



705 SECOND STREET NORTH
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June 22, 2023

Gina Mitchell, Community Planner
FAA Dakota-Minnesota ADO
6020 28th Avenue S, Suite 102
Minneapolis MN 55450-2700

Mike Hartell, Assistant Director
MnDOT Office of Aeronautics
395 John Ireland Boulevard, Mail Stop 410
St. Paul MN 55155-1800

Dear Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Hartell:

As you are aware, the City of Princeton, as owner of the Princeton Municipal Airport, is in the process of updating the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) to determine the future location of the Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS). The current system is beyond its useful life and cannot be replaced in the same location because of current siting standards. Numerous alternative sites were reviewed and reduced to two final sites, *Alternative 1 – Revised* which is located on the East side of the airfield and *Alternative 4 – Revised* which is located on the West side of the airfield. See attached maps and summary table.

We understand that both final alternatives were reviewed by the State and the FAA's Non-Fed AWOS division who determined that each site would accurately report the meteorological conditions at the airport. Each site has a different impact on the other development areas at the airport and each has a different impact on property that might need to be acquired. Recognizing these challenges, we the City have determined that *Alternative 1 - Revised* offers distinct advantages that make it the preferred option. Given the rate of hangar development over the previous 30 years, the reduction of potential development area as illustrated in the current ALP would not adversely impact airport operations.

Alternative 1 – Revised falls within the preferred siting area position along the runway. To accommodate the future growth expected at the airport, the mast for the wind sensor would be set at 50 feet which allows for future development to occur while mitigating wind flow disturbance for the sensor. This option allows for the future development of 42 additional hangars of varying sizes which exceeds the 20-year needs estimated in the 2018 Master Plan. This alternative requires the least amount of tree removal (6.6 acres) and eliminates 4.4 acres of easement acquisition as it is on City owned land. The total estimated cost of this alternative is \$351,000, with the local share an estimated \$54,073.

Alternative 4 – Revised is located outside the preferred siting area, set at 350' away from the runway centerline to minimize the number of private parcels impacted. This option allows for the continued development as depicted on the 2018 Airport Layout Plan that would exceed the expected demand noted in the 2018 Master Plan. This option requires approximately 22.7 acres of tree and vegetation removal, with 1.1 acres being inside wetlands. Additionally, this alternative requires what is expected to

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be a contentious land acquisition of 39.2 acres. The total estimated cost of this alternative is \$935,000, with the local share an estimated \$130,775.

It is important for the State and FAA to understand, the City of Princeton does not want the site of the AWOS to impede future development and if *Alternative 1 – Revised* did impede foreseeable development, the City would be the first to dismiss this course of action, but that is not the case. *Alternative 1 – Revised* still allows for development within the planning period and beyond, as illustrated.

A crucial factor that heavily influences the City of Princeton's decision is the local cost associated with each alternative. We believe it would be fiscally irresponsible of the City to spend the extra money and take private land when a viable site exists principally on airport property. As a responsible steward of public funds, we must prioritize cost-effectiveness and consider the multitude of other services we need to fund in our community. *Alternative 1 – Revised* has been determined to be significantly less expensive than *Alternative 4 - Revised*.

After careful consideration and evaluation of the alternatives presented, we have determined that *Alternative 1 - Revised* is the most suitable choice for our airport and intend to select this alternative for our preferred development and implementation. We have a joint meeting with our City Council and Airport Advisory Board on July 6, 2023, where we will discuss future internal priorities and capital expenditures. Unless we receive explicit guidance or objections from the FAA or MnDOT, we plan to select *Alternative 1 – Revised* as our preferred alternative at the meeting and incorporate its future implementation into our budgets.

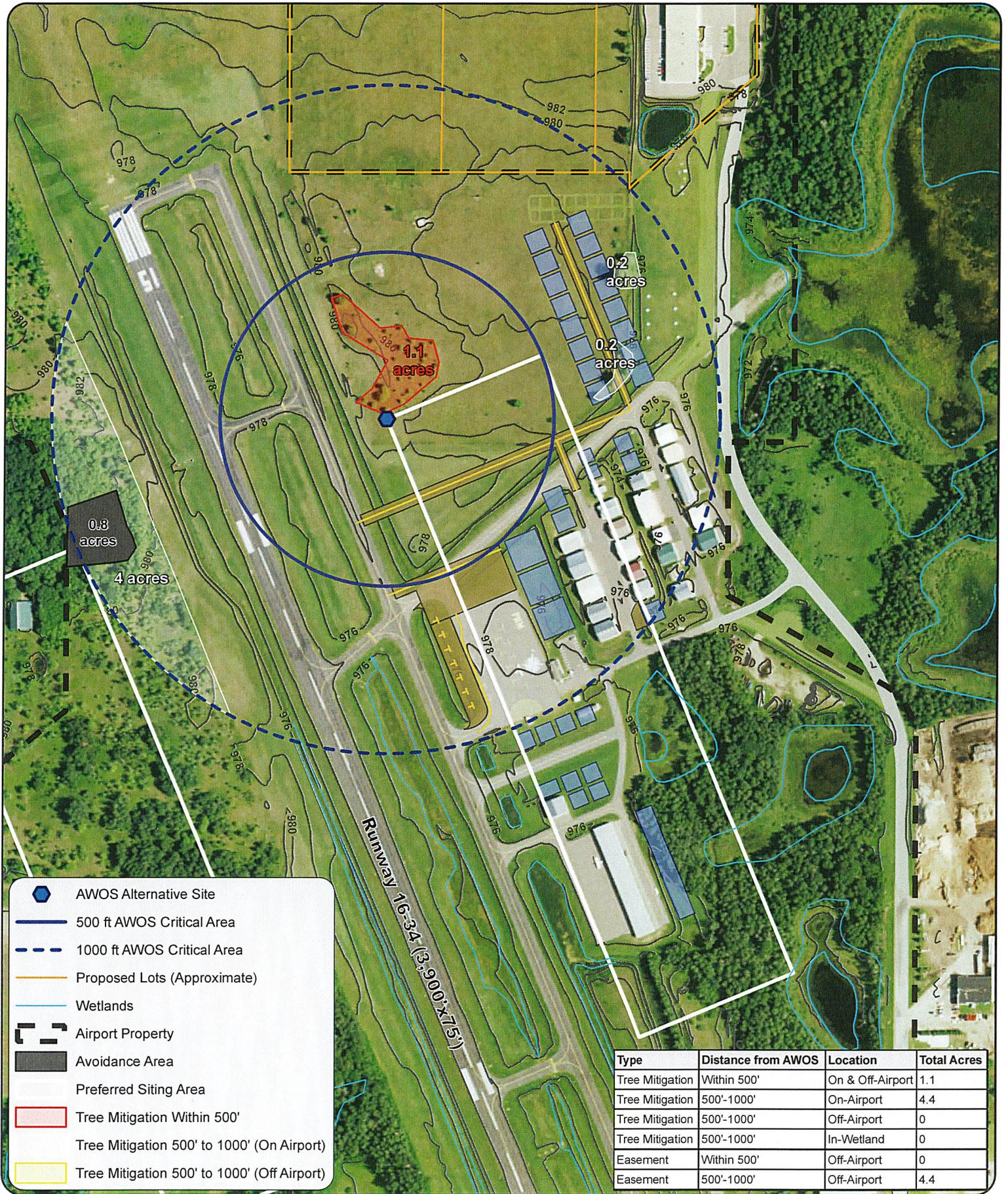
If the FAA and MNDOT desire *Alternative 4 – Revised*, then the City would expect the agencies to find additional funding such that the local share will remain at \$54,073 which is proper stewardship of local funds.

We greatly value the partnership we have established with the State and FAA and the ongoing collaboration in ensuring the safe and efficient operation of our airport. We remain committed to meeting all regulatory requirements and maintaining open lines of communication with your agencies throughout this process.

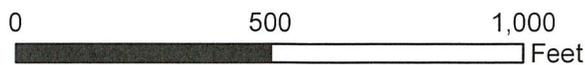
Sincerely,

Thom Walker, Mayor

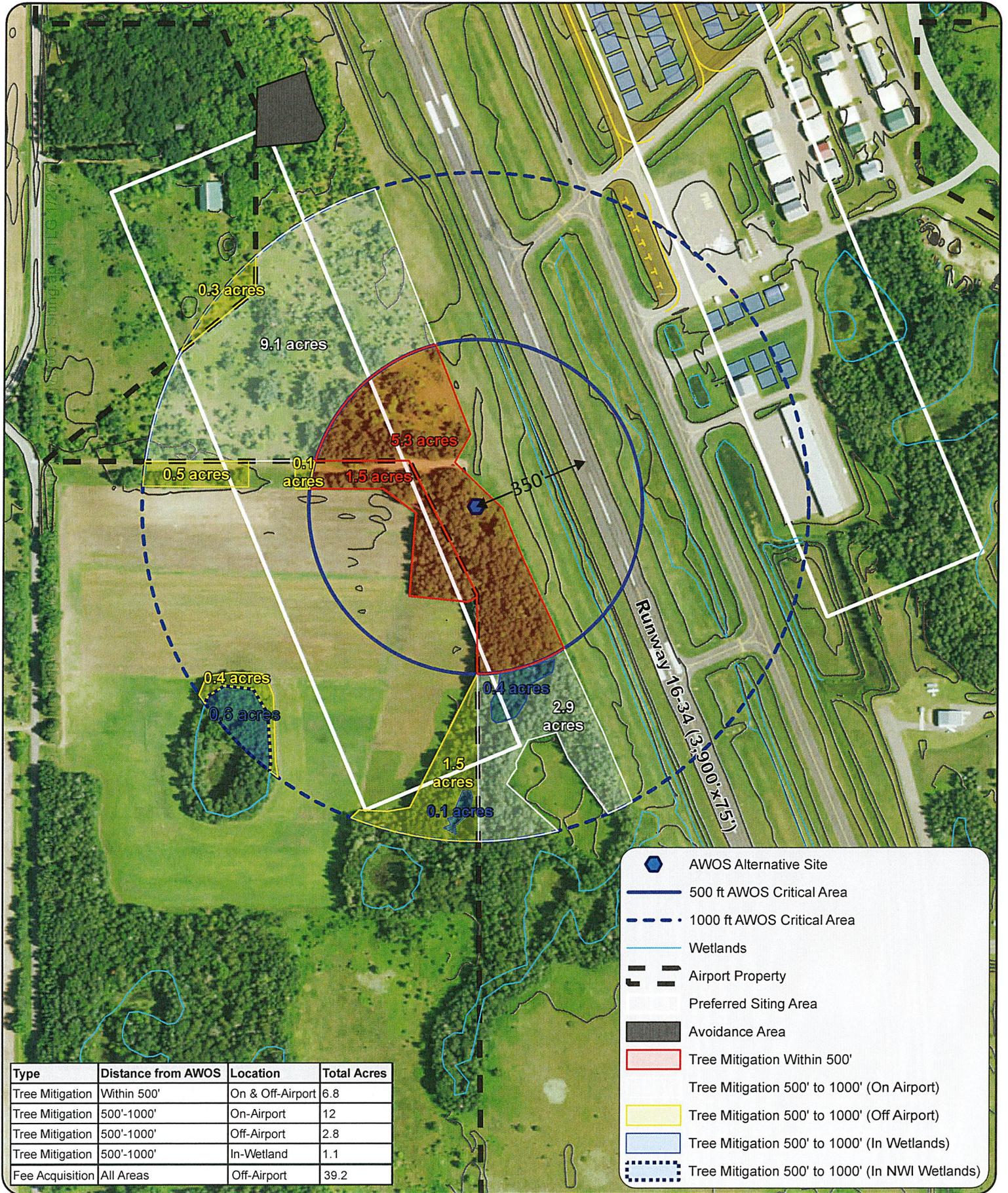
Cc: Mark Johnson, FAA
Tim Jarvis, MnDOT
John Dalton, MnDOT



*Intended for Planning Purposes Only



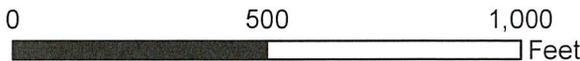
Princeton Municipal Airport
 AWOS Site Alternative 1
 (Revised)



- AWOS Alternative Site
- 500 ft AWOS Critical Area
- 1000 ft AWOS Critical Area
- Wetlands
- Airport Property
- Preferred Siting Area
- Avoidance Area
- Tree Mitigation Within 500'
- Tree Mitigation 500' to 1000' (On Airport)
- Tree Mitigation 500' to 1000' (In Wetlands)
- Tree Mitigation 500' to 1000' (In NWI Wetlands)

Type	Distance from AWOS	Location	Total Acres
Tree Mitigation	Within 500'	On & Off-Airport	6.8
Tree Mitigation	500'-1000'	On-Airport	12
Tree Mitigation	500'-1000'	Off-Airport	2.8
Tree Mitigation	500'-1000'	In-Wetland	1.1
Fee Acquisition	All Areas	Off-Airport	39.2

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**Princeton Municipal Airport
AWOS Site Alternative 4
(Revised)**

AWOS Alternatives Summary Table

Metric	Alternatives	
	Alternative 1 - Revised (East)	Alternative 4 – Revised (West)
Order 6560.20C Preferred Siting Area	Yes	No Lateral is 150' closer to Runway
Contains Avoidance Area	Yes (at 850')	No
Impacts Building Area Development	Yes (15.4 Acres)	No
Tree Mitigation		
Within 500 feet	1.1 Acres	6.8 Acres
500 to 1,000 feet – On Airport	4.5 Acres	12.0 Acres
500 to 1,000 feet – Off Airport	0 Acres	2.8 Acres
500 to 1,000 feet – In Wetlands ¹	0 Acres	1.1 Acres
Easement Acquisition		
Within 500 feet	0 Acres	0 Acres
500 to 1,000 feet	4.4 Acres	0 Acres
Property Acquisition	No	Yes (39.2 Acres)
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact to private property • Least tree mitigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≈ 2/3 of 500' is on airport land • No impact to development area
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts future development area • Avoidance Area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts 1 private landowner • Transitional Surface Penetration • Wetlands
Estimated Cost		
Land/Easement	\$1,760	\$340,000
Tree Mitigation	\$49,500	\$221,500
Site Work and Equipment	\$242,500	\$303,600
Engineering	\$57,250	\$70,000
Funding Participation		
Local	\$54,073	\$130,775
State	\$296,937	\$498,325
Federal	-	\$306,000
Total	\$351,010	\$935,100

¹ Wetlands for Alternative 4 - Revised includes 0.6 acres from NWI for off airport properties