Palomar Airport Feasibility Study – FAQs as of 1 August 2013

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Q: Does this feasibility study mean the runway extension will move forward?**

   A: The Feasibility Study will be one component of overall Master Planning for Palomar Airport. Through the Master Plan and CEQA/NEPA review process, the County and FAA will determine if a runway extension will be a part of future airport improvements.

2. **Q: Does this feasibility study commit the County to proceed with the runway extension and safety improvements?**

   A: No. The purpose of this feasibility study was to provide information to determine if a runway extension is possible according to certain criteria. At this point, no action, other than to receive this report for information, is planned from this study.

3. **Q: Precisely, what types of improvements are being proposed?**

   A: No improvements are proposed at this time. The feasibility study considers extending the runway surface over the existing inactive landfill. During the review, it was determined that an Engineered Materials Arresting Systems EMAS system on the west end would enhance safety at the airport.

4. **Q: Why do we need a longer runway at Palomar?**

   A: The economic benefit of a longer runway improves the regional economy with additional jobs, revenue, and taxes received from airport business. Increased runway length gives pilots the ability to lift off and land with extra margins of error, and an EMAS at the west end of the runway will reduce or prevent overrun directly underneath the departure zone. The safety improvements at the departure end, or "West End" of the runway are presented in the study as a safety precaution or enhancement and not intended to remediate any current safety deficiency. Aircraft accidents are a result of a number of factors, and as ground facility managers, County Airports is committed to exploring safety improvements. The new 20-year Master Plan for Palomar Airport will analyze opportunities to provide safe and efficient movement to air and ground traffic at the airport.

5. **Q: How do you determine the economic benefit of a runway project?**

   A: Potential economic benefits of a runway extension would be realized throughout the North County region. The benefits include the economic development of local aviation businesses, air visitor revenues, hospitality industries, and the creation of jobs and income for workers.

6. **Q: What is included in the payback?**

A: On-airport revenues include employment income, business revenue, and government agency revenue. Air visitor direct revenue includes direct jobs in the service area such as lodging, food service, auto rental, retail, and entertainment.

7. **Q: How much of the project's payback period money would be seen by the County?**

A: County Airports would see increased revenues from some of the fees that are charged to airport users. The rate of return on the County's investment in its infrastructure is not accounted for directly to our budget, but is expected throughout the region where the increased economic activity would be realized.

8. **Q: Why is payback important to the County?**

A: The FAA may not fund as much of a runway extension project as may normally be expected, therefore it would be important for the County to determine how the return on the investment relates to the cost associated with the extension. A Benefit/Cost Analysis was conducted and demonstrates that the cost of the project is outweighed by the economic advantages.

9. **Q: Will the airport traffic increase with a longer runway?**

A: Ground and air traffic at Palomar is expected to continue to increase over time whether the project is constructed or not. The annual operations difference in 2021 for no project as compared to an extended runway is 3,000 total operations (159,100 as compared to 162,100).

10. **Q: With a longer runway will the airport be a louder airport than it is today?**

A: Based on a shift in the runway to the east, the overall footprint for the 65 DNL (contour line of noise sensitivity) shifts to the east towards industrial-use properties and farther away from residential properties to the southwest. This is due to the aircraft being able to increase flight elevation levels sooner.

11. **Q: How much will this cost and how will it be paid for?**

A: Estimated costs for the extension alternatives range from $22.5 to $69.7 million. The west end safety improvements are estimated to cost $25.4 million. Total construction cost estimates range from $47.9 to $95.1 million. If a project is approved for construction, a combination of local, regional, and federal funds may be used. If approved, the safety improvements recommended on the west end would most likely be paid by the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant funding from the FAA. The runway extension construction would likely be paid through AIP funding with a greater percentage County participation level than the standard 10% for safety improvements.

12. **Q: Why would the County spend taxpayer money on such a project?**

A: Improvements to the County's infrastructure and transportation network, including Palomar Airport, is a critical component of regional economic activity. The identified economic benefit to the North

County economy suggests this is a good investment with a potential $163.2 million increase to the regional economy over the next 20 years. Improvements to airport facilities are normally funded from the FAA with a small percentage of local matching funds. If this project were to be approved for construction, a combination of local, regional, and federal funds would likely be used.

13. **Q: If the project is phased over time, what is the incremental cost for building the project in phases with Alternative A being built first and when additional funds become available completing the build out to achieve Alternative B?**

A: The incremental cost if the project is phased with Alternative A being built first and then Alternative B being constructed at a later date is approximately $4.5 million in 2013 dollars.

14. **Q: How does a longer runway benefit aircraft operating from Palomar?**

A: A longer runway enables a plane to take off with more weight, and fuel is the heaviest part of an airplane. With more fuel onboard, planes can travel farther. A longer runway makes for more efficient aircraft travel since stop-overs for refueling are reduced or eliminated.

15. **Q: What percent of Palomar's aircraft will be able to depart with 90% fuel load with the 900 foot extension?**

A: The 900-foot extension would serve the most demanding B-II aircraft (Falcon 2000) at 90% of its useful load. Therefore, essentially all B-II aircraft would be capable of operating at 90% of their useful load.

16. **Q: What area businesses will benefit from a runway extension?**

A: Area businesses known to operate business jets at the airport include Qualcomm; Life Technologies; Incredible, Inc.; Helix Electric; Pacific Specialty Insurance; Liberty Woods International; Relational Investors; Michael Crews Development. Area hotels, food service, and other aviation-related businesses could also benefit from a runway extension.

17. **Q. Why is the west side important?**

A: West end improvements are safety related only. Addressing the safety issues associated with the aircraft using the airfield is paramount to the airport operations, since 97% of the operations are departures to the west.

18. **Q: Why are west side safety improvements sized so large?**

    A: West end improvements would be sized to pr ovide the required Engineered Materials Arresting Systems (EMAS) bed required to stop the largest aircraft currently using the airport while allowing rescue equipment full access around the stopped aircraft.

19. **Q: Is this runway unsafe without the "West End" Improvements?**

    A: Safety improvements at the departure end, or "West End" of the runway are presented in the study as a safety precaution or enhancement and not intended to remediate any current safety deficiency.

20. **Q: How does the Master Plan affect this?**

    A: Results of the feasibility study will be considered during the development of the new 20-year Master Plan improvements. The technical data developed within the study will be incorporated into the technical data of the Master Plan.

21. **Q: Would the runway extension impact the approach patterns?**

    A: The approach threshold on the east end of the runway would be shifted only 400 feet farther east. This would have only a minor effect on the approach patterns. No other flight pattern changes were discussed.

22. **Q: Is a B-II airport unsafe for aircraft in the C/D category?**

    A: An airport that does not meet the FAA design standard guidelines for a particular classification of aircraft is not necessarily unsafe for operations by those aircraft. Under federal law, the FAA has the exclusive authority to regulate aviation safety. Unless the FAA determines an airfield to be inherently unsafe, the final decision to land or depart is up to the aircraft operator who must abide by the Code of Federal Regulations for the aircraft and its operation.

23. **Q: If the airport is not fully designed for the C/D category business jets, why not ban them from using it?**

    A: Per FAA regulations, airport sponsors (such as County Airports) that receive grant funding from the FAA cannot limit size and scope of aircraft operations from their airport. Sponsors publish the design data, in terms of Runway Design Code (B-II) that the airport is built to, and the decision to use the airport is left to the operator and pilots of the particular aircraft under the guidance of FAA.

24. **Q: Is the runway extension proposal to support California Pacific Airways?**

A: No, CPA's proposed operations were not included within this study. The focus was on the existing airport operations and their projected growth.

25. **Q: How would the runway extension benefit California Pacific Airlines?**

A: The feasibility study was conducted based on the requirements for the critical design aircraft (B-II or Falcon 2000). Runway length requirements are based on the departure requirements for the critical design aircraft (B-II or Falcon 2000). However, all aircraft would have an added level of safety and additional operational capability based on runway length extension.

26. **Q: Is the runway extension going to bring in larger commercial traffic?**

A: The feasibility of a runway extension was analyzed based on the aircraft that the airport is presently designed to accommodate, which is a business jet-sized aircraft. The study did not incorporate improvements specifically aimed at facilitating or improving commercial traffic, but does discuss safety and facility considerations that could affect all airport users.

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29. **Q: How would this affect the small aircraft users at the airport?**

A: This public-use airport would continue to be available to all pilots, including small aircraft users. In fact, the north side of the airport was established for small aircraft with tie-downs and self-serve fuel. Small aircraft would continue to have access to facilities on the south side as well.

30. **Q: Would the runway need to be closed during construction of the proposed improvements?**

A: Yes, if runway improvements were to be approved, nightly closures for the construction would be necessary. There would also be times when daytime flight operations could be impacted by construction.

31. **Q: How would airport safety be impacted during construction if the project was to move forward?**

A: Recommendations from the feasibility study would be intended to enhance long-term safety. During construction, flight operations would be impacted as the construction at the ends of the runway cannot occur during flight operations. Therefore, night construction would be anticipated with associated runway closures. (Also see response to #30.)

32. **Q: What types of environmental studies will be required for this?**

A: The technical data of the feasibility study will be incorporated in the new 20-year airport Master Plan currently in progress. The scope and type of environmental studies will be identified once the Master Plan determines a proposed development concept. Both NEPA and CEQA documentation would be required prior to project approval and construction.

33. **Q: Can this be safety built over a landfill?**

A: There is a roller coaster ride along the 52 near Convoy Street in Kearny Mesa. The Hwy 52 study and improvements were reviewed, along with the current conditions of the road, as part of this study. The lessons learned from that work were incorporated into the development of the various recommendations that were evaluated for stabilizing the landfill material. The preferred method of Drilled Displacement Columns (DDC) was found to be the best solution for cost that would provide a stable surface over inactive landfill.

34. **Q: How does this tie in with the runway work done just a couple of years ago?**

A: The work completed on the existing runway was to repair the pavement surface within the existing alignment and dimensions. The runway surface was aging past its useful life and required repair. This project recommends adding length to the existing runway surface, not reconstructing what was repaired recently.

35. **Q: With a longer runway, leading to more aircraft operations, would the chances of an aircraft accident increase?**

A: Operations are forecast to increase over time whether the runway is extended or not. An incremental increase is anticipated with an extension of approximately 3000 operations per year. Increased runway length gives pilots the ability to lift off and land with extra margins of safety, and an EMAS at the west end of the runway will reduce or prevent overruns directly underneath the departure zone. Aircraft accidents are a result of a number of factors, and as ground facility managers, County Airports is committed to exploring safety improvements. The new 20-year Master Plan for Palomar Airport will analyze opportunities to provide safe and efficient movement to air and ground traffic at the airport.

36. **Q: If I don't agree with the extension of a runway at Palomar, how can I have my voice heard?**

A: County Airports encourages interested citizens to participate in the Palomar Airport Advisory Committee, which meets the 3rd Thursday of most months at the City of Carlsbad Council Chambers, 1200 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad, California. For more information you can visit the Palomar Airport Advisory Committee website at: http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dpw/airports/paacagenda.html The County will not be taking an action on the findings of the study at this point. Technical data related to the findings of the feasibility study will be incorporated in the new 20-year Master Plan for Palomar Airport. The Master Plan process includes public involvement and environmental studies to evaluate all options available to improve McClellan-Palomar Airport to be able to handle the future needs of the airport within the next 20 years.

37. **Q: What is the next step after this report?**

A: Technical data related to the findings of the feasibility study will be incorporated in the new 20-year Master Plan for Palomar Airport. The Master Plan process includes public involvement and environmental studies to evaluate all options available to improve McClellan-Palomar Airport to be able to handle the future needs of the airport within the next 20 years.