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STEP
SPOKANE TRIBE
ECONOMIC PROJECT

FAA: STEP will not impact Fairchild AFB

*Today's determination is the latest analysis to show
retail/entertainment project will not impact flight operations*

Spokane – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released a study yesterday determining that the proposed Spokane Tribe Economic Project (STEP) “would not be a hazard to air navigation” around Fairchild Air Force Base. This is the second time the FAA has issued a “no hazard” determination for STEP.

The FAA’s findings were based on allowable building heights of 145 feet. However, according to Tribal leaders, final design of the proposed Airway Heights entertainment-resort-retail project will likely include buildings well below the height deemed permissible by the FAA. Spokane Tribal Council Chairman Rudy Peone stated: “Although we are in the preliminary design stages, our current plans call for the hotel tower to be around four stories, which would only be a total of 60 feet in height.”

The FAA’s determination marks an important milestone, affirming that the project – which will invest more than \$400 million to create about 5,000 jobs and an estimated \$50 million annual payroll – can provide an immediate boost to the local community while preserving military preparedness.

“The City of Airway Heights has worked very hard to ensure that our development regulations provide the ultimate protections for Fairchild AFB,” said Patrick Rushing, mayor of Airway Heights. “The Airway Heights City Council unanimously supports the Spokane Tribe Economic Project because the buildings meet all development regulations under the Joint Land Use Study for Fairchild. The economic boost to our region will draw developers and create thousands of new jobs. We are very excited about our future.”

“Our members are ready to get to work and help the local economy. STEP means jobs, and the FAA review is one more confirmation that we can build an amazing development and maintain Fairchild at the highest level,” said Mike Foley, president, Northeastern Washington-Northern Idaho Building and Construction Trades Council.

Today's "Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation" by the FAA is consistent with several comprehensive studies that conclude STEP will not interfere with Fairchild Air Force Base operations.

- In October 2013, the Pentagon examined STEP as part of a comparison of air bases for the new KC-46A tanker. According to *The Spokesman Review*, the [Air Force impact statement](#) "doesn't describe the casino as an insurmountable obstacle to assigning the new planes to Fairchild."
- The [Final Environmental Impact Statement](#) released by the BIA in January 2013 contains an exhaustive analysis of compatibility with Base operations, including consideration of comments from the Air Force, and concludes that STEP will not encroach upon Fairchild Air Force Base operations.
- The February 2013 independent [Madison Report](#) studying the effect of STEP on Fairchild concluded that "STEP complies with Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration regulations and criteria; it clearly does not compromise mission accomplishment or flying operations at Fairchild Air Force Base; and the air operations have little potential impact on STEP, and those who will use and benefit from its existence within the City of Airway Heights and the region."

"The Spokane Tribe reached out early in the project planning to local jurisdictions, the Air Force, and the Federal Aviation Administration to ensure any potential impacts to flight operations are identified and either avoided or mitigated," said Peone.

"The Spokane Tribe has stood true to its word. We understand the importance of Fairchild, and we're extremely pleased by the FAA's second 'no hazard' determination. We are ready to turn our plans into reality, and get our local economy moving. Unemployment is too high for tribal members and others in the community. We have the opportunity to make something together that will benefit Airway Heights, the Spokane Tribe and the region for generations."

The proposed project site is located immediately northwest of the intersection of U.S. Highway 2 and Craig Road and consists of the development of a casino-resort facility, a 300-room hotel, parking structure, retail and commercial uses, a Tribal cultural center, and a Tribal police/fire station.

The STEP project is under review by the Secretary of the Interior. Under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, the Interior Secretary must make a "two-part determination" that the project is in the best interest of the tribe and not detrimental to the community. Gov. Inslee must concur with the Secretary's determination before gaming can occur on the site.

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