



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Airport Department

Meeting: 3/6/2024  
Agenda Item No. 13

**DATE:** March 6, 2024  
**TO:** Airport Commission  
**FROM:** Chris Hastert, Airport Director *CH*  
**SUBJECT:** Santa Barbara Airport Master Plan Update

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Airport Commission receive a status update on the Santa Barbara Airport Master Plan Update.

**SUMMARY:**

Santa Barbara Airport (SBA) staff will provide an update to the Airport Commission on the progress of the Master Plan Update (MPU). This informational item is the mid-point of the MPU process and an invitation to participate in the future of the SBA and possible new development projects. An update will be presented to the Santa Barbara Planning Commission on March 7 and Santa Barbara City Council (Council) on March 12. In addition, a Public Workshop will be held on the evening of March 7, 2024. The draft plan will be reviewed in the Fall of 2024 and the Council and Airport Commission will be the deciding bodies on the final draft.

**DISCUSSION:**

SBA is a "small hub" airport currently served by United, Alaska, American, and Southwest airlines and their affiliates. Delta Airlines will return to SBA in June 2024. Since the new Airline Terminal opened in August 2011, SBA has experienced approximately 40 percent growth in enplanements (i.e. commercial passenger boardings).

SBA's capital project program is "demand based," i.e. development occurs in response to reasonably anticipated demand for facilities. In 2012, an aviation forecast was prepared in support of the 2017 Airport Master Plan which identified growth in commercial aviation at SBA reaching 657,000 annual enplanements by the year 2032.

While the most recent Santa Barbara Airport Master Plan (AMP) was completed in 2017, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidance encourages updating Airport Master Plans periodically (5-10 years). Such updates account for changes in conditions and operations, such as the recent change in fleet mix from regional jets to widebody jets at SBA, and to ensure that the document is responsive to current and forecasted needs.

In 2022, the FAA's Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) estimated SBA exceeding 668,777 annual enplanements in 2026. Thus, the most recent TAF indicates that the 2017 AMP build-out figure of 657,000 annual enplanements may be exceeded by 2026. SBA initiated a Master Plan Update in 2022 to account for additional growth that is currently outpacing the 2017 AMP and the most recent FAA TAF.

### *Airport Master Plan Background*

An AMP evaluates an airport's needs over a 20-year planning period for airfield, terminal areas, and landside facilities. The goal is to document the orderly development of facilities essential to meet an airport's needs, in accordance with FAA standards, and in a manner complementary with community interests. The plan results in a 20-year development for a financially resilient facility, reflective of the updated Airport Capital Improvement Plan and graphically depicted by the Airport Layout Plan drawings. An approved plan shows how an airport will satisfy FAA design standards and seek project funding eligible under the respective federal and state airport aid programs.

An MPU was included in the Fiscal Year 2022 Airport Capital Improvement Plan, which is 90.66% funded by FAA. A Request for Qualifications was issued by SBA staff in February 2022. Two proposals were received in March 2022, and interviews were held with both qualified firms in April 2022. Consultant interviews were held with a panel of Airport staff, which unanimously agreed to select Mead and Hunt, Inc. based on their qualifications and proposed team; they began work in July 2022 following Council approval. An update on Airport Capital Improvements and the MPU was presented to Airport Commission in June 2022 and Council in August 2022.

## **Project Update**

### *Technical Progress*

The MPU was initiated by data gathering and site visits by Mead and Hunt to SBA in August 2022. This data included topographic and environmental surveys and baseline information on existing facilities. In addition, operational data was gathered related to commercial and general aviation at SBA, as well as financial information and facility conditions.

Based on data gathered, and new 2022 TAF data from FAA, Mead and Hunt created a draft forecast chapter of the MPU, which will serve as the basis for planned future improvements over the next 20 years. The draft forecast chapter was reviewed and approved by FAA after it was made publicly available for review and comment in March 2023.

Mead and Hunt also provided a draft Environmental Conditions chapter, based on information gathered by their subconsultant Rincon Environmental. Additional future deliverables for the MPU include: an Archaeological report; an Airport Recycling, Reuse, and Waste Reduction Plan; a Facility Requirement memorandum; an Alternatives working

paper; a Financial Feasibility Analysis and Facilities Implementation Plan; an Aircraft Noise Analysis; and a revised Airport Layout Plan. Each of these deliverables will be part of the MPU and submitted to the FAA for review and approval.

Mead and Hunt are coordinating closely with simultaneous projects at SBA, which include the terminal addition and parking structure conceptual design, the Fixed Based Operator (FBO) redevelopment project, the Sea Level Rise vulnerability assessment and adaption plan, the Master Drainage Plan Update, and more.

Currently, Mead and Hunt plans to present the preferred development alternatives and ultimate development concept developed from the facility requirements analysis of the MPU following a series of input meetings in April 2023 and November 2023. The presentation will focus on the major changes recommended for the Airport over the next 20 years. Such changes include a preferred alternative for the ultimate runway configuration of a dual runway system with the closure of Runway 15L/33R, as the Airport is not eligible for future FAA funding for three runways. In addition, the preferred alternative for the taxiway system reflects geometric changes and improvements associated with a runway system with a single crosswind runway. The MPU also considers additional aircraft hangars, vertiports, a parking garage, fuel storage improvements, and a long-term terminal reconfiguration to address the long-term demand of 1.1 million enplaned passengers towards the end of the 20-year planning period.

The presentation will also include rough order-of-magnitude planning level cost estimates for the proposed alternatives and the overall ultimate development concept. The initial cost estimates will be presented in 2024 dollars. The timing of project implementation and associated cost adjustments will occur in the next phase of the MPU.

Lastly, the MPU process is guided by FAA requirements, one of which is to conduct a noise analysis that compares baseline (existing conditions) noise contours to projected future noise contours. The study will use the FAA's required noise modeling software, the Aviation Environmental Design Tool (AEDT), to model aircraft operations into and out of SBA. The computer model inputs will be based on the baseline and FAA-approved forecasted activity levels for 20 years into the future. Like topographical maps showing the elevation of terrain in an area, these noise contours are useful for comparing aircraft noise exposure throughout an airport community. The baseline and future sets of noise contours will be compared to each other to see how noise is projected to change with potential future improvements and changes in aircraft operations.

The noise analysis presented for the MPU is a cumulative metric. Cumulative noise metrics have been developed to assess community response to noise. They are useful because these scales attempt to include the loudness and duration of the noise, the total number of noise events, and the time of day these events occur into one rating scale. The FAA has approved the usage of the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) metric in California for land use compatibility analysis. CNEL, expressed in dB, is the annual, 24-hour average sound level, obtained from the accumulation of all aircraft operations, with the addition of a 5-decibel penalty added to noise events occurring in the evening (7 p.m. to 10 p.m.) and a 10-decibel penalty added to nighttime noise events (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.).

The 5 and 10 decibel penalty for evening and nighttime aircraft operations accounts for the fact that noise events during the evening and night hours are more intrusive when ambient levels are lower, and people are trying to sleep. The 24-hour CNEL is annualized to reflect noise generated by aircraft operations for an entire year and is identified by noise contours showing levels of aircraft noise.

Mead and Hunt will explain and present the noise contours to the committee members, council members, commissioners, and the general public.

### Stakeholder Engagement

In September 2022, a series of meetings were held with various SBA and community stakeholders. These meetings were conducted in person at SBA and included representatives from the City of Goleta, Visit Santa Barbara, UCSB, Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, SBA commercial and general aviation representatives and more. The intent of the stakeholder meetings was to gather feedback on the socioeconomic factors that influence the Airport and vice versa. In addition, feedback was collected specifically on the SBA facilities and where improvements could be made. The stakeholder groups were also asked to provide feedback on environmental considerations, other trends, and possible impacts related to SBA.

Based on the participation from the August 2022 preliminary stakeholder engagement, two working committees were formed: a Community Input Committee (CIC), and a Technical Input Committee (CIC). Working meetings were held with both committees in October 2022 and valuable specific feedback was received from a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats exercise facilitated by Mead and Hunt.

At the request of FAA, SBA made the draft forecast chapter publicly available on the SBA website in early 2023. The availability was advertised in City News in Brief, Santa Barbara News-Press, and Voice Magazine, and the interested parties list for the MPU, in both English and Spanish. Additional CIC and TIC meetings were held in April 2023 to assess facility requirements and an update was provided to the Planning Commission and the Airport Commission. Additionally, a hybrid Master Plan Update Public Meeting was held in April 2023.

Additional meetings were held with the CIC and TIC in November 2023 to review draft Alternatives, facility requirements, and gather feedback. An interim update was also provided to the Airport Commission in November 2023.

### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The FAA, under authorization from the United States Congress, distributes Airport Improvement Program funds each year. The FAA grants fund will cover 90.66% of City staff time as well as consultant costs for the MPU.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:**

The Santa Barbara General Plan focuses on a stated mission statement of “Living within Our Resources” and stresses sustainability for development (City of Santa Barbara 2011).

Also, a guiding principle of the 2017 AMP and the MPU is to support the sustainable design of Airport facilities and the wise use of resources. The MPU will be consistent with the Santa Barbara General Plan and will incorporate the guiding principles throughout the development of alternatives. The MPU will also support the policies of the Local Coastal Program for that portion of the Coastal Zone encompassing the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport that are protective of the natural resources abundant in Airport and Goleta Slough. Also, the MPU will incorporate updated forthcoming sea-level rise data into the alternatives and will examine aircraft electrification and sustainable aviation fuels. The MPU will also address known and foreseeable environmental challenges that may complicate projects, which will facilitate sustainable project implementation. Lastly, the MPU will update the existing SBA Recycling, Reuse, and Waste Reduction Plan.

A copy of the contract may be requested from the Airport Department for public review by contacting [SBA\\_MPU@SantaBarbaraCA.gov](mailto:SBA_MPU@SantaBarbaraCA.gov).

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

The projects and alternatives identified in the 2017 Airport Master Plan were included in the adopted 2017 Airport Master Plan Environmental Impact Report. The MPU, and any new projects or alternatives will be subject to additional California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. Any projects that are selected for development as part of the MPU will be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as well as the California Coastal Act.

**PREPARED BY:** Sara Iza, AICP, Airport Land Development Manager