

Airport Master Plan - Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) Kick-off Meeting

Date: August 19, 2014 – 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Location: Community Center, Buena Vista
AIP Project: Airport Master Plan

In Attendance:

PAC Members -

Charlie Abel, Airport Advisory Board/Abel & Eggleston
Keith Baker, Town of Buena Vista
Sue Boyd, Business Owner
Linda Bruce, FAA
Judy Hassell, Airport Advisory Board
Mike Hickman, Town of Buena Vista
Duff Lacy, Buena Vista Trustee
Bill Lockett, Airport Advisory Board/Collegiate Peaks Realty

Dee Miller, Town of Buena Vista
Brandy Reitter, Town of Buena Vista
Mal Sillars, Century 21 Summit Realty Inc.
Dennis Heap, Business Owner

Airport Staff -

Jill Van Deel, Airport Manager

Other Attendees -

Brent Jewell, Vista Inn

Consulting Team -

Hilary Fletcher, Jviation
Angela Folkestad, Jviation
Colleen Cummins, Jviation

1. PAC Welcome, Expectations, Ground Rules, Goals, Role and Responsibilities, and Communication

Jill Van Deel opened the meeting by welcoming members to the PAC and introducing Brandy Reitter, Town Administrator, and the consultant team. Hilary Fletcher briefly introduced the Master Plan project and noted she would be the meeting facilitator. All participants introduced themselves, identifying their affiliation to the airport and their interest in the airport.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- Requested glossary of terms is handed out at next PAC meeting.
- Requested list of PAC members and discussion of distribution.
- Gratitude expressed by several for invitation and opportunity to be involved as a diverse group is integral to process.

2. Airport Systems & Key Relationships

Hilary provided the PAC with an overview of the national and state airport systems and discussed AEJ's role within each. She also discussed the roles and relationships the FAA, CDOT, Buena Vista, and the Airport Advisory Board play in relation to the airport. Linda Bruce of the FAA provided supporting comments specifically noting the regional partnership of airports in Colorado.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- Linda clarified that the lines depicted on the IFR Flight map represent destinations and not single flights.
- Federal investment in airports stays at airport and a public use airport receiving federal funds cannot stop specific users from using; similar to highways, cannot stop a truck from driving on it.
- The importance of distinguishing between the title of General Aviation (GA) and Commercial Airport. Specifically, it should be identified that GA airports are not in competition with Commercial airports and vice versa.
- The National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) has approximately 3,000 airports of which 2/3 are GA.
- Colorado has 370 airports and approximately 30 airports that FAA does not fund but the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) does.
- Important that Airport Board members aid in promoting the importance of AEJ with CDOT as well as with the FAA.
- Discussion about year AEJ was established in current location (1983) and previous location near rodeo grounds.
- Comment noting safety of aviation as a transportation option and effort made by FAA, states, airports to constantly improve safety.
- Aircraft noise reduction efforts have been continuous for decades and airports create noise abatement procedures when necessary. Important to protect vacant land around an airport to prevent future noise issues.

3. Airport Financing

Hilary provided an overview of airport funding from the federal, state and local level. This included discussion regarding airport revenue generation, as well as funding for airport improvements. Linda provided supporting comments specifically about the Transfer Program which is unique to Colorado. The program groups four airports together to share entitlement funding (\$150,000 per year for GA

airports). Three airports give entitlement funds to other in a given year and then receive repay to others over next three years. GA entitlements may only be shared with other GA airports.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- The split between FAA and CDOT regarding Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant funding requirements.
- 2013 CDOT airport grants totaled approximately \$20 million which was atypical as normally it is closer to \$15 million.
- The percent of the annual operating budget dedicated to Commercial and General Aviation.
- The historical data outlining total airport funding requests and the amount actually distributed.
- Entitlements versus Discretionary funding.
- Very few airports are self-sustaining.
- Discussion about Denver International Airport auctioning older equipment which is a benefit to GA airports statewide.
- General questions were also asked and responded to by Aviation staff and FAA representative Linda Bruce.

4. Federal & State Grant Assurances

Hilary discussed the obligations and requirements associated with accepting federal grant funding under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). Specifically, federal law requires airport sponsors to follow 39 identified grant assurances. State grant assurances were also briefly discussed.

- Question was asked how airports were typically zoned.
 - Colorado requires an airport overlay zone and individual airports typically have their own zoning reference but often times are zoned as industrial.
- Grant Assurance 4 (Good Title) – each time an airport acquires land it must have good title. The FAA is aware questions exist at AEJ about land which is why title research was included in the Master Plan grant.
- General questions were asked and responded to by Aviation staff.

5. Future Air Service & Crosswind Runway

Hilary discussed the requirements for scheduled air service, 14 CFR Part 139, as well as the Essential Air Service (EAS) program which was established in 1978. The EAS program stopped taking new entrants in 2012.

- AEJ wouldn't have the market to support an airline on its own thus funding would need to be found to subsidize an airline.
- Existing airports that are relatively busy are still paying \$4-5 million per year to subsidize the airline(s).
- FAA funds may not be used to subsidize.

- Part 139 requirements are also a challenge, especially the Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) as must be onsite to meet three minute response time.
- Question asked if AEJ was able to obtain Part 139 and get air service if they would lose the \$150,000 entitlement funds received each year.
 - Linda noted that commercial service airports receive additional funding if over 10,000 annual passengers - the amount is \$1 million per year.

It was asked if a crosswind runway would be possible to plan for in the Master Plan as it is needed for smaller aircraft.

- Linda noted that it would be unlikely the FAA would be able to fund but if needed, AEJ should plan for it and protect necessary land.
- Question arose whether AEJ should protect for the “large” or “small” crosswind.
 - It was determined that the smaller one should be protected as the larger crosswind would require the relocation of County Road 319 which is unlikely to happen.
 - Currently thinking of a dirt crosswind to save costs but will request an analysis in Master Plan.

6. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Hilary asked the PAC, “Given your current knowledge, perception and understanding of AEJ, how would you rate the airport overall on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the best)? Individual ratings were between 2 and 4 with an average of 3.3. Hilary then asked what could be done to bring AEJ up to a 5. The following items were given and discussed:

- Focus on what you are good at
- Foundation/Infrastructure/Plan
- Community Value/Awareness
- Revenue Generation
 - Land Leases
- Instrument Landing System (ILS)
- Infrastructure
- Land Acquisition
- Community Perception
- Positive Cash Flow
- Marketing Town and Airport
- Space for Aircraft Parking (specifically hangar space)
- Top Notch FBO
- Better Understood in the Community
 - Value, Services, Integrated in Local Economy
- Infrastructure

- Industry at Airport
 - Land Acquisition
- Community Support
- Integrating w/Businesses
- Become an Asset
- FBO Improved
- Community Education
- Growing Industry
- FBO
- Identity of Airport

Hilary then asked the PAC what the strengths of AEJ were and the following items were given and discussed:

- Long Runway
- Open Terrain of Valley
- Full Length Taxiway
- Great Facilities
- Staff
- Rental Car
- Terminal
- Location
- Political Support
- Good Weather
- Town Amenities
 - Rafting/Skiing/Hiking
- Town Facilities
- Adventure Tourism

Opportunities:

- Ski Areas
- Tourism Industry
 - Local and Regional
- Great Access to the Airport
- Positive Energy in the Community
- Technology
 - Virtual Control Towers
- UAS/New Industries
- High Altitude Training/Testing
- Fire Fighting/Heli-Base
- Alternate GA Traffic
 - ASE, EGE, RIL

- Colorado Center & Colorado Mountain College (CMC)
- Aviation Business
 - Development on airport
- Existing Business
 - Boeing, Army, etc.

7. Master Plan Process

Colleen Cummins provided an overview of Master Plan process. This included a discussion of the different project phases and the task associated with each. She also explained the special emphasis on public engagement and education to be included with this project, outlining the various tools available to perform these tasks. An overview of the project timeline, highlighting the key milestones and PAC meeting dates, was also given.

Colleen identified the next steps of the project as well as a tentative time period for when the next PAC update will occur. The next meeting with the PAC is scheduled to occur in December.

Hilary closed the meeting by thanking the PAC members for their participation and emphasizing the PAC's role in representing the community, as this will be vital to the success of the Master Plan. Jill also expressed appreciation for everyone's participation.