

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

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# 1. Introduction

The Calgary Airport Authority (the Authority) proposes to construct a new parallel runway at Calgary International Airport (YYC) to meet demand for passenger and cargo service in southern Alberta. The proposed work is referred to as the Parallel Runway Project (PRP). The purpose of this document is to assess the potential environmental and socio-economic effects of the PRP through a self-directed Comprehensive Study (CS).

YYC is an important element of Canada's civil air transportation system and is Canada's fourth busiest airport in terms of passenger volumes. YYC is Alberta's premier air passenger and cargo gateway and is a major contributor to the prosperity of the Calgary region, with a total GDP impact of \$6 billion.

Plans for the proposed runway have been included in airport, city, provincial and federal planning processes since the 1970s. The land use surrounding the airport has been regulated by the Province of Alberta and controlled by the City of Calgary, based on the assumption that the parallel runway was in place and operating, to minimize the amount of residential development that will be affected by the new runway. The Province established the Airport Vicinity Protection Area (AVPA) Regulation in 1979, which defines acceptable land uses in areas that will be exposed to aircraft noise around YYC.

The airport and PRP footprint is on federal land, which is leased by the Authority from Transport Canada. Canadian airport authorities are not currently subject to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA), however the Authority has decided to subject all major projects to a self-directed environmental assessment (EA) based on the CEAA model. The Authority's self-assessment process seeks to verify that the environmental effects of all projects are fully considered.

The Authority applies a self-directed, EA process based on the CEAA model to all projects for which the Authority is the decision-making authority. The Authority's self-assessment process is charged with verifying that the potential environmental effects of projects are considered. The Authority has three levels of self-assessment:

1. The "Automatic Exclusion List", which identifies projects having no significant environmental effects; for example, building renovations (in areas known to be free from asbestos, lead, and other hazardous materials) or pavement overlays. Those projects require no formal assessment.
2. The "Inclusion List", which identifies projects having environmental effects that can be mitigated by known technologies; for example, underground storage tank installations or new roads. Those projects are subject to an environmental screening.
3. The "Comprehensive Study (CS) List", which identifies projects with significant concerns requiring public consultation and further study; for example, new runways. Those projects are subject to a CS.

To date, YYC projects have been assessed as set out above, but none have required a CS. However, the length of the proposed runway would dictate that a CS be conducted if the CEAA applied; thus, the Authority has chosen to implement a self-directed CS that shadows the CEAA EA process. (For more information regarding the self-directed process, see Chapter 5 of this Volume.)

The CS consists of 5 volumes:

- Volume I – Summary
- Volume II – Information Necessary to Complete the Environmental Assessment
- Volume III – Effects Assessment
- Volume IV – Supporting Information to Volume II
- Volume V – Supporting Information to Volume III

Volume I is a non-technical summary of the CS. This includes a brief report in non-technical language (plain English) so that it can be easily understood by the public. This document summarises all the findings of the assessment and presents it in a concise and effective medium such that any member of the public can gain an understanding of the process of the EA and the contents of the other Volumes.

This Volume (Volume II) includes the information that is necessary to complete the EA. This includes further detail on the EA process and methods used to undertake the assessment. There are six chapters describing the airport, the Authority, Airport Governance, the legislative framework within which the airport operates, the EA process being followed, and the communications and consultation program that was carried out as part of the CS. The project description provides details on the design and components which make up the construction and operation of the PRP.

Volume III is the effects assessment. This volume includes details of the methods used, and provides details for the assessment of adverse and beneficial effects that the construction and operation of the PRP will have on biophysical, socio-economic, air, noise and health components. There is also an assessment of the effects of the PRP on land use within the city and on the transportation network in and around YYC. Volume III includes other assessment chapters which are relevant to the CEAA process including the assessment of alternatives, accidents and malfunctions and the effects of the environment on the project. This Volume concludes with a summary of mitigation measures for project effects and describes the follow up program.

Volume IV consists of the supporting information to Volume II and includes a list of all issues that were raised by stakeholders during the consultation process. Also within this section is the Airfield Model prepared by Airbiz that provides important supporting information to the need and purpose of the PRP.

Volume V consists of the supporting information to Volume III. In particular this Volume has the raw baseline information reports for all environmental components. The baseline reports were made available to the public as independent documents during the preparation of the CS. The last items in Volume V include an outline of the Airport's Environmental Management System including a broad Environmental Construction Operations Plan (ECO Plan).

These five volumes will complete the CS and be made available to the public for consultation and comment following completion in August 2010.