



Tenant Workshop Master Plan Update St. Lucie County International Airport Meeting Minutes



Date: June 30th, 2009 @ 2:00 pm EST
Subject: Master Plan Alternative Development Workshop
Attendees: Attached Sign-In Sheet
Author: Tricia Fantinato

These meeting minutes provide a summary of the information and comments provided during the Tenant Master Plan meeting. Please note that Mr. Philip Jufko, Director of Planning for The LPA Group Incorporated, acted as moderator during this process. Comments or questions provided by him to stir discussion are designated as “Moderator Question or Comment”. Tenant questions or comments will be designated as such.

Copies of the meeting presentation and agenda are provided on the project website (www.stlucieco.org/airport). SHOULD YOU DISAGREE WITH THE INFORMATION IN THIS RECORD, PLEASE ADVISE IMMEDIATELY (TFantinato@lpagroup.com). Thank you.

I. Introduction

Phil Jufko (the Moderator) started the meeting by providing a brief introduction of the Master Plan Process. The Moderator also provided information to the tenants on “where we are in the process” and that copies of all presentations, meeting minutes and working papers are available through the County’s website. He also stated that input from the Tenants, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Public will be used to produce the planned short and long-term Airport development illustrated in the master plan update.

II. Purpose of Planning Workshop

The Moderator stated that the purpose of the meeting workshop/charette was to obtain input related to future airport development. The workshop included three distinct exercises in an effort to determine: community perceptions of the airport in general, the long-term vision of the airport as well as specific development ideas related to land use, zoning, and airside and landside facilities. This information is to be used as the basis for the airport alternative development options to be presented in the master plan update and at the next meeting.



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III. Current Perceptions of the Airport (Exercise 1)

- a. The first exercise identified public perceptions (advantages and disadvantages) associated with St. Lucie County International Airport (FPR). To facilitate the discussion, The Moderator provided the following questions:
- What do you feel are the advantages and disadvantages associated with this airport especially with regard to future development?
 - What are the perceived impacts of the airport on the surrounding community?
 - Is the County and surrounding municipalities targeting the right industries?
 - What is needed to attract these industries to the County?
- i. Tenant Perceived Airport Advantages:
1. Amount of Land
 2. Unlike other airports, relatively few complaints from the public. However, the majority of the public do not even know this airport exists.
 3. International Customs facilities for both sea and air
 4. The airport still services the South Florida Region but airspace and air traffic around FPR is light.
 5. The Airport and its tenants provide employment opportunities
- ii. Tenant Perceived Airport Disadvantages:
1. Distance from Residents (this is a perceived problem) – Residents may complain about low flying and loud aircraft, but, according to FAA INM model, noise contours do not exceed the airport property.
 2. Runway Pavement Strength compared to airports north and south – limits the type and configuration of aircraft which may operate at FPR.
 3. Runway Length – limits the type and configuration of the aircraft which may operate at FPR.
 4. Custom's representative stated that the current Custom's facilities need to be updated. **Tenant Question:** Who controls the US Customs facilities? **Custom Official Response:** The U.S. Customs officers just have a key to the building; it is up to the Airport/County to maintain and update facilities.



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iii. Operational Issues

1. Runway pavement strength limited to aircraft with MTOW of 60,000 lbs or less.
2. Runway length – impacts the type of aircraft that may operate at FPR.
3. However, the Moderator stated that if the airport/County plans to use public funding, they are obligated to follow certain processes which provide justification in the short term (5-years) as well as evaluate potential economic impacts to the airport and surrounding communities.
4. **Moderator:** ‘even if a runway extension is funded through local and private funding, the Agencies (FAA and FDOT) will still require justification and environmental evaluation in order to have them participate in the runway upkeep as well as associated taxiway development’.
5. **The Custom’s Officer** stated: ‘that according to their mandate, headquarters will not allow U.S. Customs to clear aircraft with passengers and crew in excess of 20 people at a General Aviation (GA) airport.’
6. Since the Dash-8 used by Bahamasair has a seating capacity of 50 seats, the airport would need to be designated commercial according to U.S. Customs directives.
7. **Airport Director:** ‘What happens if the passengers and crew were pre-cleared? Would there still be an issue?’
 - a. According to Custom’s, since the passengers would not be going through the Custom’s facilities, this requirement does not apply.
 - b. However, in the case of “an emergency”, the U.S. Customs officials would be able to accommodate passengers and crew in excess of 20 people. However, this must be considered on a case by case basis.

iv. Planning Issues

1. What are the impacts of extending the primary runway (east, west or combination of both)?

Moderator: As part of the planning process, LPA will evaluate the runway length required, what impacts would be associated with an



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extension to the east, west or some combination of both, and if it would be better to simply reserve property for future aviation development.

2. Where should the terminal go in the short-term and long term?

Moderator: This will be evaluated based upon input obtained from this committee and the Technical Advisory Committee which will be used in determining the long-term direction of airport development (i.e. general aviation or commercial), planned airfield and support improvements/requirements and on and off airport land use. The Master Plan Team is working with the County's Transportation Planning Organization to improve surface road access and coordinate compatible land use. Further, the information provided in the master plan update will be incorporated in the St. Lucie County updated Comprehensive Plan.

v. Economic Issues

1. FBOs are losing money since they can accommodate larger aircraft but because of runway strength and length, they are limited to smaller aircraft. This in turn impacts future capital improvements at FPR and employment.
2. The lack of a commercial airport within 30 to 45 minute driving distance may be perceived as a negative impact to an industry that might consider relocating to FPR and the County as a whole.
3. **Tenant Question:** Who markets the airport or does the County/airport wait for people to just come to them?
 - a. **Volo Aviation Representative** stated that they are trying to attract businesses to the area, but everyone is cutting back on capital investment as a result of the recession.
 - b. **The Airport Director** also stated that the County's Economic Development Council is actively trying to attract potential businesses to the area while also marketing the airport as a County asset. She further stated that the Airport is definitely on the radar for a number of businesses because they see its potential (uncongested airspace, available land, Air Traffic Control Tower, etc.). In addition the Airport has received a lot of press recently as a result of several newspaper and magazine articles.



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4. However, all industries are reevaluating their short and long-term planning strategies as a result of the recession.
5. **Moderator:** Still this is the best time to plan since there is no pressure to accommodate a new business or industry. It allows “outside the box” type thinking to address the current and future economic climate.
- vi. Additional Tenant Comments:
 1. Perimeter Security – Need to control people from going where they are not supposed to on the airfield. With the addition of the planned public trail on the east side of the airfield, fencing will need to be erected to protect the airfield from potential unauthorized access.

IV. Strategic Visioning Exercise (Exercise 2)

The second exercise was designed to obtain input from the Tenants and public concerning the long-term vision of the airport. Thus, the moderator requested that attendees develop a newspaper headline related to airport development over the next 20+ year planning period. An example was “Boeing opens maintenance plant at St. Lucie County Airport – Provides 500 new jobs”. Headlines and comments from Tenants provided below:

- “St. Lucie International Airport completes 30-years of Land Acquisition.”

Tenant Question: Will this be the last of the 30-year land acquisition?

Airport Director: The master plan will identify if more land is needed to accommodate proposed development.

Note: No other headlines were provided by the group.

- a. **Moderator Question:** Is it viable that FPR could become a Commercial Service Airport?
 - i. **Moderator Comment:** Yes, it is viable and will be considered as part of this master plan update. However, by design, a commercial service forecast was not developed. Therefore, proposed development may strictly be limited to preserving portions of the property for future development.
 - ii. **Tenant Comment:** Because of the lack of incentives and interest by businesses, development should be kept to a “slow crawl”.
 - iii. **Tenant Comment:** However, it is necessary to plan for development so that design, environmental, zoning, and permitting issues are addressed prior to the need for the facility development.



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- iv. **Tenant Question:** Would a master plan be done in another 5 to 10 years.
 - 1. **Moderator:** Yes, another master plan would probably be done within that timeframe based upon demand and development.

- b. **Moderator Comment:** Since there have been previous discussions of relocating the airport to a “Green Site”, we would like to address some issues associated with that evaluation.
 - i. **Moderator Comment:** Development of a “Green Site” will take much more time (at least 10 years) than retrofitting the existing airport. In order to develop a green field site, the following steps will need to be taken:
 - 1. Site Selection (several alternative sites will need to be evaluated based upon airspace, environmental, land use, zoning, topography, access, infrastructure and cost).
 - 2. Justification for a new site will need to be provided as well as Benefit Cost Analyses. This will be followed by an Environmental Impact Statement and Master Plan before design can even be started.
 - ii. Whereas, the development of the existing airport site already has an existing revenue stream, facilities/infrastructure, has available land, etc. Development of the existing airport will still, however, require justification and an environmental analysis to identify and mitigate potential impacts.
 - iii. **Moderator Comment:** Also, the Florida Aviation System Plan (FASP) already has recommended that St. Lucie County International Airport be developed long-term as a commercial service airport to support population growth in the Treasure Coast Region. There are also issues associated with existing grant assurances. The FAA may or may not allow the County to pay back their grants, and the FAA/FDOT may force, as part of the grant assurance policy, to keep the existing airport open for a specified time. Unless the impacts are too great, FAA and FDOT will try to convert an existing airport to accommodate this type of service since infrastructure and funding mechanisms are already in place.

- c. **Moderator Question:** What are some target industries that the Airport could attract?
 - i. **Tenant Comments:** Bonded Warehouse, some sort of Air and Sea Connection, etc.
 - ii. **Moderator Comment:** Historically, airports have been interested in attracting air cargo operators. However, because of tough economic times, cargo carriers are reevaluating their models by increasing their use of trucking for local (up to 900 miles) deliveries.



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V. Overview of Airport Facility Requirements

An overview of facility requirements based upon the FAA approved forecast was presented to the Tenants. This information was used to assist the Tenants in creating long-term development options for FPR. Based upon identified issues, some potential alternative airfield and terminal options were presented to the Tenants for their review.

- i. Land use on the airport and contiguous to the airport property will affect future aviation and non-aviation development. The Master Plan Team is working with the local planning organizations to identify compatible land use development and improved surface access to existing and proposed aviation and non-aviation facilities. As part of the master plan process, the Team will evaluate both existing and previous land use and zoning recommendations associated with future airport and off-airport expansion.
- ii. The airport property includes several foreign trade zones. While this may help induce some businesses to relocate to the area, it is by no means the “magic bullet”.

b. Facility Requirements and Preliminary Alternative Options

- i. The current location of Runway 14 may mistakenly promote runway incursions. Thus, two runway extension options were illustrated to resolve this problem.
Tenant Comment: The second option which removes the threshold of Runway 14 from the object free area of Runway 10R-28L is the better option.
- ii. Two runway extension options and a runway shift option for Runway 10R-28L were also presented to the Tenants for their evaluation and consideration.
- iii. Other issues that needed to be considered as part of Exercise 3 were:
 - Existing pavement conditions and strength
 - Taxiway width requirements
 - Aircraft access to Runway 10L-28R
 - Navigational Aid, lighting and air traffic requirements
 - Surface Access, terminal and non-aviation development, etc.

VI. Alternative Airport Development Exercises (Exercise 3)

Because the number of participants was limited, it was decided not to break into teams but to discuss future development as a group. The Moderator directed the group to consider:



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future airside, landside, and support facilities, on and off-airport land use, and surface access. Recommendations presented during the meeting are provided as follows.

- a. **Tenant Comment:** Mr. Curtis King had a drawing that showed the north side future industrial development as well as the expansion of Indrio Road to 4-lanes.
- b. **Airport Director:** pointed out that the north side property does not have any current utilities; therefore, additional costs may be incurred as part of development. However, several properties to the south and east of Runway 10R do have utilities and surface access already in place. Thus during development, the master plan team, tenants and TAC must consider the trade-off of impacting these parcels with a runway extension or developing as is but reserving property on another portion of the airfield so that the revenue from these parcels may be used to support future development.
- c. **Moderator:** As part of the master plan update, the team will also evaluate:
 - i. The impacts of the approach and departure surfaces on planned airport development,
 - ii. Land use zoning on and off airport,
 - iii. Aviation and non-aviation development opportunities which may support the County's efforts to make the airport self-sufficient,
 - iv. The impact of the FPL Power lines, existing canals, roadway expansion requirements, surface access, age and type of facilities, etc.
 - v. Since GA development is primarily controlled by the FBOs (Volo Aviation and Key Air), The LPA Group requested copies of the short and long-term plans for the airport in order to identify if forecast GA demand is met.
 - vi. Potential short and long-term commercial terminal locations will also be identified as part of the master plan process. Further, if the airport does become commercial service, it will need to adhere to Transportation Security Administration (TSA) requirements. Therefore, would US Customs and TSA share facilities; would they have separate facilities; would there be overlapping requirements, etc?
- d. The group determined that it may be in the best interest of the airport to preserve property for future aviation development and then reevaluate during the next master plan update.

VII. Questions and Comments



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- a. **Moderator:** Information and recommendations provided at this meeting will be used to develop approximately three alternative options for FPR. This development will not only incorporate the recommendations of the tenants, TAC, and public but the information provided in previous planning reports. Further, consultation with local planning authorities will be held in an effort to coordinate off- and on-airport development options. The master plan team will evaluate each of the alternatives against constructability, funding, environmental and permitting requirements, drainage, community acceptance, etc.
- b. **Tenant Question:** Is there an operations threshold which would cause the U.S. Customs to increase their hours of operations?
Customs Official Response: Historically, U.S. Customs has seen marginal traffic from 0800-1000 and after 1600 (4:00 pm). Their peak time is between 1000 and 1400 (2:00 pm). Unless there is a significant demand for services, it is unlikely that the U.S. Customs hours will increase to pre-2001 levels.
- c. **Airport Director Question:** What happens if Ferry Service starts up at the Port? Would U.S. Customs work with operators to accommodate demand?
Customs Official Response: Since most ferry services in other areas (such as West Palm) have failed, it is unlikely that U.S. Customs will “ramp up” to meet this anticipated need. CBP staff will likely not change and the hours of operation for the ferry service would be accommodated with existing staff.

Tenants at the next Workshop/Meeting will be presented three alternative development options including the pros and cons associated with each to allow individuals to make an informed decision related to future development at FPR over the twenty-plus planning period.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm EST.