DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Connected Vehicle Research Program Public Meeting; Notice of Public Meeting

AGENCY: ITS Joint Program Office, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice.

The USDOT would like input from transportation infrastructure owner/operators on their needs for guidelines, tools, resources, and policies that will support the successful implementation and operations of connected vehicle technologies. The primary target audience for the meeting is State and local Departments of Transportation, transit operators, other operating agencies, and infrastructure owners who are starting to plan for the deployment and use of connected vehicle technologies in their area. While the meeting is specifically focused for an audience that has followed connected vehicle research and is formulating plans for implementation, it is open to other stakeholders in the connected vehicle community, including national associations and the general public.

Attendees will be asked to discuss their needs for guidelines, tools, and resources to best support their decisions and deployments. Attendees will also be asked to identify anticipated institutional challenges. The results of the meeting will be used as input for FHWA’s development of Connected Vehicle guidance that is expected in 2015 and will also inform the Federal Transit Administration.

For more information, please contact Robert Arnold, FHWA, Director, Office of Transportation Management at robert.arnold@dot.gov or by telephone at 202–366–1285. Agenda items for the meeting are subject to change. Meeting information will be posted to the Web site http://www.its.dot.gov/.

Issued in Washington, DC, on the 19th day of December 2013.

John Augustine, Managing Director, ITS Joint Program Office.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Office of Commercial Space Transportation; Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Open a Public Scoping Period, and Conduct a Public Scoping Meeting

AGENCY: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the lead Federal agency. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service are cooperating agencies.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS, Open a Public Scoping Period, and Conduct a Public Scoping Meeting.

SUMMARY: This Notice provides information to Federal, State, and local agencies, Native American tribes, and other interested persons regarding the FAA’s intent to prepare an EIS that will evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the issuance of a Launch Site Operator License to Space Florida. Space Florida, an independent special district and a subdivision of the State of Florida, proposes to construct and operate a commercial space launch site (the “Shiloh Launch Complex”) and two off-site operations support areas. The Shiloh Launch Complex would include two vertical launch facilities that would accommodate up to 24 launches per year (12 launches per vertical launch facility), as well as up to 24 static fire engine tests or wet dress rehearsals per year (12 static fire engine tests or wet dress rehearsals per vertical launch facility). The launch vehicles would include liquid fueled, medium- to heavy-lift class orbital and suborbital vehicles. In addition to the 24 launches per year, the first stage of the launch vehicle could return to and land at the Shiloh Launch Complex. The proposed commercial space launch site is located on the west side of Kennedy Parkway North (State Road [SR] 3), which straddles Brevard and Volusia counties, Florida. Space Florida would be required to apply for a Launch Site Operator License to be issued by the FAA. The FAA will prepare the EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] parts 1500–1508), and FAA Order 1050.1E, Change 1, Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures, as part of its licensing process. Concurrent with the NEPA process, the FAA is initiating National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Consultation to determine the potential effects of the Proposed Action on historic properties. The FAA will also consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act regarding potential impacts to federally-listed threatened and endangered species. Pursuant to the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, this EIS will comply with the requirements of Section 4(f).

DATES: The FAA invites interested agencies, organizations, Native American tribes, and members of the public to submit comments or suggestions to assist in identifying significant environmental issues and in determining the appropriate scope of the EIS. The public scoping period starts with the publication of this notice in the Federal Register. To ensure sufficient time to consider issues identified during the public scoping period, comments should be submitted to Ms. Stacey M. Zee, FAA Environmental Specialist, by one of the methods listed below no later than February 21, 2014. All comments will receive the same attention and consideration in the preparation of the EIS.

ADDRESSES: Comments, statements, or questions concerning scoping issues or the EIS process should be mailed to: Ms. Stacey M. Zee, FAA Environmental Specialist, Shiloh EIS c/o Cardno TEC Inc., 2496 Old Ivy Road, Suite 300, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

Comments can also be sent by email to faashiloheis@cardnote.com or by fax to (434) 295–5535.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
Background

The FAA is preparing an EIS to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the issuance of a Launch Site Operator License to Space Florida. Space Florida proposes to construct and operate a commercial space launch site, called the “Shiloh Launch Complex,” that would allow Space Florida to offer the commercial space launch site to commercial launch providers to conduct launch operations of liquid fueled, medium- to heavy-lift class orbital and suborbital vertical launch vehicles. The EIS will consider the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and reasonable alternatives, including the No Action Alternative. The successful completion of the environmental review process does not guarantee that the FAA would issue a Launch Site Operator License to Space Florida. The project must also meet all FAA safety, risk, and indemnification requirements.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is for the FAA to issue a Launch Site Operator License to Space Florida that would allow Space Florida to offer the commercial space launch site (the “Shiloh Launch Complex”) to commercial launch providers to conduct launch operations of liquid fueled, medium- to heavy-lift class orbital and suborbital vertical launch vehicles. Under the Proposed Action, Space Florida would construct and operate two vertical launch facilities and two off-site operations support areas. The Shiloh Launch Complex would accommodate up to 24 launches per year (12 launches per vertical launch facility), as well as up to 24 static fire engine tests or wet dress rehearsals per year (12 static fire engine tests or wet dress rehearsals per vertical launch facility). All vehicles would launch to the east over the Atlantic Ocean. Under the Proposed Action, the first stage of the launch vehicle could return to and land at the Shiloh Launch Complex or it would land in the Atlantic Ocean.

The potential environmental impacts of all proposed construction activities will be analyzed in the EIS, in addition to the impacts from operating the facilities and launching orbital vertical launch vehicles. The EIS will evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with: Air quality; noise and compatible land use; land use, including Section 4(f) properties and farmlands; coastal resources; biological resources, including threatened and endangered species; water resources, including surface waters and wetlands, groundwater, floodplains, and water quality; historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources; light emissions and visual resources; hazardous materials, pollution prevention, and solid waste; infrastructure and utilities; and socioeconomic, environmental justice, and children’s environmental health issues. The EIS will address the potential environmental impacts associated with reasonably foreseeable changes to land administration, jurisdiction, and management with regards to the lands at the proposed Shiloh Launch Complex site currently administered by NASA and USFWS. The analysis will include an evaluation of the potential direct and indirect impacts, and will account for cumulative impacts from other relevant activities in the area of Brevard and Volusia Counties, Florida.

Alternatives

Based on comments received during the scoping period, the FAA may analyze additional alternatives. However, at this time, the alternatives under consideration include the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, the FAA would not issue a Launch Site Operator License to Space Florida.

Scoping Meetings

Two public scoping meetings will be held to solicit input from the public on potential issues that may need to be evaluated in the EIS. The first scoping meeting will be held on February 11, 2014 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the New Smyrna Beach High School Gymnasium, 1015 10th Street, New Smyrna Beach, Florida 32168. The second scoping meeting will be held on February 12, 2014 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the Eastern Florida State College, Titusville Campus, John Henry Jones Gymnatorium, 1311 North U.S. 1, Titusville, Florida 32796. The meeting format will include an open-house workshop from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The FAA will provide an overview of the environmental process from 6:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. followed by a public comment period from 6:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The open-house workshop will consist of poster stations describing the proposed project and the NEPA process. The FAA and cooperating agency staff will be present during the open-house workshop portion of the meetings to answer general questions on the proposed project and the NEPA process. During each scoping meeting, one designated area of the room will focus on the Section 106 process and solicit public input on the identification of historic properties and potential effects of the Proposed Action on historic properties.

Information on the proposed project and the NEPA process is available on the following Web site: http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ast/environmental/nepa_docs/review/documents_progress/shiloh_launch_statement/.
An airport operator who has submitted Noise Exposure Maps that are found by FAA to be in compliance with the requirements of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 150, may submit a Noise Compatibility Program for FAA approval which sets forth the measures the operator has taken or proposes to reduce existing non-compatible uses and prevent the introduction of additional non-compatible uses.

The FAA has formally received the Noise Compatibility Program for Martin County Airport/Witham Field, effective on December 18, 2013. The airport operator has requested that the FAA review this material and that the noise mitigation measures, to be implemented jointly by the airport and surrounding communities, be approved as a Noise Compatibility Program under Section 47504 of the Act. Preliminary review of the submitted material indicates that it conforms to the requirements for the submittal of Noise Compatibility Programs, but that further review will be necessary prior to approval or disapproval of the program. The formal review period, limited by law to a maximum of 180 days, will be completed on or before June 16, 2014.

The FAA’s detailed evaluation will be conducted under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 150, Section 150.33. The primary considerations in the evaluation process are whether the proposed measures may reduce the level of aviation safety or create an undue burden on interstate or foreign commerce, and whether they are reasonably consistent with obtaining the goal of reducing existing non-compatible land uses and preventing the introduction of additional non-compatible land uses.

Interested persons are invited to comment on the proposed program with specific reference to these factors. All comments relating to these factors, other than those properly addressed to local land use authorities, will be considered by the FAA to the extent practicable. Copies of the Noise Exposure Maps, the FAA’s evaluation of the maps, and the proposed Noise Compatibility Program are available for examination at the following locations: Federal Aviation Administration, Orlando Airports District Office, 5950 Hazelton National Drive, Suite 400, Orlando, Florida 32822.

Questions may be directed to the individual named above under the heading, for further information contact.