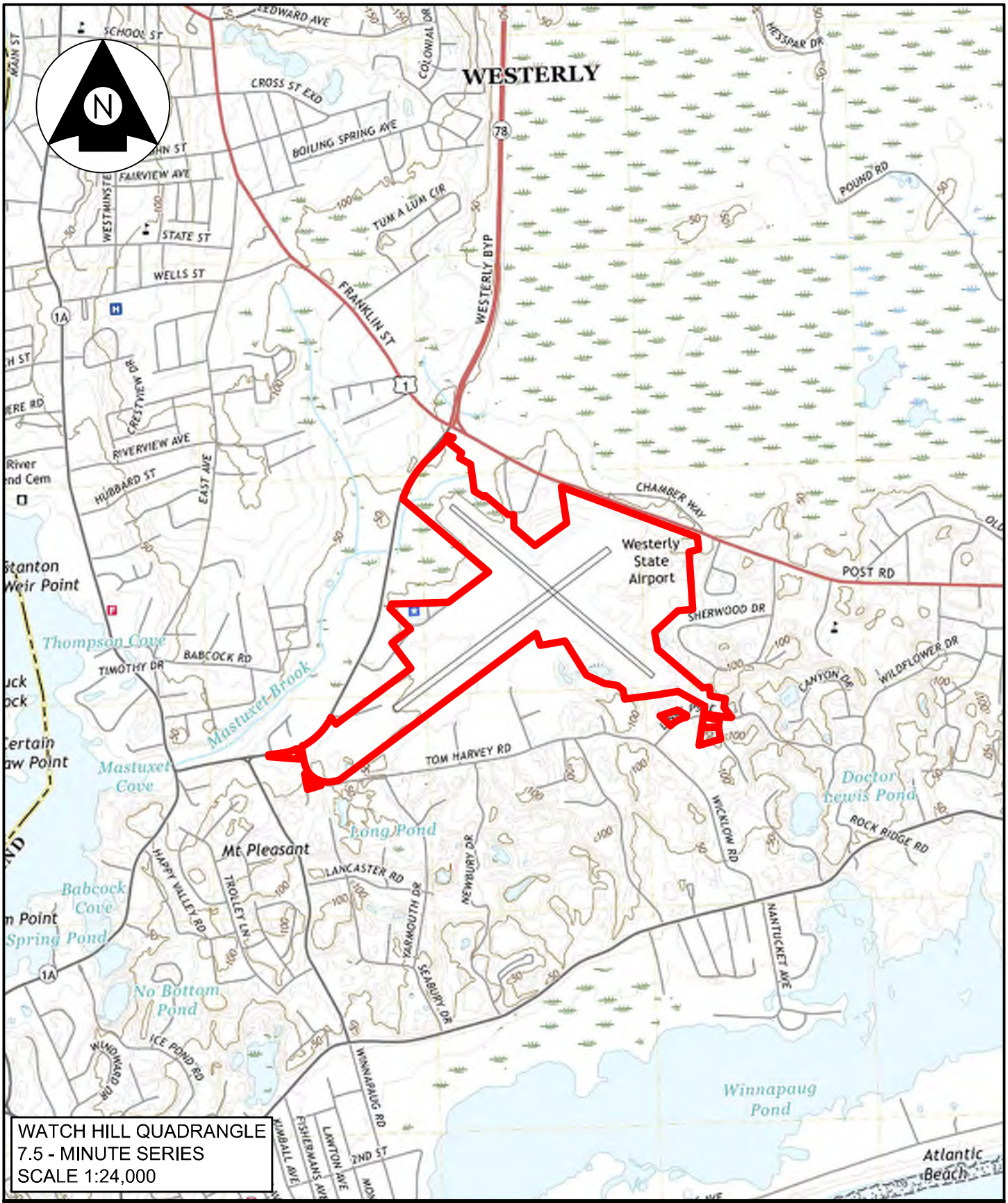
Regards,

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

Reference: Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission Section 106 Review Vegetation Obstruction Removal Westerly State Airport Westerly RI

Jacob Aaron
Environmental Scientist
Phone: 207-303-2698
Jacob.Aaron@stantec.com

Attachment: As stated



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Client/Project
RHODE ISLAND
AIRPORT CORPORATION

STATE WIDE OBSTRUCTION
REMOVAL

Project No.
179450268

Title
WESTERLY AIRPORT
LOCATION MAP

Date
2021.03.30

Figure No.
1

Public Archaeology Laboratory

Technical Memorandum
Obstruction Removal and Easement Acquisition: Westerly Island Airport
Westerly, Rhode Island

Cultural Resources Due Diligence

October 25, 2021

Submitted to:

Stantec
482 Payne Road
Scarborough, Maine 07074

The Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) is using data from an Airspace Analysis to execute obstruction removal and easement acquisition to clear runway approaches and Part 77 surfaces as defined by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at Westerly State Airport (WST) in Westerly, Rhode Island (Figure 1). Under federal law, when obstructions threatening safe airspace are encountered, RIAC is required to mitigate such obstructions. Obstructions may include terrain, trees, utility poles, buildings, etc. (Figures 2 through 5). The majority of obstructions identified at WST are trees that have been allowed to grow over a period of decades. If an obstruction/tree is identified on private property near the airport, RIAC is required to follow an FAA prescribed process to enter into negotiations with landowners to negotiate a fair and equitable compensation for airspace easements which allows for trees to be cut and/or removed. Stantec is assisting RIAC in the identification of potential obstructions and preparation of an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Project Authority

The Project will require review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 3100101 *et seq.*), and its implementing regulations (36 CFR § 800). At the state level, the Project is subject to the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Act of 1968 (Rhode Island General Law 42-45 *et seq.*). The results of this study will assist the FAA and RIAC with complying with applicable federal and state legislation and regulations pertaining to cultural resources and historic preservation. All tasks associated with this study were undertaken in accordance with the standards outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* (48 FR 44716, 1983) and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission's *Performance Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology in Rhode Island* (RIHPHC 2015).

Area of Potential Effects

Under Section 106 (36 CFR § 800.16(d)), the Project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) is defined as "the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist." A historic property is defined as "any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the Secretary of the

Interior" (36 CFR § 800.16(l)). The APE is defined based on the *potential* for effect, which may differ for aboveground resources (historic structures and landscapes) and subsurface resources (archaeological sites).

As the Project entails the removal of individual obstructions that will result in minimal changes to the existing landscape or visual setting, the APE is restricted to direct impacts associated with areas of potential ground disturbance associated with the removal of obstructions (Figures 2 through 5). To assess the potential for impacts within the APE, a study area encompassing one-half mile for archaeological sites and one-quarter mile for aboveground historic resources from the center of the Project was established to provide information about the types of resources located within the vicinity of the Project (Figure 6).

PAL Scope

PAL reviewed in-house databases relative to environmental, and pre- and post-contact historic contexts for the Westerly area; information on recorded aboveground and archaeological resources, and [redacted]

Results

Context

Westerly State began as a grass strip in the 1920s. By the 1930s, air traffic had increased to the point where plans were made to build a municipal airport as part of a Depression-era Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. Construction of Westerly's airport was almost finished in 1938, but it didn't see much use by the public at the time. The 1938 hurricane delayed completion, and after the United States entered World War II in 1941, it became a Navy airfield. Westerly and the Naval air base at Charlestown were the only fields in the country to give pilots night training for air combat in the Pacific.

Westerly State Airport covers an area of 321 acres (130 ha) at an elevation of 81 feet (25 m) above mean sea level. It has two asphalt paved runways: 7/25 is 4,010 by 100 feet (1,222 x 30 m) and 14/32 is 3,960 by 75 feet (1,207 x 23 m). Westerly operations are extremely seasonal, with the majority of operations occurring during the peak tourism season between Memorial Day and Labor Day. In 2005, $3.4 million in federal funding was allocated to repair and improve the main runway and taxiways.

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New England Ecological Services Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301-5094
Phone: (603) 223-2541 Fax: (603) 223-0104
http://www.fws.gov/newengland

In Reply Refer To: February 02, 2022
Project Code: 2022-0002201
Project Name: NEPA Environmental Assessment, Vegetation Obstruction Removal Westerly State Airport, Westerly, RI

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS-IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS-IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF

Please be aware that bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*), and projects affecting these species may require development of an eagle conservation plan (http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle_guidance.html

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

New England Ecological Services Field Office
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301-5094
(603) 223-2541

Project Summary

Project Code: 2022-0002201
Event Code: None
Project Name: NEPA Environmental Assessment, Vegetation Obstruction Removal Westerly State Airport, Westerly, RI
Project Type: Airport - Maintenance/Modification
Project Description: The Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) is proposing the removal of trees identified as obstructions to protected approach surfaces associated with Runways 7-25 and 14-32 at Westerly Airport located in Westerly, Rhode Island. Obstruction removal activities are proposed adjacent to the runway ends in locations on and off airport property. To facilitate the project planning process and satisfy NEPA review requirements, we are interested in obtaining information regarding threatened, or endangered species as well as any critical habitat that may be located within the proposed project areas.

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: https://www.google.com/maps/@41.34859285,-71.8028777768438,14z

Counties: Washington County, Rhode Island

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 3 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries[1], as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
Northern Long-eared Bat *Myotis septentrionalis* No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045	Threatened

Birds

NAME	STATUS
Red Knot *Calidris canutus rufa* There is **proposed** critical habitat for this species. The location of the critical habitat is not available. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1864	Threatened

Insects

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Candidate

Critical habitats

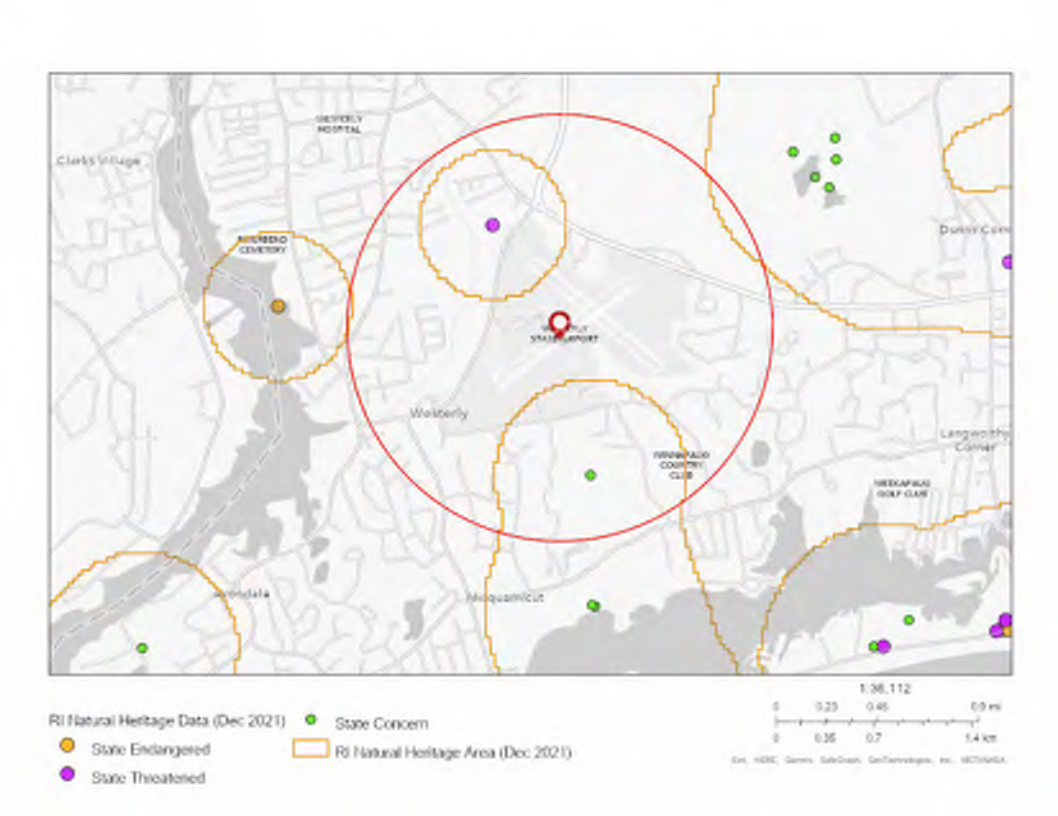
THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

Natural Heritage Screening Westerly Airport

Area of Interest (AOI) Information

Area : 78,477,426.26 ft²

Feb 16 2022 8:39:01 Eastern Standard Time



Summary

Name	Count	Area(ft²)	Length(ft)
Heritage Species	3	N/A	N/A

Heritage Species

#	Survey_Date	LAST_OBS	Family	Genus	Species	COMNAME	RI___STAT	Count
1	8/22/2010	2,012.00	Asteraceae	Pityopsis	falcata	Sickle-leaved or Falcate Golden Aster	State Concern	1
2	7/23/2012	2,012.00	Asteraceae	Pityopsis	falcata	Sickle-leaved or Falcate Golden Aster	State Concern	1
3	00/00/1984	1,984.00	Bird	Ammodramus	savannarum	Grasshopper Sparrow	State Threatened	1

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
2211 Congress Street Suite 380, Portland ME 04102-1955

February 16, 2022
File: 179450268

Attention: Chief Megan DiPrete
RI Department of Environmental Management
Division of Planning and Development
235 Promenade Street., Room 320
Providence, RI 02908

Dear Chief Megan DiPrete,

Reference: Natural Heritage Program Project Review
Vegetation Obstruction Removal
Westerly State Airport, Westerly, RI

The Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) is proposing the removal of trees identified as obstructions to protected approach surfaces associated with Runways 7-25 and 14-32 at Westerly Airport located in Westerly, Rhode Island. Obstruction removal activities are proposed adjacent to the runway ends in locations on and off airport property. To facilitate the project planning process and satisfy NEPA review requirements, we are interested in obtaining information regarding state-listed rare, threatened, or endangered species as well as any critical habitat that may be located within the proposed project areas.

RIAC is presently preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate potential impacts associated with the obstruction removal actions. In upland locations, trees will be removed, stumps will be cut to ground level and may be grinded on easement areas off airport property. The disturbed areas will be topsoiled and seeded with grass. In wetland locations, trees will be cut as close to ground level as possible in such a manner that avoids disturbances to wetland soils. Stump grubbing, grinding and grading will not be conducted in wetland locations. Obstruction removal activities are anticipated to begin upon acquisition of the necessary easements.

A plan set illustrating the obstruction removal proposed at Westerly Airport has been included with this letter to assist with your review. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or if additional information is required.

Regards,

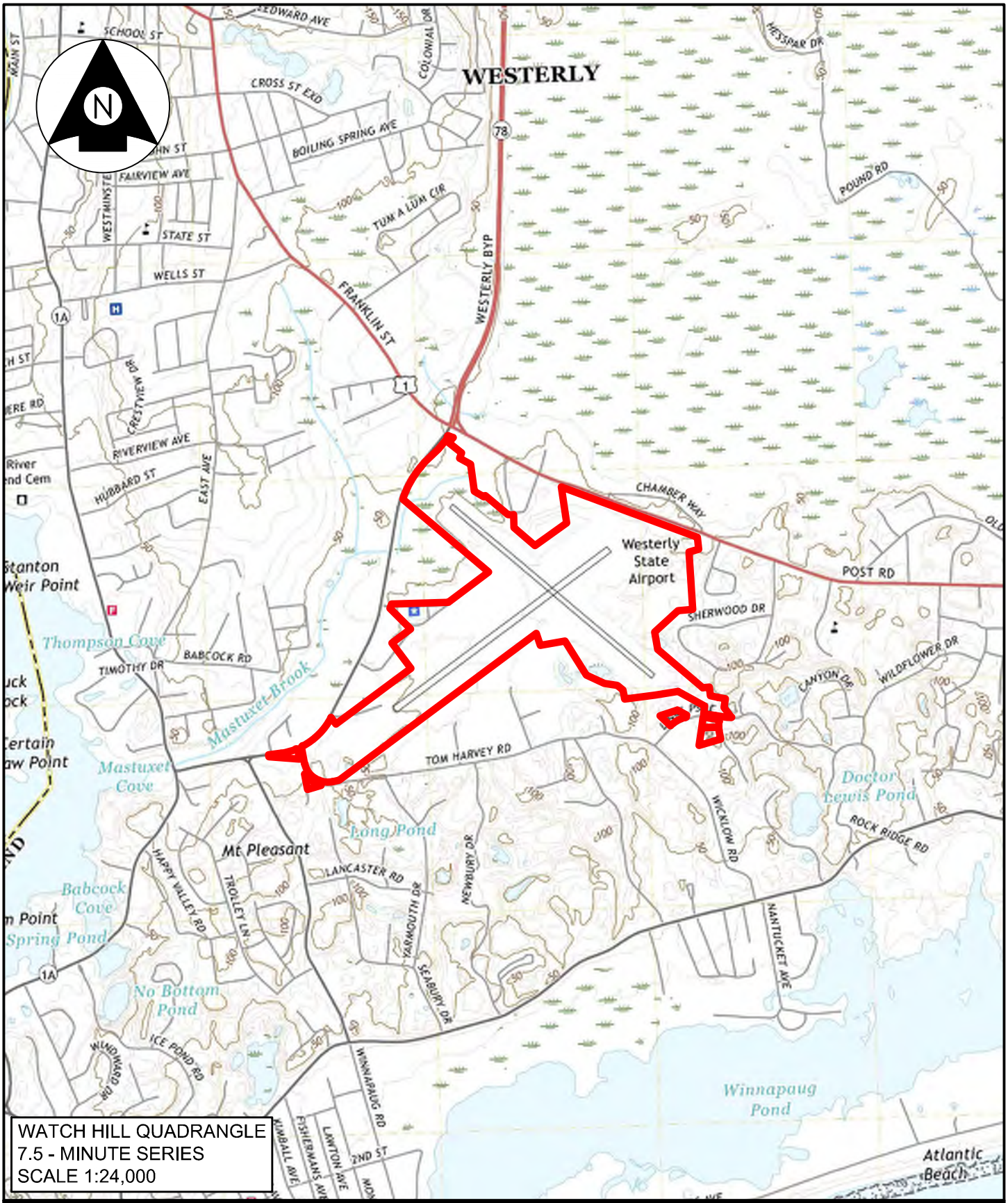
Stantec Consulting Services Inc.

Jacob Aaron
Environmental Scientist
Phone: 207-303-2698

Reference: Natural Heritage Program Project Review Vegetation Obstruction Removal Westerly State Airport, Westerly, RI

Jacob.Aaron@stantec.com

Attachment: As stated



v:\1794\active\179450268\aviation\9_drawing\sheet_files\riac_location_maps

2021.03.30 12:59:50 PM

Stantec

Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
2211 Congress St Suite 380
Portland, ME 04102
Tel: (207) 883-3355
www.stantec.com

Client/Project
RHODE ISLAND
AIRPORT CORPORATION

STATE WIDE OBSTRUCTION
REMOVAL

Project No.
179450268

Title
WESTERLY AIRPORT
LOCATION MAP

Date
2021.03.30

Figure No.
1

LEGEND

- AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE
- ABUTTERS PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING EASEMENT
- EXISTING FENCE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE CONTOUR (1150)
- VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (REFER TO VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY) (261 / 2)
- NON-VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (ACTUAL OBSTRUCTIONS > 0' ABOVE SURFACE)
- WETLAND BUFFER
- WETLAND BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OBSTRUCTION LIGHT

NOTES:

1. ALL ELEVATIONS LISTED ARE MEAN SEA LEVEL (MSL) NAVD88 VERTICAL DATUM.
2. ELEVATIONS AND RUNWAY END COORDINATES SUPPLIED BY BRAYANT ASSOCIATES, INC.
3. TREE TOP SURVEY CONDUCTED AUGUST 2019 BY WOOLPERT, INC.
4. PROPERTY LINES ARE APPROXIMATE.

PERMITTING LEGEND

- UPLAND VEGETATION CLEARING 2015 & 2005
- WETLAND VEGETATION CLEARING 2015 & 2005

AIRPORT ROAD

WINNAPAUG ROAD

CELTIC COURT

SEABURY LANE

TOM HARVEY ROAD

1,600' MALSF LIGHT PLANE (OUT OF SERVICE)

1,600' MALSF LIGHT PLANE CLEAR LINE OF SIGHT

TAXIWAY 'A'

RUNWAY 7
END OF RUNWAY
ELEV. = 50.03'

RUNWAY 7
DISPLACED
THRESHOLD
ELEV. = 53.25'

373.54'

MALSF LIGHT PLANE
TREE CONTROLLING
OBSTRUCTION =
12.1' PENETRATION

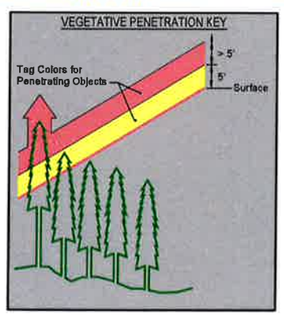
CLEAR LINE OF SIGHT
TREE CONTROLLING
OBSTRUCTION =
18.4' PENETRATION

OCS NO.3
EXISTING UTILITY POLE
OBSTRUCTION =
12.2' PENETRATION

OCS NO.3
TREE CONTROLLING
OBSTRUCTION =
14.7' PENETRATION

EXISTING 4-LIGHT PAPI
(OUT OF SERVICE)

VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY



0 100' 200'

DRAFT
FOR REVIEW ONLY
AUGUST 27, 2019

REVISION NUMBER	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION

Rhode Island Airport Corporation

WESTERLY AIRPORT

WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

SHEET TITLE
RUNWAY 7
MALSF LIGHT PLANE / CLEAR LINE OF SIGHT &
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE (NO.4)
ANALYSIS

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
LRK	LRK	GAC	DWR

Stantec

PROJECT NO. 195211170

DATE: AUG. 2020

SHEET 1

LEGEND

- AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE
- ABUTTERS PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING EASEMENT
- EXISTING FENCE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE
- 1150 AIRSPACE SURFACE CONTOUR
- VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (REFER TO VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY)
- NON-VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (ACTUAL OBSTRUCTIONS > 0' ABOVE SURFACE)
- WETLAND BUFFER
- WETLAND BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OBSTRUCTION LIGHT

NOTES:

1. ALL ELEVATIONS LISTED ARE MEAN SEA LEVEL (MSL) NAVD88 VERTICAL DATUM.
2. ELEVATIONS AND RUNWAY END COORDINATES SUPPLIED BY BRAYANT ASSOCIATES, INC.
3. TREE TOP SURVEY CONDUCTED AUGUST 2019 BY WOOLPERT, INC.
4. PROPERTY LINES ARE APPROXIMATE.

PERMITTING LEGEND

- UPLAND VEGETATION CLEARING 2015 & 2005
- WETLAND VEGETATION CLEARING 2015 & 2005

TAXIWAY 'A'

RUNWAY 7
THRESHOLD
ELEV. = 76.81'

25

EXISTING VASI
DOWNWIND BAR

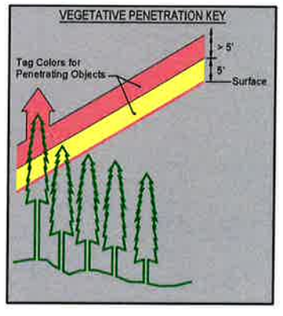
TREE CONTROLLING
OBSTRUCTION =
2.2' PENETRATION

SUMMER WAY

ROUTE 1

24 100 110 120 140 150 160 170 180 190

VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY



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DRAFT
FOR REVIEW ONLY
AUGUST 27, 2019

REVISION NUMBER	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION

Rhode Island Airport Corporation

WESTERLY AIRPORT

WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

SHEET TITLE

RUNWAY 25
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE
(NO.3) ANALYSIS

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
LRK	LRK	GAC	DWR

Stantec

PROJECT NO. 195211170

DATE: AUG. 2020

SHEET 2

PERMITTING LEGEND

- UPLAND VEGETATION CLEARING 2015 & 2005
- WETLAND VEGETATION CLEARING 2015 & 2005

LEGEND

- AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE
- ABUTTERS PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING EASEMENT
- EXISTING FENCE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE CONTOUR
- VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (REFER TO VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY)
- NON-VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (ACTUAL OBSTRUCTIONS > 0' ABOVE SURFACE)
- WETLAND BUFFER
- WETLAND BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OBSTRUCTION LIGHT

NOTES:

1. ALL ELEVATIONS LISTED ARE MEAN SEA LEVEL (MSL) NAVD88 VERTICAL DATUM.
2. ELEVATIONS AND RUNWAY END COORDINATES SUPPLIED BY BRAYANT ASSOCIATES, INC.
3. TREE TOP SURVEY CONDUCTED AUGUST 2019 BY WOOLPERT, INC.
4. PROPERTY LINES ARE APPROXIMATE.

ROUTE 1

WHIPPLE AVE

CHARLES AVE

AIRPORT ROAD

EXISTING 4-LIGHT PAPI (OUT OF SERVICE)

RUNWAY 14 END OF RUNWAY ELEV. = 56.54'

RUNWAY 14 DISPLACED THRESHOLD ELEV. = 63.09'

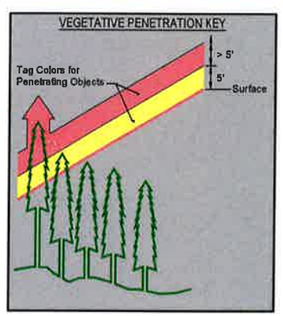
587.04'

TAXIWAY 'F'

TREE CONTROLLING OBSTRUCTION = 24.5' PENETRATION

EXISTING UTILITY POLE OBSTRUCTION = 7.9' PENETRATION

VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY



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DRAFT
FOR REVIEW ONLY
AUGUST 27, 2019

REVISION NUMBER	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION

Rhode Island Airport Corporation

WESTERLY AIRPORT

WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

SHEET TITLE

RUNWAY 14
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE
(NO.3) ANALYSIS

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
LRK	LRK	GAC	DWR

Stantec

PROJECT NO. 195211170

DATE: AUG. 2020

SHEET 3

LEGEND

- AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE
- ABUTTERS PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING EASEMENT
- EXISTING FENCE
- AIRSPACE SURFACE
- 1150 AIRSPACE SURFACE CONTOUR
- VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (REFER TO VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY)
- NON-VEGETATIVE OBSTRUCTION ID TAG (ACTUAL OBSTRUCTIONS > 0' ABOVE SURFACE)
- WETLAND BUFFER
- WETLAND BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OBSTRUCTION LIGHT

NOTES:

1. ALL ELEVATIONS LISTED ARE MEAN SEA LEVEL (MSL) NAVD88 VERTICAL DATUM.
2. ELEVATIONS AND RUNWAY END COORDINATES SUPPLIED BY BRAYANT ASSOCIATES, INC.
3. TREE TOP SURVEY CONDUCTED AUGUST 2019 BY WOOLPERT, INC.
4. PROPERTY LINES ARE APPROXIMATE.

PERMITTING LEGEND

- UPLAND VEGETATION CLEARING 2015 & 2005
- WETLAND VEGETATION CLEARING 2015 & 2005

RUNWAY 32 DISPLACED THRESHOLD ELEV. = 77.67'

RUNWAY 32 END OF RUNWAY ELEV. = 79.92'

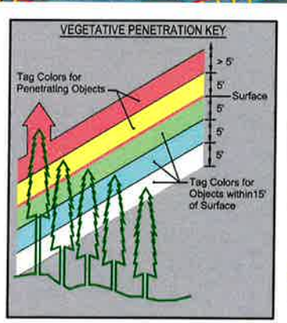
742.80'

TAXIWAY 'F'

TREE CONTROLLING OBSTRUCTION = 26.3' PENETRATION

LINKS PASSAGE

VEGETATIVE PENETRATION KEY



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DRAFT
FOR REVIEW ONLY
AUGUST 27, 2019

REVISION NUMBER	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION

Rhode Island Airport Corporation

WESTERLY AIRPORT

WESTERLY, RHODE ISLAND

SHEET TITLE

RUNWAY 32
20:1 OBSTACLE CLEARANCE SURFACE
(NO.3) ANALYSIS

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
LRK	LRK	GAC	DWR

Stantec

PROJECT NO. 195211170

DATE: AUG. 2020

SHEET 4

Appendix B Public Notice and Comments

Public Notice

The Rhode Island Airport Corporation, Westerly Airport and Stantec Consulting Services Inc. have compiled a Final Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with a proposed safety improvement project planned for Westerly Airport located in Westerly, RI. The proposed project subject to this EA includes acquiring avigation easements and removing trees located off airport property that are obstructing runway airspace.

The purpose of this document is to inform the public of potential environmental consequences associated with proposed federal actions and their alternatives. The EA assists with identifying the environmentally preferable alternative for the proposed actions. The EA also provides the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with the information necessary to determine whether impacts associated with the proposed project has the potential to contribute to significant impacts to the environment. Based on this determination, the FAA will either issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or the agency will require additional review to further analyze the proposed project and associated impacts.

Copies of the Draft EA have been made available for a 30-day public review and comment period at the Westerly Library, Reference Section, 44 Broad Street, Westerly, RI 02891. The Draft EA may also be viewed at https://www.flywesterlyairport.com. Public comments will be accepted in writing or via email until 5 pm Wednesday, January 11th, 2023. Public comments will be submitted to the FAA for consideration and included in the Final EA.

Please forward comments to:

Gregg Cohen
Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
2211Congress Street, Suite 380
Portland, ME. 04102
Phone: 207-887-3824
gregg.cohen@stantec.com