

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: August 21, 2013
Bulk Item: Yes No

Division/Department: Growth Management
Staff Contact Person/Phone #: Christine Hurley 289-2517

AGENDA ITEM WORDING: Discussion on the Naval Air Station Key West Airfield Operations Final Environmental Impact Statement (NAS KW FEIS) published in the Federal Register on August 2, 2013, regarding NAS Key West airfield operations and the Navy's selection of Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative and direction to the County Administrator to discuss the unresolved County concerns which were outlined in the County's comment letter to the NAS KW Draft Environmental Impact Statement (NAS KW DEIS).

ITEM BACKGROUND: On June 29, 2012, the Department of the Navy published a notice of availability of the NAS KW DEIS in the Federal Register. On August 15, 2012, the County responded to the NAS KW DEIS with a letter stating 41 specific comments and concerns. On August 2, 2013, the Navy published the NAS KW FEIS (Attachment A – executive summary) and selected Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative, which includes the transition to next generation aircraft (F-35) and carrier air wing Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP) at NAS Key West which may impact the County. While the Navy addressed some of the County's comments, all major substantive recommendations were rejected (Attachment B).

The NAS KW FEIS addresses the potential effects of future aircraft and airfield operations at NAS KW. The Navy evaluated three action alternatives for new aircraft and future airfield operations at NAS KW, and a No Action alternative in the FEIS as follows:

No Action Alternative – Annual airfield operations would continue to occur at a level similar to present (approximately 47,500 annual operations), support of existing capabilities would continue, no new aircraft would be introduced, and no facilities would be altered to support next generation aircraft training operations.

Alternative 1 – Annual airfield operations would continue to be maintained at a level similar to present (approximately 47,500 annual operations), plus legacy aircraft would gradually transition to next generation aircraft, and existing facilities would be altered to meet requirements for next generation aircraft.

Alternative 2 – Same as Alternative 1, plus provides the flexibility to accommodate additional carrier air wing FCLP training at NAS Key West when primary carrier air wing training locations around the U.S. are unavailable. Additional carrier air wing FCLP operations would vary annually based on availability of the primary training locations, but could total up to 4,500 additional annual operations (2,250 patterns). Total annual airfield operations could equal approximately 52,000 operations.

Alternative 3 – Same as Alternative 2, plus provides added operational capacity and flexibility to effectively meet Navy training requirements under the Fleet Readiness Training Plan with an approximately 10 percent increase in other annual airfield operations. Total annual airfield operations could equal approximately 57,000 operations.

Keith and Schnars (K&S) is providing support to the BOCC, County Administrator and the County's Environmental Impact Study Oversight Committee (EIS Committee) in the review and comments in response to FEIS documents. The EIS Committee held a meeting on August 14, 2013 to discuss the NAS KW FEIS and passed a resolution outlining continuing concerns and requesting the BOCC authorizes the County Administrator and K&S to represent the County in conversations and meetings regarding the FEIS (Attachment C).

Again, while the Navy responded to the County's letter with 41 comments, all the major substantive recommendations were rejected and the County remains concerned with the existing and proposed operations at NAS KW. County staff, with the support of K&S, would like authorization to continue the discussion with Navy to ensure not only that the Navy's mission of readiness training requirements is maintained but that the increasing operations at NAS KW will not negatively impact the surrounding community. We strive to work with the Navy to ensure important national defense objectives are met and that the interests and wellbeing of our residents, visitors and natural environment are protected.

A Record of Decision is expected to be issued by the Secretary of the Navy in September 2013 and will be published in the Federal Register. The FEIS is available electronically at www.keywesteis.com.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOCC ACTION: On August 15, 2012, the BOCC authorized the mayor to sign the County's comment letter on the DEIS, drafted by Keith and Schnars, P.A. The County responded to the DEIS with a letter stating 41 specific comments and concerns.

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT CHANGES: N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Authorization for County Administrator, staff and K&S to meet with senior Navy policy officials, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, White Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, members of the Florida congressional delegation and County lobbyist to discuss the County's continuing concerns with the FEIS:

- The establishment of absolute maximum limits on all types of flight operations, including FCLP and night flights. The current FEIS language does not clearly establish limits for the Navy operations;
- The proper evaluation of the baseline condition for existing operations at NASKW. Specifically, the impacts associated with the FA-18E/F Super Hornet were included in the FEIS baseline notwithstanding the fact that the impacts to the surrounding community by this aircraft were not properly evaluated in past NEPA documentation. The Navy's inclusion of the FA-18E/F Super Hornet has the effect of reducing the magnitude of impacts between the baseline operations and the operations included in the preferred alternative;
- The recommendation that the Navy contract with an independent consultant to conduct a noise study to establish an actual noise baseline with actual noise sampling based on industry accepted protocols; and
 - Should the Navy choose not to conduct a noise study, as requested by the EIS Committee, request authorization for the County to contract an independent consultant to conduct a noise study to establish an actual noise baseline with actual noise sampling to document the full impacts to surrounding community and the necessary mitigation by the Navy to alleviate the impacts.
- The full mitigation by the Navy for the impacts associated with the proposed increases in flight operations included in the preferred alternative and as a result of the FA-18E/F Super Hornet to ensure the impacts on existing surrounding community are minimized. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Navy request for statutory authority, where necessary, to provide mitigation to the surrounding community impacted by the proposed increases in flight operations included in the preferred alternative and as a result of the FA-18E/F Super Hornet. Mitigation including, but not limited to:
 - Soundproofing (noise attenuation)
 - The use of alternative runways (i.e., 13/31, 03/21) to alleviate impacts to the surrounding community.
 - Modification of operational procedures and full enforcement of course rules (e.g., altitudes, flight paths) to minimize impacts to the surrounding community.

TOTAL COST: _____ **INDIRECT COST:** _____ **BUDGETED:** Yes ___ No ___

DIFFERENTIAL OF LOCAL PREFERENCE: _____

COST TO COUNTY: _____ **SOURCE OF FUNDS:** _____

REVENUE PRODUCING: Yes ___ No ___ **AMOUNT PER MONTH** ___ **Year** ___

APPROVED BY: County Atty ___ OMB/Purchasing ___ Risk Management ___

DOCUMENTATION: Included X Not Required ___

DISPOSITION: _____ **AGENDA ITEM #** _____