

Brief Description of the Proposed Action (include purpose or need):

Increased traffic at the East Hampton Airport (“Airport”) for more than a decade has created growing concerns about noise, public health, safety, environmental and climate change impacts. These impacts are not well-aligned with East Hampton’s identity as a resort community, and its commitment to sustaining the quality of life and the quiet enjoyment of its rich natural, cultural, and scenic resources. The Airport also provides positive values to the community including employment, economic and recreation opportunities as well as access for emergency, medical and civilian services.

Expiration of Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) grant assurances in September 2021 has provided the Town Board with the opportunity to re-examine the future of the Airport including the opportunity to close the Airport and open a new private use airport (“New Airport”), at which time the Town Board will be federally permitted to study the impact of operational changes designed to minimize and/or avoid longstanding noise and other impacts. By letter dated November 6, 2020, and in the course of subsequent discussions between the Town Board and the FAA, the FAA has suggested five (5) options for the Town to consider concerning the future of the Airport.

After conducting a one year-long public engagement process to examine the Airport during 2021, the Town Board believes, based on thorough review of public comments and consulting reports, that closing (or “deactivating”) the Airport and opening the New Airport- Option 2 suggested by the FAA-achieves the Town’s goal of obtaining maximum local control, retaining flexibility to control aeronautical activities in East Hampton in the future, and protecting the community in the most comprehensive and effective manner. By resolution adopted January 20, 2022, the Town Board adopted a SEQRA Negative Declaration for pursuing Option 2 as described in the FAA’s November 2020 letter.

Once the New Airport is operating, the Town will utilize a “Prior Permission Required” (PPR) framework that enables the Town to consider restrictions and limitations. The operational policies being considered by the Town Board include the following:

- 1. Time-based permissions such as curfews.**
- 2. Aircraft-based permissions such as reduction or elimination in jets, helicopters and/or sea planes.**
- 3. Noise-based permissions such as reduction or elimination of aircraft that have a noise signature that exceeds a defined threshold.**
- 4. Operator-based permissions such as reduction or elimination of commercial operators.**
- 5. Environmental-based reduction such as the eventual reduction or elimination of lead-based fuel sales.**

This EAF evaluates the potential environmental impacts of adopting long-term operational changes to the New Airport being considered by the Town Board.

Expanded Environmental Assessment Form Part 2 and Part 3

- 1. Impact on Land-** The modifications and restrictions contemplated for operating a New Airport in accordance with a Prior Permission Required (PPR) framework will not involve the construction on or physical alteration of the land surface at the New Airport. Similarly, while aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to other proximate airports (the “Affected Airports”), those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. The Proposed Action would not result in any physical impacts to land.

- 2. Impact on Geological Features-** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Similarly, while aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to the Affected Airports, those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. The Proposed Action would not result in any physical impacts to land. Therefore, no impacts to geological features will occur.

- 3. Impact on Surface Water-** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Similarly, while aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to the Affected Airports, those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. The Proposed Action would not result in any physical impacts to land or surface water. Therefore, no impacts to surface waters will occur.

- 4. Impact on Groundwater-** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Part of the PPR restrictions may include, at some future date, a sunset provision on the sale of lead-based fuel at the airport. This could help protect groundwater resources from potential spills and contamination. Removal of tanks and any potential cleanup would be subject to a separate environmental review and permitting process.

Forty-seven acres within the airport property are subject to Superfund restrictions, for which the Town Board has signed a consent order with the NYSDEC for cleanup. The Final Site Characterization Report identified the following areas of concern where PFOA and/or PFOS were

detected in Site groundwater concentrations above the US EPA Health Advisory Level of 70 ppt: where firefighting foam training and crash response occurred, where aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) was used in a mass casualty training exercise, where AFFF and fire trucks are stored, and adjacent to the burn training structure. The consent order and clean-up are proceeding independently of any proposed PPR restrictions at the New Airport and the Proposed Action would not affect that cleanup.

5. **Impact on Flooding-** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Therefore, no impacts contributing to flooding will occur.
6. **Impact on Air-** The modifications and restrictions contemplated for operating a New Airport in accordance with a PPR framework could potentially result in the redistribution of some of the aircraft operations that would have otherwise occurred at the New Airport to other nearby airports and landing areas. This redistribution or diversion could result in an increase, and would redistribute, greenhouse gas and other air emissions due to potential increased aircraft operations at the Affected Airports and ground vehicular miles required to access nearby surrounding airports or as a result of changes in modes of travel from aircraft to land-based vehicles (see Impact on transportation for a full discussion of potential diversion impacts and the potential increase in aircraft and ground vehicle trips).
7. **Impact on Plants and Animals-** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Similarly, while aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to the Affected Airports, those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. The Proposed Action would not result in any physical impacts to land. Therefore, no direct impacts on plants and animals will occur.

There is a potential for changes to aircraft noise to indirectly affect certain noise-sensitive wildlife on or proximate to the Affected Airports.

8. **Impact on Agricultural Resources-** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Similarly, while aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to the Affected Airports, those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. The Proposed Action would not result in any physical impacts to land. Therefore, no impacts to agricultural resources will occur.

- 9. Impact on Aesthetic Resources-** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Therefore, no impacts to aesthetic resources will occur.
- 10. Impact on Historic and Archaeological Resources-** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Similarly, while aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to the Affected Airports, those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. The Proposed Action would not result in any physical impacts to land. Therefore, no impacts to historic and archaeological resources will occur.
- 11. Impact on Open Space and Recreation -** No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Similarly, while aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to the Affected Airports, those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. The Proposed Action would not result in any physical impacts to land. Therefore, no impacts to open space and recreation will occur at the Airport. See paragraph 18 for potential impacts to the community character of protected open space.
- 12. Impact on Critical Environmental Areas-** The New Airport is located within two overlapping Critical Environmental Areas: The South Fork Special Groundwater Protection Area (SF SGPA) and the Town of East Hampton Water Recharge Overlay District (WRO). No physical changes, improvements or alterations are proposed as part of the PPR framework. Therefore, no direct impacts to critical environmental areas will occur at the New Airport. Part of the PPR restrictions may include, at some future date, a sunset provision on the sale of lead-based fuel at the New Airport. This could help protect groundwater resources, including the SF SGPA and the Town of East Hampton WRO from potential spills and contamination. Removal of tanks and any potential cleanup would be subject to a separate environmental review and permitting process.

While aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to the Affected Airports, those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. The Proposed Action would not result in any physical impacts to the quantity or quality of critical environmental areas. See paragraph 18 for potential impacts to the character of critical environmental areas surrounding the Affected Airports, such as those around Montauk Airport.

13. Impact on Transportation- The modifications and restrictions contemplated for operating a New Airport in accordance with a PPR framework could potentially result in the redistribution of some of the aircraft operations that would have otherwise occurred at the New Airport to other nearby airports and landing areas. Redistribution or diversion could have adverse impacts on the operations at the Affected Airports, with associated negative impacts on ground traffic, noise, and air emissions.

The facilities most likely to receive diverted aircraft operations include Gabreski Airport, Montauk Airport and Southampton Heliport. In addition to the aircraft that could feasibly divert to these surrounding airports, the PPR could cause changes in types of aircraft, frequency, time of day and routes of aircraft, all of which could impact Affected Airports and the airspace over East Hampton. Limited facilities for aircraft parking and fueling at Montauk Airport may lead some aircraft operators to drop off passengers and then return later for pickup, thereby further increasing aircraft operations and associated impacts to Montauk.

The PPR restrictions could also potentially result in increased ground vehicle miles and hours of travel for passengers utilizing aircraft not permitted at the New Airport. This could negatively impact the capacity of the roads and traffic surrounding the airports, serving Montauk and East Hampton Town and the general region. Increased traffic may also impact emergency vehicle operations and non-motorized users of the roadway network, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, etc.

14. Impact on Energy- The modifications and restrictions contemplated for operating a New Airport in accordance with a PPR framework could potentially result in changes to fuel usage for aircraft and vehicles. Increased fuel usage could result from an increase in aircraft and road vehicle miles traveled by passengers no longer permitted to use the New Airport at East Hampton. Similarly, users that formerly landed at East Hampton may use less aircraft fuel if they land at one of the Affected Airports.

Another potential impact to energy resulting from the PPR framework is the consideration of a ban on the sale of lead-based fuel at the New Airport, the potential imposition of sunset provisions on the usage of lead-based aircraft and the imposition of other measures to encourage more environmentally sound operations. The negative impacts associated with lead fueled aircraft is well documented. However, the ban on lead-based fuel could, in the short term, increase the aircraft mileage and energy usage of East Hampton based aircraft dependent on lead-based fuel due to the need to purchase fuel from another airport before returning to

East Hampton. It is noted that the EPA has taken preliminary steps to regulate lead pollution from aircraft fuel and the aircraft industry claims that alternative technologies will soon replace leaded fuel engines. Thus lead-based fuel operations are on a course to be phased out nationwide, not just in East Hampton and adverse impacts, if any, may be short lived.

15. Impact on Noise, Odor, or Light- The modifications and restrictions contemplated for operating a New Airport in accordance with a PPR framework could potentially result in diversion of aircraft and associated noise impacts to surrounding airports. Noise impacts are associated with type of aircraft, frequency, time of day and aircraft routes. No impacts to odor or light are anticipated at the Affected Airports.

16. Impact on Human Health- The modifications and restrictions contemplated for operating a New Airport in accordance with a PPR framework could potentially reduce the amount of greenhouse gas and other air pollutants generated by aircraft using the New Airport. Alternatively, diversion to Affected Airports other nearby airports and conversion to ground vehicles could increase the amount of greenhouse gas and other air pollutants generated by people traveling to and from East Hampton.

Diversion to Affected Airports could result in noise impacts with associated impacts on human health.

Forty-seven acres within the Airport property are subject to Superfund restrictions for which the Town Board has signed a consent order with the NYSDEC for cleanup (see impact to groundwater for a more complete description of the contamination). The consent order and the clean-up are proceeding independently of any proposed PPR restrictions, and the Proposed Action would not affect that cleanup.

17. Consistency with Community Plans- Goal 2 of the Town Comprehensive Plan (2005) states that the Town should “Take forceful measures to protect and restore the environment...” and reduce impacts of human-produced noise.

In 2021, the Town Board unanimously adopted a “Climate Emergency Declaration” demonstrating the Town’s commitment to make climate mitigation and the elimination of greenhouse gas emissions a guiding principle and objective of all municipal operations, all policy and purchasing decisions, all planning and zoning decisions and all aspects of Town business for the foreseeable future.

The subject proposal will reduce noise and greenhouse gas emissions in association with the municipal operation of the New Airport and will help to protect and restore the environment in Wainscott. The PPR framework will allow the Town Board to impose restrictions and limitations to reduce noise and greenhouse gas emissions at the New Airport. The potential sunset/future ban on the sale of lead-based fuel at the New Airport will help protect the ground and drinking water resources.

While aircraft that would have been bound for the New Airport may be diverted to the Affected Airports, those operations would only be accommodated to the extent that the Affected Airports had the capacity to handle additional flights. There is no plan of which the Lead Agency is aware to expand the capacity of any of the Affected Airports. Potential impacts from diversion from the New Airport have been identified as part of the responses to questions 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18.

To the extent that the Action will reduce human-produced noise, greenhouse gases and other environmental impacts in the vicinity of the New Airport, the proposal is consistent with the Town Comprehensive Plan and adopted policies.

18. Consistency with Community Character-The Town of East Hampton is defined by the unique character of its hamlets, villages, and countryside. With large expanses of pristine ocean beaches, scenic vistas, preserved farmland, historic landscapes, significant fish and wildlife habitats, and high-quality drinking water resources, the unique natural and cultural features of the Town are largely intact. Increased traffic at the Airport in recent years has created growing concerns about noise, public health, safety, environmental and climate change impacts. These impacts are not well-aligned with East Hampton's identity as a resort community, and its commitment to sustaining the quality of life and the quiet enjoyment of its rich natural, cultural, and scenic resources. The proposed action is designed to help the Town gain better control over the New Airport and shape it to better fit with the community character.

Changes to the number, type, and time of flights at the New Airport and the Affected Airports has the potential to result in changes to community character. Potential impacts would be the result of changes to the number, type, and timing of flights, which would directly affect noise conditions and traffic conditions. The significance of an impact to community character will be dependent on the current conditions of the affected area, including existing noise conditions and land uses, as well as the presence of protected open space and Critical Environmental Areas. It is noted that the Montauk Airport is located within the Montauk USFWS Ecological Complex and is adjacent to two NYS Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitats: Lake Montauk and Big & Little Reed Ponds.