



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

September 26, 2024

Western-Pacific Region
Airports Division

San Francisco Airports District Office
2999 Oak Rd, Suite 200
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Ms. Tamara Vides
City Manager
City of Watsonville
275 Main Street, Suite 400
Watsonville, California 95076

Dear Ms. Vides:

**RE: Watsonville Municipal Airport (WVI)
Sponsor Proposed Closure of Additional Runway 09/27**

This letter is in response to the City of Watsonville's letter, dated April 5, 2024, informing the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the City Council directing the airport staff to explore the process to initiate deactivation of Additional Runway 09/27.

The San Francisco Airports District Office (ADO) is in communication with the Airport Manager, regarding the requested subject runway deactivation.

Previous ADO discussions with the Sponsor included reviews of design options to shorten the length of Runway 09/27, to preserve the City's preference to not relocate hangar obstacles within the existing Runway Visibility Zone (RVZ). We received a Sponsor request for a modification to standards (MOS) for the RVZ that was terminated because the FAA does not allow an MOS for RVZs at non-towered airports. As such, the current Published Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures (reference attached *Watsonville Four Departure - Obstacle*) reflects Runway 27 is Not Authorized (NA) due to airport obstacles. The Flight Procedures Team communicated to clarify to WVI that the removal of Runway 27 from the Departure Procedure is intended for aircraft operating under civil IFR takeoff minimum conditions other than standard and does not affect Visual Flight Rules (VFR) operations at this airport. The most recent FAA-approved ALP on file, depicts Runway 09/27 as a visual runway. There was the subsequent FAA determination that the runway type categorization for runway 09/27 is an Additional Runway and is ineligible for AIP funding at this time.

On January 29, 2024, the ADO communicated via email to the Airport Manager outlining the preliminary steps needed for FAA consideration of the City's proposal to deactivate Runway 09/27. We recommend the City of Watsonville review the following steps:

1. Conduct an Updated Airport Master Plan (AMP) with Alternatives Analysis with public involvement/review. Provide the selected Preferred Alternative airfield geometry reflected on an Updated Airport Layout Plan (ALP) drawing set to the ADO for the FAA review process.

- Airport Master Plan Update should conduct due diligence identification of airfield reconfiguration, meeting current design standards, provide justification for proposed changes, and identify any proposed changes to current dedicated aeronautical-use parcels.
- Provide a list of all Capital projects and estimated costs needed to perform the runway 09/27 deactivation. We highly recommend the updated AMP study effort include engagement with local community for input.

2. The proposed runway deactivation action, reflected on the updated ALP, will be an impact to the National Airspace System (NAS) and will require FAA line of business coordination which may include:
 - LOB coordination to identify effective barrier/visual aids and communication updates to maintain safe operations.
 - Updated IFR Procedures and airport publication coordination.
 - Construction project schedules identified and potential impacts.
3. NEPA will be required for any near-term proposed airfield geometry alteration/reconfiguration.
4. FAA Compliance may need to review applicable grant assurance obligations related to the runway deactivation.
5. Once the previous four steps are complete, the Sponsor would then need file an FAA Form 7480-1, *Notice of Construction, Alteration and Deactivation of Airports*. See Item 5 deactivate and select RWY.
 - Deactivate, abandon, or discontinue using a taxiway associated with a landing or takeoff area on a public-use airport.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 925-546-6432 work or Amy.I.Chi@faa.gov

Amy Choi

Amy L. Choi

Manager, San Francisco Airports District Office

CC: Rayvon Williams, Airport Manager, Watsonville Municipal Airport (WVI)

Attachment: *Watsonville Four Departure - Obstacle*