



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Airport Department

## Memorandum

**DATE:** April 20, 2022  
**TO:** Airport Commission  
**FROM:** *BD* Brian D'Amour, Interim Airport Director  
**SUBJECT:** Update on New Service Animal Relief Area Project

---

### RECOMMENDATION

That Airport Commission receive a staff presentation regarding the development of a new Service Animal Relief Area (SARA) at the terminal of the Santa Barbara Airport (SBA).

### DISCUSSION

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires all airports with 10,000 or more annual enplanements to provide a wheel chair accessible SARA for service animals accompanying passengers. The Santa Barbara Airport, classified as a primary (servicing more than 10,000 annual enplanements), and small hub airport, must meet this requirement. Since SBA has only one operating terminal building, only one SARA is required.

SBA currently has an existing SARA, located outside, near the Gate 6 ground-boarding exit. The existing SARA does not meet certain design elements required by the FAA and is not in the most convenient location. The new SARA will have enclosed fencing with a wheel chair accessible gate and will be outside in the grassy area in front of the terminal closer to the primary concentration of arriving and departing passengers. Signage at the entrance of the SARA will establish guidelines for using the SARA facility and inform passengers that non-service pets may use the facility as well. Additionally, SBA will update all directional signage for the new SARA and include supplementary guidance for passengers with vision impairments.

The FAA also requires that all airports building a SARA facility, must consult with at least one service animal training organization regarding the design of the SARA. SBA has contracted with Paws & Effects, a non-profit organization which promotes and trains service dogs, to consult on the new SARA design elements and proposed location. Normally, the FAA requires SARAs to be located within the sterile area of the airport terminal, however, the FAA allows exceptions to this rule, primarily if the consulting

animal training organization, the airline carriers and the airport all agree that a SARA would be better suited outside.

On Wednesday, August 13, 2022, the Airport Project Engineer briefed the station managers of SBA's commercial airline carriers and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) management staff on the new proposed SARA. There were no objections to the proposed outdoor, pre-security, location. Paws & Effects has also previously supported the proposed outdoor location. Therefore, SBA will plan the construction of the new SARA in the proposed outdoor location and not within the terminal's post-security, sterile area.

SBA is currently designing the new SARA facility, and will present before the City's Architectural Board of Review in late spring of 2022. SBA anticipates completing the construction of the new SARA in fall of 2022.

**PREPARED BY:** Phil Davis, Airport Project Engineer