

T.F. Green Airport Master Plan and Environmental Impact Assessment

Study Resource Committee

Meeting Summary July 26, 2001

Introduction

Suzanne Orenstein, Facilitator, opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda and noting that several handouts were provided for this meeting. The handouts included a summary of the small group discussions from the previous meeting.

Wayne Schuster, Director of Planning and Development at RIAC, updated the Committee about plans to revise the 1998 economic impact study, which should add important information to the Master Planning process.

SRC Master Plan/EIS Schedule

The Committee reviewed a detailed schedule for future meetings and the Master Plan process. A copy of the schedule is posted on the airport web site. Several questions were raised about when the discussions of community impacts would be addressed and when public hearings should be held. The discussion of these questions was deferred until later in the meeting.

Discussion of Quality of Life Issues

As planned, the Committee met in small groups to discuss three questions addressing quality of life and community impacts from the airport. The questions were:

1. What does quality of life mean to you?
2. What quality of life issues arise due from the location of the airport?
3. How can these quality of life factors be measured?

The small groups developed the following list of quality of life factors.

- ?? Uninterrupted sleep
- ?? No alteration of social habits, like use of outdoor space to congregate, neighborhood changes, etc.
- ?? Quiet
- ?? Absence of fumes
- ?? Manageable traffic

- ?? Freedom to use outdoor space
- ?? No fear of health consequences
- ?? Absence of fear of accidents
- ?? No decreases in real estate values
- ?? No community impacts on emotional well-being
- ?? Residents are satisfied to stay in their community rather than leave
- ?? Good educational opportunities

In addition to the list of factors, Committee members commented that:

- ?? Some studies measuring quality of life factors exist, e.g. military, nursing homes, Economic Policy Council, etc.
- ?? It may be necessary to distinguish between annoyances, nuisances, and catastrophic impacts, given that humans differ in their tolerance and perceptions.
- ?? Quality of life needs to be defined for the Master Plan/EIS process.
- ?? Quality of life impacts might be addressed by establishing a “box” for the airport, creating a buffer based on preserving Warwick’s quality of life.
- ?? Airport effects on children may need to be assessed separately, as children react differently to some potential impacts.
- ?? May need to go beyond traditional zones, such as noise contours, when looking at quality of life concerns.
- ?? Some who experience quality of life impacts from airport do not benefit from its existence.

The Small Groups developed the following list of quality of life impacts that potentially can be measured.

- ?? Air quality
- ?? Fuel dumping
- ?? Noise levels
- ?? Relative health
- ?? Traffic
- ?? Taxes, at least on a comparative basis
- ?? Real estate value of homes
- ?? Safety records of airplanes and airports
- ?? Jobs and economic opportunities
- ?? Ease of access to airport
- ?? Drinking water quality
- ?? Differences in educational test scores for schools in airport area

Wayne Schuster noted that the airport is studying or will study noise, fiscal impacts of the airport, air quality and safety. The EIS will address many of the other issues. He suggested three factors that the airport would have difficulty measuring: real estate values, drinking water quality, and educational test

scores. However, information about these factors may be available from other agencies or organizations.

In discussing how quality of life issues and community impacts from the airport could be addressed in the Master Plan/EIS process, the SRC suggested that a subgroup begin working on these issues. They asked the subcommittee to identify what quality of life factors will be studied in the EIS and Master Plan processes. They also suggested that the subcommittee identify quality of life data available from other sources. The following members volunteered to work on this subcommittee: Duane Clinker, Jerry Flynn, Raleigh Jenkins, Beth Collins, David Spengler, Karen Kalunian, and Wayne Schuster. They will meet on August 22 from 5:30 to 9 PM at RIAC. They will

- ?? review the list of factors developed by the SRC,
- ?? compare it with list of studies RIAC is conducting or is planning to conduct,
- ?? compare it with studies done by others, including Economic Policy Council,
- ?? determine if there is enough data to address the quality of life questions, and
- ?? develop a report to the full SRC to be presented at the Sept. 24 meeting.

Forecasting Methodologies and Processes

Doug Wilson, Senior Economist from Edwards and Kelcey, continued the presentation on the elements of the aviation demand forecasting for the 20-year Master Plan. The presentation slides are on the Master Plan web site (www.pvdairport.com). Among the questions and comments that Mr. Wilson addressed are the following.

- Q. Can the forecast come up with a projection of increased airport-related noise or traffic in Warwick?
- A. The goal of the forecasting is to develop a projection of aviation demand only. The EIS will identify and evaluate potential noise impacts on the community.

- Q. Will the forecast documents outline the assumptions and parameters that are in the forecasting model.?
- A. Yes.

- Q. What GDP assumptions are you using?
- A. We are using the projections for New England made by DRI.

Comment: It seems that the forecast is key to the development of the Master Plan and that its assumptions are the driving force.

Response: That's why we are going through them with you in such detail. You need to review all information and help determine that the forecast is reasonable

and makes sense. The FAA also will review and comment on the forecast, looking at it from their experience and expertise.

Q. As an airline manager, even I don't know what the airline's future projections for growth are. How are you taking airline realities into account?

A. We know certain markets are growing at certain historic rates. That is the information we have to go on.

Q. Given that the last forecast was valid for only a short period, what can you do to make sure that this forecast works for the airport over the long run?

A. It is not unreasonable that after five years airports have to re-evaluate their forecasts. The forecast is a snapshot, and needs to be updated whenever circumstances change that affect it.

Q. Will there be another Southwest effect or technical improvements included in the assumptions?

A. Yes. We assume there will be a smaller wave of Southwest growth. Also, we assume that Southwest's choice of aircraft will remain the same, though there may be some technical improvements in that aircraft.

Q. Who is doing the forecasting for the regional airport system planning effort? Will the T.F. Green Master Plan be part of that effort?

A. Louis Berger and Associates is the consultant hired for that project. The T.F. Green forecast will probably be taken "as is" into the regional plan. Phase I of the regional system plan is an 18 month study that will focus on forecasting the region's aviation growth.

Q. What happens if the current infrastructure will not support the projected growth?

A. We will look at the impact of the constraints on the airport's ability to handle the growth and plan for what happens if you meet the demand or cannot meet the demand.

Q. Will you be able to run some what-if scenarios regarding how the airport could respond to the forecast results?

A. We will do that as we look at the capacity-constrained forecast and facility requirements. That will show the maximum capacity with the current footprint of the airport.

Comment: Shouldn't we be starting with the constraints and working on the Master Plan from there? We will have civil disobedience if we try to significantly expand the airport.

Response: The forecast will give us information about when we may need to make improvements in the airport's efficiency, and at what passenger levels we will face decisions about expansions, etc.

Response: FAA needs and requires an unconstrained forecast, because we will have to handle the growth somewhere in the regional system, and need to know what it is likely to be.

Q. Is it possible to provide forecast data on three separate constraint scenarios – runways stay at present length, runway 16/34 becomes unusable, and runway 5-23 is extended to 9000 feet? These may be the minimum, maximum and medium growth potential scenarios.

A. This can be done. It may be done in the alternatives development phase of the Master Plan rather than in the forecasting, but this information will be provided to you.

Planning for Future Meetings

Ms. Orenstein reviewed the plan for the September 24 meeting, which is to discuss the forecast numbers, the capacity analysis for the current facility, and possible facility requirements. There was a proposal to also hold a public hearing on the day after the September SRC meeting, but after considerable discussion with the SRC, RIAC agreed to wait until the September meeting to decide about the content of a public hearing.

Some SRC members felt it was essential to develop a clear product, inclusive of SRC discussion, for the public to respond to. RIAC felt that opening the discussion to the general public as soon as possible after the SRC meeting was essential. Others suggestions were:

- ?? There is a need to educate the public about the forecasting process before scheduling a public hearing. Press articles and mailings may be necessary, and they should be provided well in advance, so that citizens can read them before hand.
- ?? The format needs to allow most of the time for the public to voice their concerns, and should not have extensive presentations.
- ?? Don't use a format in which the public views informational displays and stations – that is perceived as “divide and conquer”.

In any case, the September SRC meeting will be open to the public as all of the SRC meetings are, so the press and the public who attend will hear the discussion of the forecast results and the facility capacity and requirements analysis.

Public Comment

Rick Lucas, noted that it is important to outline the issues facing the airport in a way that separates the facts from the myths.

Dan Murphy noted his objections to the use of the term gentrification to describe the quality of life issues for neighborhoods surrounding the airport. He expressed the view that ethnic neighborhoods are a strength of the Warwick area. He further noted that citizen representatives on the SRC have no vote regarding their own future, and that is objectionable to him.

T.F. Green Master Plan/EIS SRC

Attendees, July 26th

Kip Bergstrom, RI Economic Policy
Robert Blaikie, FedEx
Mark Brewer, RIAC
Colby Cameron, RIAC Board
Mark Carruolo, City of Warwick
Michael Cheston, RIAC
Duane Clinker, Cranston
Lindsay Commeau, FAA
Jim Doherty, Southwest Airlines
John Elsoffer, Warwick
Gerald Flynn, Warwick
Kevin Flynn, Cranston
Charles Gaffney, RIAC Board
Patti Goldstein, RIAC
Raleigh Jenkins, C.A.N.
Karen Kalunian, Warwick
Tom Klin, L&B
Al Lamothe, RI Pilots Association
Bob Lamoureux, Warwick
Anthony Longo, Warwick
Robert Martin, Warwick
Mark McKenney, Warwick
Verna Pezzullo, Cranston
Hope Pilkington, Cranston
Janet White Raymond, Providence Chamber
Wayne Schuster, RIAC
David Spengler, Thrifty Car Rental
Katherine Trapani, EDC
Vince Scarano, FAA
Paul Silva, Dept. of Transportation
Walter Slocumb, RI Statewide Planning
John van Woensel, L&B

Alternates

Robert Eagan
Joseph Solomon
Robert Sangster
Dave Mills