

Executive Director (CAPT Gusman) and chairman (Tim Leitzell).

(2) Approval of the September 9, 1999 minutes.

(3) New business. Presentation on Ports and Waterways Safety Assessment

Procedural

This meeting is open to the public. Please note that the meeting may adjourn early if all business is finished. Members of the public may make oral presentations during the meeting. This meeting is in addition to, and will not affect the date of the Committee's next regularly scheduled meeting, Thursday, January 27, 2000.

Information on Services for the Handicapped

For information on facilities or services for the handicapped or to request special assistance at the meetings, contact the Executive Secretary as soon as possible.

Dated: October 1, 1999.

Paul J. Pluta,

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District.

[FR Doc. 99-27236 Filed 10-18-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-15-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Additional Airship Design Standards To Allow 13-Passenger Capacity

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of availability of additional design standards.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of additional Airship Design Standards to allow increasing the Skyship 600 passenger capacity from 9 to 13 passengers.

Discussion

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has received an application to amend the type certificate (TC) of the Skyship 600 to increase the maximum passenger capacity from 9 to 13. The regulatory basis for the original Skyship 600 TC is FAA-P-8110-2, "Airship Design Criteria (ADC)." The ADC established a level of safety for airships equivalent to Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 23 Normal Category Airplanes, thereby limiting airships to nine passengers. Therefore, additional airworthiness criteria are required to increase the maximum number of passengers above the nine-passenger limit.

AC 21.17-1A, Change 1, "Type Certification—Airships," describes two acceptable criteria for the type certification of airships. The two criteria provide acceptable means, but not the only means, for showing compliance to 14 CFR part 21, § 21.17(b). The ADC provides one of the acceptable criteria. If the ADC airworthiness criteria are inadequate or inappropriate for type certification due to an airship's unique design or design features, AC 21.17-1A, in accordance with 14 CFR § 21.17(b), allows for other criteria to be developed. The FAA must approve these other criteria.

The applicant has proposed criteria, in addition to the ADC, to allow 13-passenger capacity. The additional criteria are the same criteria issued by the British Civil Aviation Authority for 13-passenger Skyship 600 operations in the United Kingdom. The FAA agrees that the additional criteria provide an acceptable level of safety by requiring additional emergency exits. The additional criteria is similar to that of 14 CFR part 23, § 23.807(d)(1)(i), which establishes emergency exit requirements for commuter category airplanes with up to 15 passengers.

The FAA has approved the additional criteria specifically for the passenger seating increase for the Skyship 600. The additional criteria would not necessarily be adequate or appropriate for a similar capacity increase on an airship of different type design.

How To Obtain Copies

A copy of the Skyship 600 13-passenger criteria may be obtained from the FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, Attention: Ms. Terre Flynn, ACE-111, DOT Building, Room 301, 901 Locust, Kansas City, MO 64106-2641.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mike Reyer, Aerospace Engineer, Regulations and Policy Branch, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate; telephone number (816) 329-4131.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on October 7, 1999.

Michael K. Dahl,

Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-27285 Filed 10-18-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Policy Regarding Risk Analysis for Airport Proposals Involving Federal Aid

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); DOT.

ACTION: Notice of interim policy; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the issuance of an interim policy establishing procedures to help proponents identify and analyze the principal risks related to the feasibility of certain airport development proposals for which Federal aid may be requested. Risk analysis is typically eligible for Federal aid when conducted in conjunction with, or in anticipation of, airport master and system planning studies. This interim policy describes the types of proposals for which risk analysis is warranted and the analytical procedures that are typically involved. The primary purpose of the policy is to ensure that proponents are informed early in the planning process about certain risks involving the financial feasibility of development, so that they can make appropriate adjustments. An interim policy is being issued in lieu of a proposed policy to help ensure that development proposals currently being planned are handled in a consistent manner. In formulating this interim policy, the FAA has considered and recognized the analytical practices currently accepted and in use as producing reasonable results. This policy does not intend to disturb those practices, but rather to apply them uniformly. This interim policy may be revised prior to issuance of a final policy pursuant to comments received. **DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before December 20, 1999. Late filed comments will be considered to the extent possible.

ADDRESSES: All comments concerning this proposed policy must be delivered or mailed to Larry Kiernan, Manager, Airport Capacity Branch, Federal Aviation Administration, Room 623, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Larry Kiernan, Manager (APP-410), (202) 267-8784, Airport Capacity Branch, National Planning Division, Office of Airport Planning and Programming, Federal Aviation Administration, Room 623, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Airport development is primarily a local or state responsibility, but the Federal government often provides substantial financial aid for planning and developing airports listed in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Federal aid currently accounts for about 1/4 of the total public investment in airports. The Federal government typically pays 90% of the cost of eligible planning studies, in order to encourage the development of a safe and efficient airport system and to help local officials make well-informed decisions.

The FAA maintains guidance for the content of typical planning studies. However, some airport development proposals warrant additional, more detailed risk analysis during the planning phase because of the size of the investment and uncertainty whether future activity will achieve forecast levels. The potential consequences of a shortfall in activity includes a corresponding reduction in airport revenues. If the ability to generate adequate revenues cannot be demonstrated in a convincing manner, a project may be considered too risky to permit financing with revenue bonds or other forms of debt financing, which plan an essential role in most large projects. Inadequate revenues could also result in a requirement for an operating subsidy from the general fund of the local sponsoring agency.

A proposal should usually be subjected to detailed risk analysis if it involves an eventual total investment (Federal, State and local) of \$25 million or more and has one or more of the following characteristics:

1. The traffic forecast that warrants the proposal involves a substantial change in or reallocation of the local traffic trend.
2. The proposal would compete with other airport facilities for a substantial portion of its traffic. (Examples would include the establishment of passenger and cargo transfer facilities and aircraft maintenance centers that are intended to attract business that would otherwise take place at another airport).
3. A substantial financial commitment is required long in advance of full utilization of the airport. (An example would be land banking for a major new airport).
4. The proposal is intended to serve a technology or innovation that has not yet been widely accepted and implemented. (Examples would include airports to serve future supersonic transports or tilt rotor aircraft).
5. The anticipated cost of the proposal is considerably higher than for

proposals providing similar capacity at other locations. (An example would be an off-shore airport built on an artificial island).

6. The proposal does not enjoy strong support from the segment of air transportation that it is intended to serve. (Examples would be a remote transfer airport or a new cargo airport without firm financial commitments from the prospective users).

7. The implementation of the proposal is dependent on the availability of substantial Federal aid. (An example would be a supplemental air carrier airport with little near-term potential for generating revenues through rents and fees).

8. The proposal requires close cooperation by a number of public agencies in order to be implemented. (An example would be a new regional airport intended to replace one or more existing airports or that is expected to provide supplementary capacity to existing airports).

Application

Proposals that are considered potential recipients of Federal aid for planning and/or development, and which, if implemented, involve a total cost (Federal, state, and local) of \$25 million or more, will be screened by FAA to determine whether detailed risk analysis is warranted as a part of the planning process. It is anticipated that about 200 projects will be screened annually and about 10 will require detailed analysis.

Initial Screening

Proposals will be screened by FAA Regional Airports Office personnel at the earliest possible time to determine whether special attention should be given to elements of risk. The screening will usually be conducted in conjunction with the initial discussions between the FAA and the project proponent. In addition to the factors mentioned above, an FAA Regional Airports Division Manager may require a detailed risk analysis based on other considerations that, in the Manager's judgment, warrant such action. The requirement that a proposal be analyzed for risk does not constitute an approval or disapproval action. It simply highlights specific aspects of a proposal that should receive special attention during the planning process.

Risk Analysis

Once a proposal has been recommended for analysis, the FAA Regional Airports Office will coordinate with the proponent to ensure that an appropriate analytical process is used to

assess the risk and the results are disseminated to interested parties. An analysis should be tailored to the specific characteristics of a proposal, identifying potential risk factors and examining their significance. The selection and implementation of an appropriate analytical process is the responsibility of the proponent of the planning study, with the goal of providing a frank and complete assessment of major risks. The product should be a report that is both easily understood by the general public and consistent with expert opinion within the aviation community. The risk will usually be analyzed as part of a master or system planning study, although the analysis can result in a stand-alone study and report.

Application of Results

The main purpose of risk analysis is to support well-informed development decisions. Risk analysis should begin as soon as possible after conception of a major project and is ideally conducted in an iterative manner that is incorporated into the overall planning process. Information developed by the analysis may be used to modify the scope of the project, and these changes should be identified and implemented as quickly as possible. Changes may affect the underlying purpose of development, activity forecasts, staging of development, scale of development and proposed financing.

More information about the analytical process is included in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1. Analysis Techniques

The possibility that activity may fall short of forecasts, and the potential financial consequences of such a shortfall, are often the primary issues to be addressed.

It is particularly important to determine whether a project is intended to serve the current and probable future local demand for air transportation at a single airport with an effective monopoly position (the usual situation that tends to involve little risk) or if it is intended to compete with other airports for traffic that may be speculative (a situation that can involve substantial risk of failure). The risk of a shortfall in activity can be estimated through sensitivity analysis that examines the assumptions that underlie a forecast, consultation with experts, comparison to forecasts for similar proposals, if any are available, and comparison to regional and national growth projections.

The risk involved in a passenger enplanement forecast can be addressed from a number of perspectives;

1. Examination of the assumptions that underlie the forecast, and comparison to assumptions for official FAA forecasts.
2. Comparison to local, regional, and national historical data and trends.
3. Comparison to forecasts of local, regional, and national aeronautical activity

and information available from the FAA, state aviation agencies, regional planning organizations, and airframe manufacturers.

4. Comparison to population and employment projections for the airport service area.

5. Computation of per capita consumption of air travel and comparison to the historical trend for the airport service area and the nation.

6. Discussion of the forecast with representatives of the air carriers and other segments of aviation serving the area. The opinion of all carriers should be given due consideration, particularly if the proposal is intended to promote competition. The opinion of incumbent carriers should be weighed against the probability of other carriers to serve the market.

7. Discussion of whether the proposal involves traffic currently served at another airport and, if so, the level of certainty that traffic will be transferred.

8. Examination of base data, principal assumptions, and forecasting methodology by a panel of experts convened for that purpose. (This could include peer review by operators of comparable airports). Cargo forecasts can be addressed by:

1. Examination of the assumptions that underlie the forecast.

2. Comparison to local, regional, and national historical data and trends.

3. Comparison to forecasts by metropolitan planning and state aviation agencies. (The FAA does not make detailed forecasts of air cargo.)

4. Comparison to forecasts by experts and industry leaders.

5. Examination and group discussion by an expert panel or peer review group.

6. Discussion with potential airport users, including shippers, air carriers, and tenants.

The financial aspects of a proposal can be examined in the context of a market analysis by estimating capital and operating costs and comparing them to probable sources of funds, including grants, subsidies, and income from rents and fees. The financial feasibility of many proposals can be estimated at an early stage by using guidelines and rules of thumb developed by credit rating agencies for evaluating the viability of revenue bonds. Increasingly detailed estimates can be prepared as the planning process generates more precise data.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on October 14, 1999.

Louise E. Maillett,

Acting Associate Administrator for Airports.

[FR Doc. 99-27288 Filed 10-18-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Athens and Meigs Counties, Ohio

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed project in Athens and Meigs Counties, Ohio.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dan Dobson, Field Operation Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 200 N. High Street, Room 328, Columbus, Ohio 43215, Telephone: (614) 280-6853.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to construct an improved highway from the City of Athens in Athens County to just south of Darwin in Meigs County, Ohio.

An Environmental Assessment was prepared for this proposal and approved by the FHWA with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) issued on September 10, 1997. Subsequent public comment and changing environmental issues and regulations have resulted in the decision to prepare an EIS.

The existing facility is a two-lane, rural roadway with numerous substandard features, including narrow shoulders, tight curves, steep grades, and numerous access points. The purpose of the project is to provide an improved connection from the existing four-lane US 33 in Athens to the existing four-lane US 33 freeway just south of Darwin. The project will improve safety, increase the efficiency of regional travel, and improve capacity to provide for projected increases in traffic volumes. This project is also intended to provide the transportation infrastructure needed to meet the mobility, access, and economic goals established for Southeastern Ohio in *Access Ohio*, the state's long range transportation plan.

Alternatives under consideration include: (1) Taking no action; (2) upgrading the existing facility; and (3) constructing a highway on new alignment.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. A citizens advisory committee will be formed from known interested organizations and stakeholders to provide input on the proposal. One or more public meetings will be held in the Fall of 1999. In addition, a public hearing will be held, expected in the Spring of 2000. Public notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing. The

draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing. No formal scoping meeting is planned at this time.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: October 6, 1999.

Dan Dobson,

Field Operations Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Columbus, Ohio.

[FR Doc. 99-27177 Filed 10-18-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

Environmental Impact Statement: Fairfield County, OH

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed project in Fairfield County, Ohio.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dan Dobson, Field Operation Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, 200 N. High Street, Room 328, Columbus, Ohio 43215, Telephone: (614) 280-6853.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to construct a four-lane, limited access, divided highway bypassing existing U.S. Route 33 through the City of Lancaster in Fairfield County, Ohio.

Construction of this bypass is considered necessary to relieve congestion and improve safety for local and regional travel. This proposal is intended to be consistent with the mobility, access, and economic goals established for Southeastern Ohio in *Access Ohio*, the state's long range transportation plan.

Alternatives under consideration include: (1) Taking no action; (2)