

CHAPTER 4 - ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The following additions are made to Chapter 4 of the revised airside facilities.

Environmental Assessment

Environmental considerations for Airports are outlined in the Airport Environmental Handbook October 8, 1985, by the Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration. No specific regulations are available which outline the flood protection requirements for airports. However, the Airport Environmental Handbook covers the requirements of building airports within a floodplain. This handbook basically requires an environmental assessment for locating an airport within a floodplain as "it is the DOT policy, in accordance with Executive Order 11988, to avoid where practicable encroachments in base floodplains by DOT actions. (ref Environ. Handbook Chapter 5 Paragraph 47e(12)f.). The term practicable is defined in paragraph 47e(11)e. as follows: "The term "practicable" means feasible. Whether another alternative is practicable depends on its feasibility in terms of safety, meeting transportation objectives, design, engineering, environment, economics and any other applicable factors. Some additional cost may be recognized as necessary and justified to meet national wetland policy objectives."

If the proposed action and reasonable alternatives would encroach on the base floodplain, 47e(12)f goes on to state that, the environmental assessment must indicate why it is proposed, why no other practicable alternatives exist, and proposed mitigation measures such as commitments to special flood related design and flood related impacts such as impact on natural and beneficial floodplain values. Since construction of the airport is all within the floodplain of the Gila River, it appears that these regulations should be met to continue further development. Many of the flood related design and impact would be covered through the Pinal County Flood Control District and FEMA regulations for construction within a flood plain and flood protection.

An environmental assessment has been performed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The final copy of this document is under review for approval issuance. Recommendations of this document will be required to be met during construction of improvements.

The site as proposed will remove the project from the 100-year floodplain through the construction of the flood protection levee and revisions to the Federal Emergency Management Agency flooding mapping.

Wildlife Attractions

In February of 1994, the Arizona Department of Transportation. Aeronautics Division, (ADOT) was notified of the new Federal Aviation Administration Advisory Circular AC 150/5200-xx on Wildlife Attractions On or Near Airports. The Advisory Circular provides guidance on land uses and activities located on or in the vicinity of airports that are potentially attractive to birds or other wildlife. More specifically, it applies to airports adjacent or near to waste disposal sites,

wastewater treatment facilities, and wetlands, as these types of areas have high potential to attract concentrations of wildlife (U. S. Department of Transportation, undated). Due to the location of the Kearny airport and in response to this Advisory Circular, the Arizona Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division, requested that the Kearny airport site be surveyed to ascertain the potential of wildlife hazards to the airport operations.

A site survey was performed by Dr. Robert A. Johnson, Johnson and Associates, EEI, Inc. in July, 1994, and it was determined that the overall potential for collision hazard relative to airport operation is very low at both airport runway sites due to absence of rookeries, roosts, aggregations, or other areas of extremely high bird density. Such potential will be further reduced at the floodplain site after vegetation and the small wetland adjacent to the Wastewater Treatment Plan have been cleared from the zone adjacent to the runway.