HVN Releases Draft Environment Assessment

*EA makes clear that planned improvements would improve airport’s future environmental impact*

**New Haven, Conn.** – Tweed-New Haven Airport (HVN) today released its draft Environmental Assessment (EA) of previously-announced plans to expand HVN, which are aimed at allowing the airport to more fully serve the needs of southern Connecticut and its economy. The EA, which covers both the extension of the airport’s runway as well as the construction of a modern terminal, was conducted by HVN with the support of national aviation consulting firm McFarland Johnson. In conjunction with the draft assessment, HVN also announced details of a planned public meeting on April 1, 2023, that will provide the public with an opportunity to learn more about the proposed project and to provide comments.

“Completion of this Environmental Assessment marks another successful milestone in our work to enhance HVN and fully realize a $100+ million investment in southern Connecticut that will create more than 1,147 direct jobs, in addition to the more than 300 jobs already created in the last year and a half,” said Jorge Roberts, CEO of Avports. “The airport will continue to see additional activity in the coming years, and the draft assessment makes clear that this project would reduce the airport’s overall environmental impact to the region as that growth occurs.”

“We remain committed to ensuring that this expansion is executed in an environmentally sustainable manner. Avports has been an excellent partner throughout, going above and beyond to fulfill the promise of a more sustainable HVN,” added Thomas Rafter, Executive Director of the Tweed New Haven Airport Authority. “We look forward to continuing to work with our partners and neighbors in the community to make this vision a reality.”

The full draft Environmental Assessment can be found here. The EA makes clear that the planned project would improve the airport’s future environmental impact. Specific notable findings include:

- **NOISE**: Extending the runway and relocating the terminal reduces overall noise by reducing the number of total necessary flights\(^1\) and shifting aircraft ground noise further from residences;\(^2\) HVN will also extend its ongoing Residential Sound Insulation Program to include additional homes that would otherwise be significantly impacted by aircraft noise.

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\(^1\) See Section 2.2.1. Summary of Expected Aviation Activity
\(^2\) See Section 5.6.1. No Action – Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Resources
• **AIR QUALITY**: The air quality analysis found that by relocating the terminal and extending the runway HVN and its airline partners can reduce overall impact on air quality when compared to doing nothing, with potential air emissions from the construction, forecasted operations, and changes in vehicle trips associated with expansion expected to be well below thresholds set by the EPA.

• **WETLANDS**: The new terminal is proposed within the footprint of a closed runway and taxiway field. The impact on undisturbed wetlands has been intentionally minimized to less than 0.2 acres, and expansion would include mitigation measures implemented to achieve the overall policy goal of “no net loss”.

• **WILDLIFE**: Impact to wildlife and plant life has been reduced to less than federal and local thresholds; the project site contains no critical habitats for threatened or endangered species as designated by the state or federal government.

• **TRAFFIC**: Expansion would not significantly impact current driver experience as studied across 11 key intersections. A new traffic signal and intersection improvements would be provided at the intersection of Proto Drive and Coe Ave.

This Environmental Assessment meets the requirements of NEPA and is required for all such projects by the FAA and outlines the purpose and need for the project, analyzing alternatives and potential impacts, and demonstrates compliance with federal, state, and local environmental laws, and requires public participation. This EA process began on November 18, 2021 and has included extensive research and information from a variety of sources, including: scientific studies, community input, and collaboration with numerous local, state, and federal agencies including the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The Environmental Assessment’s release marks the beginning of a 45-day public comment period, which will conclude on April 16. During this time members of the community are encouraged to submit written testimony, which will be reviewed by the FAA and will factor into its decision. The Tweed-New Haven Airport Authority will also host a public information workshop and hearing on April 1 at East Haven High School.

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**Contact**: Andrew King, aking@avports.com

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3 Table 5-6: GHG Emissions Associated with Existing Conditions, Proposed Action and No Action
4 Table 5-2: Construction and Net Operational Emission Changes Compared to De Minimis Thresholds
5 Table 5-4: Vegetation Assemblage Distribution and Estimated Footprint Impacts
7 Table 5-11: Overall Intersection Level of Service Summary Future No Action and Proposed Action Conditions
8 See Chapter 5 Page 42 (5-42)
9 See Section 1.2.1. Regulatory Basis
10 See Section 1.3. Public Involvement
11 See Appendix L