



NEWS RELEASE

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More Analysis Needed on Gness Field Project

Federal officials ask for more study on 1,100-foot runway extension

San Rafael, CA – The Federal Aviation Commission (FAA) has requested that additional study be completed by Marin County prior to a final federal decision on the [Gness Field Runway Extension Project's Environmental Impact Statement](#) (EIS).

The [Marin County Department of Public Works](#), which oversees management and operation of the Novato general aviation airport, said the addition study could take as long as 18 months. The extension project, in the planning stages since adoption of the Airport Master Plan in 1989, is slated to change the runway's length from 3,300 feet to 4,400 feet.

The FAA issued its Final EIS in June 2014 and received two comment letters. One suggested that a shorter runway than the 1,100-foot extension identified as the FAA preferred alternative may be justified. Following FAA internal review, they asked the County to update the 2009 aviation forecast that was the basis for the EIS, including determination of the critical aircraft and runway length determination, prior to its decision on the project.

The project is being funded by FAA grants, with a 10 percent County match. The FAA requires the County to use the same consultant as previously selected by the FAA to prepare the any supplemental EIS documentation. Public Works soon will bring a contract amendment for the additional tasks to the Board of Supervisors for consideration after conferring with FAA staff.

Although the unexpected request from the FAA will delay the runway extension project, the costs of consultant work are small compared with the costs of project construction and environmental mitigation, and Public Works believes it is the right time to review the cost effectiveness of project decisions.

The Board of Supervisors had tentatively scheduled a merit hearing on

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the project for February 24, 2015, which was to follow the FAA Record of Decision on the project. With the delay, the Board hearing will be postponed until after the FAA decision is issued.

Gross Field occupies 120 acres just east of Highway 101 north of downtown Novato and is open 24 hours a day. For more information, see the [proposed runway extension website](#).

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