



SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

On May 2, 2017, the City of Santa Monica (City) Airport Commission held a meeting to provide airport and community stakeholders and the airport commission members with a brief project update, including a review of the two options under consideration for shortening the runway. This summary report provides an overview of the meeting format and outcomes.

BACKGROUND

On January 28, 2017, the City of Santa Monica reached a settlement agreement/consent decree with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that determines the operating environment for the Santa Monica Airport until December 31st, 2028, when the City will legally be able to close the Airport. The terms of the agreement include reduction of the operational runway length from the current 4,973 feet to 3,500 feet, which the City intends to implement prior to December 31st, 2017. The AECOM/AEROPLEX team is providing the City with technical planning and community engagement services to support the Runway Shortening Project. The project team anticipates recommending a design option to the City Council on May 24, 2017.

MEETING FORMAT

The Airport Commission Meeting occurred on May 2, 2017, from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the City of Santa Monica City Hall. Approximately 50 community members attended the meeting, generally representing local community members and the Santa Monica Airport Association. Written comment forms were available for those who wanted to provide written comment as well as speaker cards for those who wanted to speak publicly.

The meeting was run by Commissioner Donald, chair of the Airport Commission. He first introduced Stelios Makrides, Airport Director who introduced the project team, specifically Rick Valte, P.E., the City Engineer. A brief presentation was provided with an overview of the project purpose and the runway shortening options.

SUMMARY OF AIRPORT COMMISSIONER RESPONSES

The Commissioners provided comments on a range of topics, including: air quality and public health; safety; asphalt removal; emergency preparedness; flight patterns; preferences for Option A or B, potential future development and uses, and other observations.

Commissioner Rubin:

How did you come up with the proposed options?

- FAA Standards – Safety
- Noise, air quality, and removal of existing substandard conditions were all considered

Has the FAA seen both options A and B? Has direction been provided by the FAA?

- The FAA has had both options presented to them in meetings with Airport staff
- A construction approval will require a “No-Objection” from the FAA
- Currently there are no objections from the FAA on the proposed options

As it is currently portrayed, part of the taxiway in option B is a nonstandard condition?

- Yes, Option B has a “jog” or “s-turn” on the taxiway at the southwest corner of the airport – that is a nonstandard condition that the FAA has indicated they have no objection to.

Commissioner Mark:

Is there a biased toward minimizing catastrophic options between A or B?

- Both options meet the required FAA Safety Standards.
- 95% of operations are in the westerly direction

Where are aircraft going to be idling/waiting for departure?

- Safety areas cannot be used for run-up activities.

Will the unusable runway pavement be removed at the runway ends?

- This project will not include any change to the existing pavement at the runway ends.
- The project does plan to do as minimal construction as possible.
- Removing the pavement will be part of a separate project subsequent to direction from City Council.

What, if any, are the pros to choosing Option A?

- Option A eliminates the substandard condition on the southwest taxiway
- Option A has aircraft higher over the homes and infrastructure off the west end of the runway. It is important to note that 95% of operations take off to the west.

Commissioner Paulson:

Explain why pilots want full length departure with a 3,500-foot runway?

- A displaced threshold would allow for starting departure on pavement that is not available for landing.
- The consent decree speaks to a 3,500-foot operational length runway and no more than that.
- Neither option includes the use of a displaced threshold for departures. The total operational length of the runway will be 3,500 feet.

What are white lines versus yellow lines?

- White lines indicate useable runway for departure.

- Yellow lines indicate unusable runway.

What are the enforcement procedures to keep aircraft outside the yellow chevron areas?

- Should a pilot enter the proposed yellow chevron areas, there could be damage to airport infrastructure and the aircraft itself
- The FAA would conduct an investigation on the incident, but it is an FAA violation to use the overrun areas and voluntary non-adherence to those regulations could result in a suspension or loss of license per federal regulations, except in the case of an emergency scenario.

Commissioner Schmitz:

In case of an aircraft overrun into the unusable area, how would the airport know?

- It would be reported by the FAA (Control Tower) to the Airport
- The Airport has 24/7 police patrol
- There would likely be physical damage to the airport infrastructure
- City staff or airport stakeholders could visually witness this and report it to the Airport

Commissioner Donald

Can the striped area be used for calculating takeoff distance available?

- No, as proposed, the striped area is unusable.

Do the proposed options bring SMO into compliance with FAA Advisory Circulars as it relates to safety areas?

- Yes, the proposed options have safety areas at each end of 300 feet.

Recommend Option B, but would like to note that the community would like the unusable asphalt torn up as soon as possible.

- Removal of the unusable runway pavement will be part of a separate project subsequent to direction from City Council.

PRESENTATIONS

- Commissioner Paulson - Option A vs. Option B – Community Impacts (Presentation Attached)
- Commissioner Schmitz - Option A vs. Option B – Distance Questions (Presentation Attached)

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Asphalt Removal

- The project, that is slated to be completed prior to December 31st, 2017, is only the interim solution and the FAA should have no objection to the City removing the unusable asphalt as soon as possible within what is allowed by CEQA.
- What are the options for use of the land at either end of the airport runway? Are the plans the same for both options A and B?

- Why not demolish the excess runway that has been removed from operation, so it can be used for future parkland or other purposes?
- Why will it take extra time to consider removing of the pavement and why is it not part of the original proposal?

Responses from Project Team

- *Consideration of potential future uses of the removed runway is not a part of this project, but will be considered by City Council as a subsequent follow up project.*

Excursion Enforcement

- Can the Vector cameras be allowed to detect over runs into the unusable asphalt?
- What fines or enforcement procedures can be in place for aircraft who use the unusable pavement for arrival or departure?
- An Airport Stakeholder and Community Resident concluded that Commissioner Schmitz presentation was not factual. It is absurd to assume that pilots would voluntarily violate aviation rules and regulations and use the unusable runway for takeoffs and landings.

Response from Project Team

- *The airport will study and evaluate a range of monitoring options, including the Vector camera system.*
- *It is an FAA violation to use the overrun areas and voluntary non-adherence to those regulations could result in a suspension or loss of license per federal regulations, except in the case of an emergency scenario.*
- *The airport will not be publishing declared distances for the runway. The total operational length of the runway will be 3,500 feet.*

Environmental Implications

- One resident concluded that jets and the pollution that comes with these aircraft are gone regardless of which option is selected, due to the runway length. Option A will allow the departures of aircraft to be higher over Sunset Park to the west.

MEETING CONCLUSION

Motion 1: Adopt Option B, if and only if, the City obtains binding agreement from the FAA for a two-part project. (PASSED)

A. Phase 1 implements Option B and prevents aircraft incursion into the decommissioned runway, and

B. Phase 2 replaces the excess concrete/asphalt at the runway ends.

Motion 2: Urge the City Council to direct Staff to initiate the CEQA as soon as possible and that it be completed with requisite haste. (PASSED)