



Martha's Vineyard Commission

DRI #365-M Airport Business Park Expansion MVC Staff Report – 2021-7-14

1. DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 **Applicant:** Martha's Vineyard Airport (Kevin Brennan, Airport Properties Manager)
- 1.2 **Owner:** County of Dukes County
- 1.3 **Project Location:** Two proposed lots on South Road, one lot on West Line Road, and one lot on North Line Road (all currently part of Lot 24-1); and 22 North Line Road (Lot 24-2.40), Edgartown
- 1.4 **Proposal:** Expansion of the Airport Business Park to include five new lease lots totaling 8.78 acres
- 1.5 **Zoning:** B-3 Light Industrial Business
- 1.6 **Surrounding Land Uses:** Commercial uses in the Airport Business Park, including storage, office space, vehicle repair, a gas station, and other light industrial and service uses; Martha's Vineyard Airport to the west (partly in West Tisbury), State Forest to the east, forested land and residential/agricultural uses to the south.
- 1.7 **Project History:** The MVC approved DRI 365 in 1993, which designated the existing Airport Business Park as a DRI. The approval was for approximately 63 acres and 50 lots, and the lots at the time totaled 53.64 acres. Eight of the approved lots were later determined to be undevelopable due to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, so only 45.26 acres may currently be used. The 1993 approval included one condition, that a development agreement between the MVC and the Airport Commission, governing future development and revenues at the Business Park, be adopted and included as part of the Decision for DRI 365. The Development Agreement, adopted in 1998, requires that the Airport Commission review all proposals for development in the Business Park in accordance with the Airport's Business Park Development Regulations, except for specific uses that require automatic review by the MVC. The MVC is currently in the process of revising the agreement. As proposed, DRI 365-M will be reviewed separately from the agreement, with an understanding that any approval will include a condition that the agreement will be revised and included as an appendage to the Decision.

Project Summary: The proposal is to add five new lease lots (known as lots 39, 40, 41, 42, and 44) to the Airport Business Park to accommodate new or expanded business. The new lots would total 8.78 acres, increasing the total developable area of the Business Park from 45.26 to 54.04 acres (still under the 63 acres approved in 1993). Lots 39, 40, and 44 may be further divided, depending on the proposed uses.

- Lot 39 (3.01 acres): Currently has no structures, was used in the past for construction staging for the Airport. Consists largely of hard-pack material from the subbase of the runway.
- Lot 40 (3.1 acres): Partially cleared from an earlier Steamship Authority project that did not materialize. Has new pine growth.
- Lot 41 (0.78 acres): Currently forested, previous site of a WWII bunker.

- Lot 42 (0.22 acres): Consists of brush and trees.
- Lot 44 (0.88 acres): Was mostly cleared for development in the past, now contains a ropes course for the Dukes County Sheriff's Department.

The proposal is one of several projects the Airport plans to undertake in the next few years, including fuel farm improvements (2022), hangar development (2022), vegetation management and removal of obstructions (2023), reconstruction of taxiway 15-33 (2023), renovations to the Airport Terminal (2028), aircraft parking (2029), access road improvements (2030), and the permitting of Business Park lots 34 and 38 for commercial use, as detailed in the Airport's 2021 Proposed Capital Improvement Plan.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 **DRI Referral:** Self-referred
- 2.2 **DRI Trigger:** 1.3D (Modification to Previous DRI)
- 2.3 **LUPC:** June 14, 2021
- 2.4 **Public Hearing:** July 15, 2021

3. PLANNING CONCERNS

3.1 Water and Wastewater: The proposed lots will be connected to the Airport Wastewater Treatment Facility, which is permitted for up to 37,000 gallons per day (GPD). The Airport currently averages about 15,000 GPD, which increases in the summer but is still well below the 37,000 GPD limit. Certain potential uses for the Business Park, including county offices and a jail, might exceed the capacity, but the Airport would take that into consideration when awarding leases. The Airport is in the process of updating the facility to meet new Department of Environmental Protection standards, which would also qualify the facility for up to 61,000 GPD.

3.2 Traffic and Transportation: The Business Park has two entrances and exits (West Line Road and North Line Road) about 1,600 feet apart on Barnes Road. There are also bus stops at the intersection of North Line and Barnes Roads, and a shared-use path that runs along Barnes Road between the roundabout and Edgartown-West Tisbury Road. Barnes Road currently has left and right turn lanes for vehicles approaching Edgartown-West Tisbury Road, but the level of service (LOS) for the approach is considered low.

Various traffic alternatives are laid out in the Airport's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), but they focus mostly on Airport Road. However, traffic counts were conducted at the intersection of Barnes and Edgartown-West Tisbury Roads on July 25, 2019, showing a total of 15,426 vehicles, and a peak hour of 12-1PM (1,477 vehicles). Heavy vehicles accounted for about 6% of the daily total. Vehicles approaching the intersection from the north (the direction of the Business Park) totaled 5,247. Vehicles turning onto Barnes Road, toward the Business Park, totaled 4,683. However, it is unknown how many vehicles were traveling to or from the Business Park.

Traffic alternatives considered in the DEIR include a stop sign for vehicles on Edgartown-West Tisbury Road, a new connector road between Barnes Road and Airport Road to bypass the other intersections, a left-turn lane for cars approaching Barnes Road from the west, a roundabout at the Barnes Road intersection, and other alternatives for Airport Road. Any traffic changes at the intersection of Barnes and Edgartown-West Tisbury Road would require approval by the MA Department of Transportation. (Edgartown-West Tisbury Road is owned by the state.) The Airport

is currently looking into installing traffic counters at the Business Park entrances to monitor traffic over time and help inform the Master Planning process.

An unpaved access road between Airport Road and West Line Road traverses the area for proposed lots 39 and 40. The Airport does not plan to make that road public, but it is unclear whether the road will be maintained as part of the proposal. Lot 39 would appear to have three potential access points (two from West Line Road and one from Barnes Road), although the intent is for all access to the lots to be from within the Business Park.

- 3.3 Habitat and Ecology:** The Business Park is surrounded on all sides by Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) Priority Habitat and BioMap2 Core Habitat, but the five proposed lots are outside that area. Much of the Business Park and surroundings, including all of the proposed new lots, contain forestland of statewide or local importance.
- Separately from this proposal, the Airport is in the process of obtaining MEPA approval for the use of Business Park lots 34 and 38, which are within NHESP Priority Habitat. Lot 34 (0.77 acres) had previously been cleared and regraded, but is not currently being leased. Lot 38 (0.43 acres) is already developed and is being leased.
- 3.4 Energy:** The current Airport Development Agreement and Business Park Development Regulations do not include any requirements for renewable energy or energy efficiency, although the MA Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) Greenhouse Gas Emissions Policy requires that certain projects undergoing MEPA review take steps to avoid, reduce, or mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. The Airport has stated that it will apply the policy to all Business Park leases going forward. Projects referred to the MVC under the Development Agreement are also subject to the MVC Energy Policy.
- 3.5 Stormwater and Drainage:** Stormwater management on each lot in the Business Park is the responsibility of the leaseholder.
- 3.6 Economic Development:** The project will allow for new or expanded business in a central location, although the specific uses are undetermined. The Airport Commission will award the new leases following Requests for Proposals (RFPs), and based partly on the value of each bid per square foot. The Business Park waiting list includes 34 applicants as of May 2021, with proposed uses including food and equipment storage, county government (including a jail and courthouse), wholesale and retail establishments, recreation, light industry, a cannabis farm, catering, and office space.
- 3.7 Character and Identity:** Many light-industrial uses such as those indicated in the waiting list currently take place at the Business Park and might otherwise be out of place in town centers or other parts of the Island. New development would be reviewed by the Airport Commission and would need to comply with the Business Park Development Regulations, including design review. Certain uses, including fuel and hazardous material storage, structures greater than 8,000 ft², and retail, recreational, educational, or entertainment uses, also require review by the MVC under the 1998 Development Agreement, which is in the process of being revised.
- 3.8 Scenic Values:** Proposed lots 39 and 44 would extend the Business Park toward Barnes Road and the shared-use path, potentially increasing the park's visibility from that direction. Lot 44 is already

mostly cleared, but is not developed. It also includes a substantial amount of vegetation along North Line Road at the north entrance to the park. Lot 39 is partially cleared, but could also potentially increase the park's visibility from the road and path. The vegetative buffers between lots 39 and 40 and the path would be about 140 feet.