

## **Proposed massive development at Hanscom – is this what our towns want?**

Plans for a massive build-out at Hanscom Field civil airport were recently submitted by private developers to MEPA (MA Environmental Policy Act) as part of state requirements, with potentially major implications for the four Hanscom-area host communities, Bedford, Concord, Lexington and Lincoln.

The proposed development would **add nearly 500,000 square feet of hangar space on almost 50 acres of land**, equivalent to eight football fields.

Construction would take place on two adjacent properties near Hartwell Road:

- 1) the North Airfield area, owned by Massport, and to its east,
- 2) the former Naval hangar parcel, which was acquired by Runway Realty Ventures, LLC, through a government public auction, 2018-2019.

Runway Realty Ventures, LLC (RRV), owner of the Naval parcel, and Massport's developer, North Airfield Ventures, LLC (NAV), filed a joint ENF (Environmental Notification Form), detailing the developers' plans. The ENF was posted on MEPA's website on 1/25/23.

MEPA is providing three opportunities for public comment and information:

- **Monday, 2/6/23 (two events):**
  - **3:00 pm: in-person site visit, accessed off Hartwell Road, and**
  - **6:30 pm: remote consultation session at 6:30pm via Zoom.**
  
- **Public Comment period ending on 2/14/23**

*(See end of this article for details on how to participate in all three.)*

### **Construction of new, larger hangars**

According to the [North Airfield Development ENF](#), the combined development of Massport's North Airfield and Runway Realty Venture's Navy parcel will provide "approximately 495,470 square feet of hangar space in the form of 27 purpose-built hangars for aircraft parking and storage on-airport. Renovation of the existing Navy Hangar building will comprise 87,110 sf of this total, resulting in 408,360 sf of new building area."

For context, this extensive development project would essentially double the combined infrastructure of the three current Hanscom FBOs (Fixed Base Operators, i.e., aircraft fuel and service stations), even with the removal of older, smaller hangars taken into account. FBOs attract aircraft activity. While the North Airfield project is not explicitly identified as an FBO, it would provide services generally associated with FBOs, such as hangar space, storage, aircraft maintenance – and the sale of aviation fuel (for "self-fueling").

### **Increased ground traffic, impervious surfaces, water use, wastewater**

The proposed [North Airfield development](#) would also add:

- 194 vehicle trips/day, a change from zero
- 23.9 acres of new impervious area, a change from 15.1 acres

- 13,500 gals of water per day, a change from zero
- 12,150 wastewater generation/treatment, a change from zero

**Land Swap and Access Agreement**

Central to the proposed 47-acre development is a Land Swap and Access Agreement between Massport and Runway Realty Ventures, LLC (RRV). The Land Swap would transfer:

- Two parcels of land totaling about 5.2 acres, from Massport to RRV
- Approximately 2.6 acres of land, from RRV to Massport

**Construction of an additional vehicle service road**

Because the value of Massport’s parcels exceeds the value of RRV’s parcel by \$930,000, RRV will be expected to contribute that amount toward the cost of a new vehicle service road on a portion of the periphery of Hanscom Field (the “VSR Project”), and assume all responsibility for its construction.

**Construction of an additional taxiway**

The related Access Agreement, also called a through-the-fence (TTF) agreement, would permit “RRV and aircraft owned and leased by its tenants to taxi their aircraft from the former Navy parcel ‘through-the-fence’ to Hanscom Field” and would allow RRV to construct a taxiway connecting the former Navy parcel with Hanscom Field via Taxiway Romeo, which is immediately adjacent to RRV’s property to the south.

**Reconfiguring Taxiway Romeo to support larger and heavier aircraft**

According to the [Land Swap Terms](#) “Taxiway Romeo currently supports up to design Group III aircraft with weight limits of up to 100,000 pounds.” Of concern, at RRV’s request, the Land Swap agreement *would allow RRV to fund and upgrade Taxiway Romeo to support not only the current Design Group III aircraft but larger and heavier Design Group IV aircraft in the future.*

[Differences between FAA Design Group III and IV Aircraft](#)

FAA Aircraft Category	Wingspan	Tail Height	Typical Weight	Length
Design Group III	79 ft - < 118 ft	30 ft - < 45 ft	Up to 100,000 lbs	n/a
Design Group IV	118 ft - < 171 ft	45 ft - < 60 ft	100,000 lbs - plus	n/a
Design Group III <b>EXS:</b> - Challenger 300 - Gulfstream V (G-V)	63.84 ft 93 ft 3 in	20.33 ft 25.8 ft	Below 100,000 lbs	68.63 ft 96 ft 5 in
Design Group IV <b>EXS:</b> - Boeing 707-320 - Airbus A310-200	142 ft 144 ft	42.2 ft 52.3 ft	Above 100,000 lbs	152.9 ft 153.2 ft

Source for weight data: [Massport Board Meeting Minutes, 10/20/22, pp. 9-15](#)

The developers purport that their 500,000 sq ft of proposed hangar infrastructure is environmentally beneficial as it will reduce the number of “ferry flights”. [Their ENF states:](#) “Currently, aircraft fly in and out empty to pick up and drop off aircraft operators who cannot secure aircraft storage space at Hanscom, as well as employees of Massachusetts-based companies located in close proximity to the Airport. This practice results in extra flights (referred to as ‘ferry flights’) that would otherwise not be required with aircraft stored at Hanscom.”

This assertion is made with no supporting data, and it flies in the face of experience which suggests that the ferry flight operations will continue – overlaid onto the additional operations that aircraft activity from the new hangar space will generate.

The proposed development may have far-reaching effects, given that Hanscom Field civil airport is located adjacent to Minute Man National Historical Park, near Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, and is surrounded by thousands of historic sites in four that millions of people visit every year to experience living history and the peace of the natural world. For decades, Hanscom-area residents and their elected town and state representatives have worked diligently to balance the needs of the airport with the need to protect these irreplaceable resources and the surrounding neighborhoods from the adverse effect of continuous expansion of the airport.

Given the magnitude of the proposed development and its potential impacts, Hanscom-area community members are urged to become informed and raise their questions and concerns.

**Below you will find:**

- **How to submit comments to MEPA & join the two 2/6/23 MEPA meetings**
- **Links to Documents related to the proposed North Airfield Development**
- **Facts about Hanscom Field**

**How to submit comments to MEPA & join the two 2/6/23 MEPA meetings:**

- **Public Comment period, ends on Tues, 2/14/23.**

Comments may be submitted to MEPA contact: [alexander.strysky@mass.gov](mailto:alexander.strysky@mass.gov) or via the [MEPA Public Comments Portal](#).

Note: Please include this reference in the subject line of your Comment:  
“RE: EEA #16654: L.G. Hanscom Field North Airfield Development ENF”  
and include your name and address.

- **Monday, 2/6/23** (two meetings):

**3:00 pm: in-person site visit, accessed off Hartwell Road,**  
across from Edge Sports Center, 191 Hartwell Rd. Bedford, and

**6:30 pm: remote consultation session via this Zoom link:**

<https://vhb.zoom.us/j/84330574548?pwd=eThiOXY3a05YQWRzcGphKzZ0aFpYZz09>

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### **Links to Documents related to the proposed North Airfield Development:**

- **ENF (Environmental Notification Form) on Proposed North Airfield Development**  
Submitted to MEPA by North Airfield Ventures LLC & Runway Realty Ventures LLC
- **Massport Board Meeting presentation on Proposed Land Swap and Access Agreement, 10/20/22** , pp 45-53
- **Massport Board Meeting Minutes, 10/20/22, Proposed Terms of Land Swap & Access Agreement**, pp. 9-15
- **FAA Notice re: Land Swap in Federal Register, 12/15/22**

### **Facts about Hanscom Field:**

- Though they share the same name, Hanscom Civil Airport (Hanscom Field) is owned by Massport and is distinct from Hanscom Air Force Base (HAFB) – which has no runway nor any aviation activity. Rare military flights use Massport’s runway at the civil airport.
- Hanscom is the second busiest airport in New England, and a reliever for Logan Airport.
- In addition to Hanscom Field, Massport also owns Logan and Worcester Airports.
- Massport pays no taxes to its four Hanscom-area host towns: Bedford, Concord, Lexington and Lincoln.
- There are no taxes on private business and luxury jets.

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