

17/35 Runway Safety Improvement Project Stakeholder Comments

County Airports received comments from 49 pilots, aircraft owners, airport businesses and local residents of Gillespie Field during the stakeholder comment period of October 12th – November 30th, 2020.

45 comments are in support of reclassifying 17/35 as a BI Small. The comments primarily cite the costly impacts to stakeholders of tearing down hangars and reducing aircraft parking areas to meet the BII safety area standards. Stakeholders also confirmed the importance and their usage of the runway 17 instrument approach, the crosswind runway and that a BI Small design meets the needs of pilots utilizing the runway.

3 comments received are opposed to reclassifying 17/35, preferring to keep it as a BII runway design. The comments stated items such as runway 17/35 is a waste of time and money, expressed concerns regarding removing displacements and possible encroachment of future building to the north of runway 17.

1 comment received is categorized as other as it did not state a stakeholder opinion, but asked questions regarding the approach to 17, circling and pavement strength.

All comments received are provided below unedited, if personal information was provided within the comment it has been obscured for privacy. Comments are sorted by Support, Opposed and Other; also subcategorized by relationship to airport (Pilot/Aircraft Owner, Gillespie Airport Business, Local Resident).

45 Comments in Support of Reclassifying 17/35 as a BI Small

Pilot/Aircraft Owner:

- 1. Seems like the only realistic option presented other than closing is to reclassify runway 17/35 as a BI Small with the minor changes noted. Keeping it a BII obviously not realistic or practical. As mentioned in the video almost all operations that currently use 17/35 would still be accommodated as a BI small. Appears that the presentation has basically answered its own question if the runway is to remain open. I am not in favor of closing the runway. Thank you.*
- 2. This is a win-win situation. I can see no downside to converting to a B1 small classification. Additional comment: As an active flight instructor, Runway 17/35 offers an excellent tool for intensive cross wind landing practice when traffic is light. The tower can allow 17/35 take off and landings doing "loops", alternating take off on 17, landing on 35, take off on 35, landing on 17. Also, when we are experiencing Santa Ana conditions, 17/35 allows a safer alternative to 27R/L.*
- 3. The requirements for the 17/35 B2 designation infringes upon a physical part of a hangar owned by myself. Therefore, I am all for a designation of 17/35 as a B1 small. the runway, which I use quite often, has been in use for an extended period of time and I can see of no requirement to change it except for onerous and misinformed regulators.*
- 4. It is my recommendation that runway 17/35 be designated BI small, remove displaced thresholds. This is in the best interest of airport businesses, aircraft owners, flight and ground safety, and off-airport local residential and commercial property.*
- 5. Keeping RWY 17/35 open under the BI Small option with the GPS instrument approach to RWY 17 is the best use for Gillespie. While the difference of the minimums for the circling approach and the GPS approach*

are only 140 feet that can be significant when marine layer conditions exist. The major factor though is that a circling approach is more challenging to fly and it is not authorized at Gillespie at night.

- 6. I support the effort to reclassify the Gillespie Airport Reference code for Runway 17/35, a Class B1 small runway in order to keep our GPS approach with the lowest minimums.*
- 7. I am the owner of a small aircraft so the reclassification makes sense and potentially has no impact to me. My concern would be with the proposed runway reduction. Does this mean tearing up the concrete and modifying the taxiways? If so I would want to see the proposed changes. If it is just paint then, would we be allowed to taxi on the runway reductions to prep for take off etc.? Closing 17/35 is NOT an option, as my aircraft is a tail dragger and requires a minimal cross wind component for a safe landings. If the runway closes I would have to find an alternate airfield to park my plane for that reason. I assume that, in the future, if the runway needs to be reclassified to a BII it can be, with the extensive changes.*
- 8. Reclassifying to B1-small with extension modifications as laid out by the Airport Manager looks to be the only solution that will preserve the most existing structures and cost the least to maintain Rwy 17/35 with the best approach and lowest minimums at KSEE. Thanks for all your work on this. Well done.*
- 9. 17/35 is an essential runway to keep at KSEE and based on the information, it seems most logical to make the minor changes and reclassify it as B1-SMALL. The substantial cost savings and maintaining a very viable cross-wind runway is, in my opinion, the best solution.*
- 10. Of the three options presented, the most viable one is to change the runway status to B1-small with the threshold changes. This option makes the best economic sense and according to the statistics preserves 95% of the existing usage. Please the B1-small option.*
- 11. Having watched the presentation re: KSEE classification, classifying the airport as B-1 small seems to have the least negative impact on tenants, pilots, and the Air Traffic Control tower.*
- 12. I support going for B1 (small) to retain the GPS 17 approach, which I use regularly.*
- 13. I am in favor of the B1 small 17/35 classification. Flown from SEE since 1979 and have two personal use aircraft at Sky Harbor. B1 small meets all my needs.*
- 14. Thank you for the clear explanation of the issues on your video. Also, thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. After having reviewed the KSEE classification video, I recommend classifying the airport as B-1 small. This option appears to have the least adverse impacts on the airport tenants, pilots, and the FAA Air Traffic Control tower.*
- 15. To me it's a no-brainer. "Downsizing" the runway to a B1 classification and allowing 99% of the planes that already use it to continue, with minimal changes and costs to the airport, vs making the required FAA changes to keep it viable for that 1% seems a very reasonable alternative. Kudos to the presenter for a clear presentation.*
- 16. I support the B1 option for SEE 17/35. This is the optimum solution for pilots, lease holders, airport revenue, safety, and impact to nearby residents.*
- 17. As a flight instructor and owner of a small business located on the airport, I operate out of Gillespie Field hundreds of flights per year. I respectfully request the County of San Diego Airports and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reclassify the Gillespie Airport Reference Code for Runway 17/35, from a BII*

to a B1 Small. This will minimize impact to the stakeholders, enhance safety of the operations on Runway 17/35 and save money for all involved.

- 18. I support the proposed reclassification to B1 Small with reduced/removed runway thresholds. That will allow the runway to remain open with the least impact to structures and neighboring properties.*
- 19. I feel under the circumstances the best option to retain use of the 17/35 runway is to reclassify it to a B1 Small.*
- 20. Reclassification to "B1 small" seems to be the only practical alternative. (1) We certainly do not want to close runway 17/35, that alternative should be viewed unacceptable. (2) Additionally, from a cost-benefit perspective, justification for maintaining the B2 classification is a struggle. The B2 option is unsupportable considering the lost utilization of airport infrastructure and costs to be incurred. The B1 Small option should work fine for me and with minimum impact.*
- 21. I strongly support reclassification of KSEE as a B1 Small Airport.*
- 22. I am in favor of Gillespie being a B1 airport, general aviation is best supported by this action.*
- 23. Reclassify the Gillespie Airport Reference Code for Runway 17/35, from a BII to a B1 Small.*
- 24. In my opinion, the 17/35 runway must be kept open. If 99% of users can work with a 3,000' runway there should be no problem for pilots making it B1 small. Residents under the extended center of 35 between the airport and Las Colinas may notice lower flying airplanes on takeoff. Everything in aviation is a compromise.*
- 25. I would choose reclassification to minimize the number of lost ty-downs and hangers.*
- 26. I believe that reclassifying Runway 17/35 as "B1 Small" is the most prudent course of action. It is the least disruptive for operations at the airport and for the airport's impact on the surrounding community.*
- 27. Also a CFII operating out of Plus One Flyers. I support reclassifying 17/35 as a B1 Small runway and causing no impact on existing aircraft parking, access roadway, Astria operations, etc.*
- 28. How did it happen that structures were allowed to be built in the RPZs? Is this reclassification on an FAA wish list? FAA bureaucracy hard at work? Federal law? Will encroaching structures be required to be removed? By when? Who pays for the economic loss? The airport runways were there long before any of the current problem buildings appeared. However, it is solely down to a choice between BII, BI, or close the runway, my vote would be for BI.*
- 29. Reclassification of 17/35 runway seems to be the most reasonable and cost-efficient solution for this compliance issue.*
- 30. I recommend reclassifying Runway 17/35 to a B1 small.*
- 31. This proposal seems like a well thought out plan with thw least amount of impact on the tenants and to safety. I'm happy to support it.*
- 32. Your presentation was very helpful and clear - thank you! The B1 small, removing the displaced thresholds seems like the best choice for the community, the airport users, and our first responders.*
- 33. Please reclassify Gillespie Field to a B1 Small Airport. Doing so would be the most cost efficient and least disruptive solution to users and businesses on the airport. It would also save the destruction of facilities,*

loss of an instrument approach and a runway that is noise abatement friendly to the surrounding community, and relocation of the control tower. Reclassify, don't demolish and restructure!

34. *I am a pilot/aircraft owner who has been flying at KSEE since 1978. I have used 17/35 many times over the years for both SEL and glider operations. As a taildragger pilot (C180), it is very important to have a crosswind runway available when needed. Based on the FAA requirements and on runway usage, it seems the only practical path is to reclassify 17/35 as a B1 "small" runway. However, I am concerned about the reduction in overall runway length available for takeoff. By reducing the length you reduce safety on takeoff for both the pilot and those on the ground, as the aircraft will be at lower altitude when passing the airport fence. In addition, noise will be higher for those on the ground. Based on noise only it seems like a simple trade to keep the runway before the displaced thresholds. Based on safety, a trade should be completed between the lower safety due to sight line obstructions and the increased safety from having a longer runway. I appreciate all the hard work on this issue and the opportunity to comment.*

Gillespie Airport Business:

35. *I agree with the planned reclassification of runway 17/35 from BII to BI Small. A couple of questions: Since the runway length will be reduced from 4147' to 3160', will the non-runway pavement be removed? Or, will this area be designated Blast Pad or Clearway? Or will it be marked as an in-line taxiway? If it becomes an in-line taxiway, does the FAA sanction this? Will the stub taxiway pavements be removed? Currently, the hold line distances meet BI Small standards. Will they remain in their current locations? The FAA 5010 form, Facility Directory, and Instrument Approach Procedures will all require corrections. Will this be accomplished by the airport/consultant?*

36. *Support 17/35 runway down grade to B2 small This will retain FBO leases as they are, eliminate building removal and save County and users lots of money. We further support closing runway 35 night operations to allow the current control tower to remain along with that portion of San Diego Aircraft leasehold that includes flight school aircraft parking and the cafe building and a flight school building. Primarily this also saves millions of dollars and will allow County Airports to extend the lease to current FBO so that major needed improvements can be built. County has been withholding lease extensions, unreasonably in my opinion! To be clear, 17 is not affected as the approach and landing visibility to the cross runways is unobstructed - also storms and other weather primarily comes from the south which favors 17.*

37. *The benefits of this action will be a substantial benefit to Gillespie Field in my opinion. Three questions. Is the RVZ as depicted from runway 17 the total RVZ? Or will the RVZ calculated from runway 35 alter the final boundaries? Will runway 35 be closed by Notam during hours the Control Tower is not in operation? This action would improve safety and reduce County liability. This action has been taken by other airports with similar circumstances. Will the current Heli pads on the County ramp be affected?*

38. *I OWN [REDACTED]. I HAVE BEEN AT THIS LOCATION SINCE 1989. OUR HANGAR 8 IS DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY THE BII DESIGNATION FOR RWY 17/35. HANGAR 8 IS LOCATED ADJACENT TO TAXIWAY "B". INITIALLY WE ENJOYED A LARGE APRON AREA BETWEEN THE HANGAR AND THE TAXI WAY WHEREIN WE WERE ABLE TO OPERATE AND PARK HELICOPTERS SAFELY. AS THE RESTRICTIONS OF BII BEGAN TO BE ENFORCED WE LOST THIS OPERATING AREA AND WERE FORCED INTO SMALLER AND SMALLER AREAS THAT EVENTUALLY BECAME UNTENABLE AND UNSAFE. GILLESPIE AIRPORT IS A SMALL AVIATION AIRPORT AND ENJOYS THE SUCCESS OF GENERAL AVIATION. 90% OF AIRCRAFT USAGE AT THE AIRPORT IS LESS THAN 12,500 LBS THEREFORE*

NEGATING THE NECESSITY OF THE BII DESIGNATION. IF THE BII DESIGNATION IS UPHELD I WILL HAVE TO EITHER MODIFY OR TEAR DOWN HANGAR 8. THIS WOULD BE AN UNNECESSARY EXPENSE AND LOSS OF REVENUE. I HOPE SANE MINDS PREVAIL AND RECLASSIFY RWY 17/35 AS BI SMALL. I have a hangar located at [REDACTED]. This is one of the hangars that would be affected if the 17/35 rwy designation is left as BII. I strongly agree with changing the designation to B1 small so as to preserve the status quo. The argument that 99% of all traffic on 17 is compelling and accurate.

39. *We are responding to your information to reclassify the Gillespie Airport Reference Code for Runway 17/35 from a BII to a BI Small. As you can see on the drawings I have included, we would have to remove or greatly modify the following hangars: [REDACTED], are individually owned on our leasehold, and [REDACTED] are Sub Sub Leased to Businesses on our leasehold. All 5 hangars would either have to be modified or removed, at great expense to [REDACTED]. We would lose some very important businesses to Gillespie, as they would probably leave our leasehold and maybe Gillespie Field as we have nothing else that size to offer to them. As a Master Lessee at Gillespie Field we are very much in favor of this change. It will do us great harm if it is not reclassified to a BI Small within the next few years.*

Local Resident:

40. *To whom it may concern, I have long been an avid observer and proponent of the Gillespie field area. From my 1970 involvement helping OES shuttle supplies to Crest for fighter relief, taking my very first ride in a Cessna out of Golden State Flying Club off of Runway 17 out over the now gone stand of eucalyptus trees to the watching of a wide range of aircraft types come and go on a daily basis for many years since. Even the abolishment of the Stock car race track and soon the loss of Airport Drive- where I often enjoy vicariously ride along with our pilots and listen to the outstanding work of our ATC men and women. Gillespie Field improvements and renovations over the years have been both needed and appropriate. As you can see Gillespie Field has been near and dear to my heart for some 50 years! Your presentation and proposed reclassification to Runway 17/35 is well done and I certainly agree that Reclassification to a B1 runway is justified. Thank You for allowing me to express and comment. Resident of East county since 1984 and resident of Santee since 2007. former Member of S.D. Humane Society's Animal Rescue Reserves(1974 to 2014) . Current member of AOPA(Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association).*

41. *I believe that it is critical that runway 17/35 be retained. In my 15+ years of returning from Orange County, I have used that runway innumerable times. Day, night, VFR, IFR. I am familiar with the data that the Airport Manager has prepared regarding the options. I support classifying it as BI small. This retains it as a very serviceable runway.*

42. *KSEE does not require a B-II runway, however it's necessary to keep the 17/35 runway in operation because of its instrument approach, its use by Sheriff's ASTREA and SDGE's fire helicopters, and as a night-time runway that minimizes noise to surrounding housing areas. The cost of remaining with a B-11 runway designation is exorbitant and will cause the loss of businesses, homes and the FAA control tower. Therefore, I support changing the current 17/35 runway designation to a B-I small, which will greatly reduce the areas of non-compliance as well as the associated costs of maintaining the B-II designation.*

43. *It is important for aviation safety to maintain a runway with lower approach minimums and one that allows emergency operations. The option for reclassifying 17/35 as a BI Small makes more economical and operational sense as well as less impacts on businesses within the immediate airport environment.*

Removing 17/35 completely would create a large negative impact to the airport, its operations and the many pilots who regularly utilize that runway.

44. *In looking at the different proposals it appears clear the only viable option is to reclassify 17/35 to a B1small. Though a complete closure is technically an option, the points in the Manager's report show that is not a practical option. SD Sheriff's ASTREA and other related operations are critical to the region's safety so their need for the continued use of 17/35, even after modification, is essential.*

45. *Go to B1 configuration.*

3 Comments Opposed to Reclassifying 17/35, Prefer it Remains a BII

Pilot/Aircraft Owner:

46. *It's a waste of time and money to even consider changes to 17/35. As it intersects the middle of both 27R & 27L, it generally isn't used during calm, or west wind conditions, which usually prevail. The statement in the presentation about Instrument minimums on 17 (1,360) being the lowest is incorrect; RNAV 9L minimum is 1,350.*

47. *Removing displacements on the south end degrades safety for departing aircraft and all people on the ground north of the runway. Departing aircraft with an emergency will be lower leaving less time and space to avoid objects & people. Landing aircraft will have less distance to stop. Once the overall length of the runway is shortened new encroachment to the north will be possible (ALUCP) again making things less safe. It appears that the FAA is either making the airport less safe by imposing restrictions post approved completed development. Either we tear down existing development or make the airport less safe. It's like the county telling you that 25% of your house must be torn down because of new building codes. The FAA did not have a problem until about 20 years ago. The advent of the RNAV 17 should not be an issue since all runways are visible down to about 50' AGL. Are we letting the tail wag the dog?*

48. *It is imperative that pilots have available the RNAV Rwy 17 approach at all times, as it is a safety issue for landings conducted in instrument conditions. From a pilot's perspective, the current runway 17 configuration is safe and spacious. I have never heard a pilot talk about lateral clearance issues from adjacent structures. It would be a much better use of funds to extend runway 9R/27L and leave runway 17 alone.*

1 Comment Received as Other

Pilot/Aircraft Owner:

49. *How would reclassification from B2 to B1 small affect the RNAV app to Rwy 17 for approach category C & D? Does it eliminate the circling mins? They are lower than Loc D circling mins and no straight in mins / circling mins are authorized for RNAV 9L. What is the largest a/c that can land on 17/35 after a reclassification to B1 small? Pavement strength does not appear to be an issue?*