



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

Date: May 15, 2013 - 8:00am to 11:00am
Location: Carnegie Building, Durango
AIP Project: Airport Master Plan

In Attendance:

PAC Members

Bob Allen, Allen & Associates
Linda Bruce, FAA
Mike Burns, Alpine Bank
Travis Craig, Vectra Bank
Jim Davis, La Plata County Public Works
Gary Derck, Airport Commission
Mike Foutz, FCI Contractors
Tom Gessel, Mercy Regional Medical Center
Ray Hagerman, Four Corners Economic Development
Al Harper, American Heritage Railways
Marilyn Lang
Doug Lyon, DATO Board
Peter Marshall, Double Tree Hotel
Emily Meisner, The Patio Restaurant
Kristen Muraro, Ska Brewing
Matt Muraro, Colorado Dept. of Transportation
Brian O'Donnell, Conservation Lands Foundation
Jim Ottman

Airport Staff

Kip Turner
Tony Vicari

City Staff

Sherri Dugdale

Kris Oyler, Steamworks Brewing Co.
Marsha Porter-Norton
Sheri Rochford-Figgs, STEAM Park
Steve Schwartz, Fort Lewis College
Steve Parker, Airport Commission
Brad Tafoya, Tafoya Barrett & Associates / Economic Alliance
Jim Tencza, La Plata County Planning Commission
Tim Walsworth, Business Improvement District
Bill Webbe, Glacier Club
Bruce Whitehead, Southwest Water Conservation District
Milton Williams, Durango Taxi
Roger Zalneraitis, La Plata Economic Development Alliance
Christi Zeller, La Plata County Energy Council
Tim Zink, Three Springs

Consulting Team

Hilary Fletcher, Jviation
Dave Nafie, Jviation
Colleen Cummins, Jviation

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

Kip Turner opened the meeting by welcoming members to the PAC and introducing the airport staff, city staff, and consultant team. Dave Nafie briefly introduced the Master Plan project and introduced Hilary Fletcher as the facilitator. All participants introduced themselves, identifying their affiliation to the airport and their interest in the airport.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- ➔ The makeup of the PAC along with the role of the FAA and CDOT within this process.
- ➔ 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. Force Field Analysis

Hilary asked the PAC, "Given your current knowledge, perception and understanding of DRO, how would you rate the airport overall on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the best)? Individual ratings were between 2 and 5 with an average of 3. Hilary then asked what could be done to bring DRO up to a 5. The following items were given and discussed:

- Larger, more efficient terminal facility with air traffic control tower (ATCT)
- Year-round competition for United into Denver
- Distinct TSA facility
- Direct flight to/from Houston
- Direct flight to Albuquerque (to foster connections on Southwest)
- Better access from northern New Mexico
- Improved amenities both inside and outside security (restaurants, Wi-Fi access, etc.)
- Safer access to the terminal / improved internal circulation
- Increased/improved public transportation to/from DRO
- Park/Ride facility
- Improved parking
- Improved signage (interior, exterior, larger FIDS)
- Common customer service representative in terminal
- Constant staffing of airline counters
- Better sense of place in terminal / Distinct Durango feel
- Additional art (specifically local themes – Durango, Ignacio, etc.)
- Fly local campaign
- Competitive air service
- Consistent airline service (more guarantee that your flight will actually leave on time and/or not be cancelled)

- Jet bridges
- Shared regional vision (Durango, Northern New Mexico, Southwest Colorado as a whole)
- Time ratio – fly vs. 8 hour drive
- Improved professionalism from all service areas (airlines, restaurants, rental cars)

Positives of Existing Facility

- Very easy to get in and out
- Convenient parking
- Views of La Plata Mountains

3. Master Plan Overview

Hilary gave an overview of the goals, role, and responsibilities of the PAC. She also outlined the communication protocol to be utilized throughout the project.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- ➔ We need to keep in mind that La Plata County is forecasted to increase in population by 20-25k over the next 20 years. Hilary noted that the forecast will analyze local and national factors thus such information will be captured and considered.

4. Airport Systems & Key Relationships

Hilary provided the PAC with an overview of the national and state airport systems and discussed DRO's role within each. He also discussed the roles and relationships the FAA, CDOT, La Plata County, and the Regional Airport Commission play in relation to the airport. Linda Bruce of the FAA provided supporting comments.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- ➔ The classification of DRO as a primary in the national system and major commercial service in the state system and the benefits of these roles.
- ➔ 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.
- ➔ Request for a map which provides passenger final destinations.

5. Key Relationships & Roles

Dave Nafie continued with discussing the roles and relationships the FAA, CDOT, City of Durango, La Plata County, and the Durango-La Plata County Airport Commission play in relation to DRO.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- How does the transportation security administration (TSA) fit into process?
 - Relationship with airport is transactional, i.e. TSA informs DRO what is needed and Sponsor provides (space, equipment, etc.).
 - TSA has own funding to hire employees/staff
- What about perimeter security?
 - TSA focuses on terminal and access to/from gates.
 - TSA has a safety plan filed with FAA as the two agencies work together.

6. Airport Financing

Dave 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.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- The split between FAA and CDOT regarding Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant funding requirements.
- 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.
- Historically DRO has not received a lot of discretionary funding which places them in a better position for future discretionary grants.
 - DRO hasn't requested as annual entitlement funds were sufficient for needs.
 - DRO has been well maintained and has not had a "crisis" which required significant funding.
- Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs) – asked if determined amount locally.
 - Yes, but has a cap of \$4.50 per passenger which is currently what DRO applies.
 - PFC is an FAA program thus airports must submit an application for use of funds to ensure comply with federal law.
- DRO is currently self-sustained and does not receive additional funding from municipality budgets.
- Discussion regarding whether or not an airport could apply for 501c3 (non-profit) to receive funds, i.e. Friends of the Library model?
 - Not aware of an example, however, would need to be a separate organization such as ones similar to those communities do for air service.
 - Hilary noted she is aware of two airports that received money from a private donor for runway extensions but does not think they were tax exempt.
- Is there an example of a Regional Transportation Authority contributing to airports?
- Request to know existing footprint of airport as well as neighbors.
 - Dave noted that the Inventory chapter of the MP document will detail existing information such as footprint and an Airport Property Map (APM) will be developed

to illustrate title information on property as well as show adjacent properties to DRO.

- ➔ How will cost of operating an expanded or new terminal compare to cost of existing?
 - Dave noted that a cost estimate for each alternative evaluated will be done and a specialty consultant is part of the team to consider and analyze the information. Estimate this information to be done around November/December 2014.
- ➔ General questions were also asked and responded to by Aviation staff and FAA representative Linda Bruce.

7. Federal & State Grant Assurances

Dave 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 if FAA could fund improvements to county road in front of airport.
 - Not typically unless part of a larger project at airport which would require road modifications/improvements.
 - Linda Bruce noted that airports should be careful using FAA funds for roads not involved in a larger project as the airport as then road is dedicated for airport use.
- ➔ General questions were asked and responded to by Aviation staff.

8. Master Plan Process

Dave provided an overview of Master Plan process. This included a discussion of the different project phases and the task associated with each. He also provided the key features and additional study components including GIS data and environmental data collection. Dave 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.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- ➔ Request to obtain the prior/current Master Plan.
 - Document as well as any other appropriate past documents will be uploaded onto project website.
- ➔ Did the prior/current Master Plan do a good job of forecasting where we are today and if not how will this Master Plan be different?
 - It did not project the amount of enplanements occurring today. This plan will develop contingencies to address realistic growth scenarios that could impact facilities; however, we cannot guarantee 100% accuracy.
- ➔ A list of projects completed since prior Master Plan was requested.
 - Dave noted that a list of completed projects will be made available on the project website.

- What environmental studies will be needed following the Master Plan? Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?
 - Colleen Cummins explained that an EIS is not anticipated based upon the development likely to be proposed. To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) an Environmental Assessment (EA) will most likely be acceptable. The document would contain development expected in the next 5 to 10 years.
- What impact might wind turbines or solar energy arrays have at DRO?
 - FAA recently put regulations in place for solar arrays and wind turbines which requires an airport to go through a process to ensure the proposed solar or wind is compatible with the airport.
- How does the FAA plan for un-manned aircraft in our airspace?
 - Linda Bruce noted that the FAA is working with other agencies to resolve issues and that a national policy does not currently exist. The airspace issue is quite considerable and until solved it is not possible to determine impacts to airports.
- How can we proceed with confidence when it comes to airline service? Can we trust them to provide service, stay at DRO, etc?
 - The forecast developed during the Master Plan is a tool for DRO to talk to air carriers about future and success at DRO. Air service development, however, is a separate issue from the Master Plan.
 - Hilary noted that she understands cynical perception of airlines based upon past. However, it is our obligation to put DRO in its best position moving forward as no one can predict airline service.
- Airport tours to be scheduled with small groups and will not be your average tour but a behind the scenes tour, i.e. “Go where your bag goes”.
- General questions were asked and responded to by Aviation staff.

Dave Nafie 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 July.

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. Kip also expressed appreciation for everyone’s participation.

Discussion followed and PAC comments included:

- The meeting time (8:00am) worked well but a new meeting location requested.
- Wednesdays and Thursdays determined to be best days to hold meetings.
- July and August are tough months for people due to vacations and peak tourism time in Durango.
 - Hilary noted that advanced notice would be sent out in order for members to be able to attend.



General Comments from the PAC:

- Be careful with public outreach. No matter how much you publicize meetings, a segment of the public will still tell you that “I didn’t know about this”. Also, don’t rely exclusively on the Durango Herald to publicize meetings.
- The PAC/public will always want to air their grievances with the airlines. It may be beneficial to designate an “airline complaint period” at every meeting, and then move on.
- We need to really promote the use of DRO locally. A “Fly, Don’t Drive” or “Fly Local” campaign may be needed. Many people are willing to drive to Denver or Albuquerque.