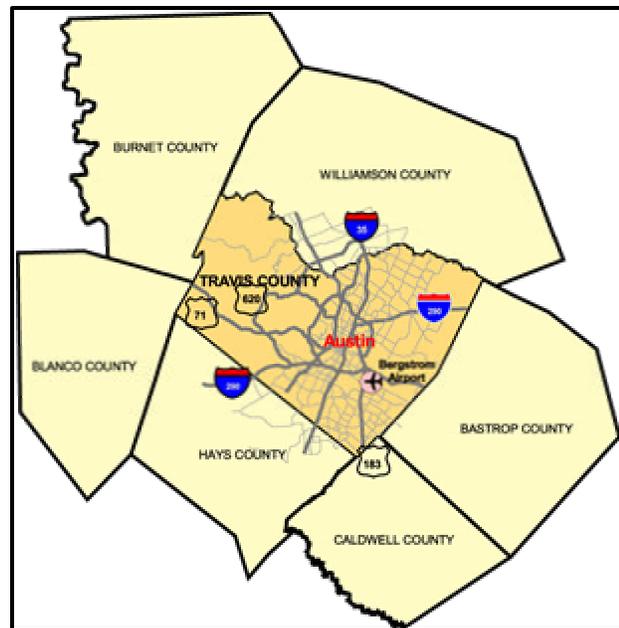




PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Aviation Division recently received Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding to study the feasibility of, and determine the best location for, a new general aviation airport in the Austin area. The study is the result of a State Legislature mandate. The recent closures of Robert Mueller Municipal and Austin Executive have significantly reduced the options available to area aircraft owners and transient general aviation users alike. The general area being considered for the siting of a new airport is Travis County and the six contiguous counties.

The consulting firm of Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA) was selected to complete the feasibility, site selection, master plan, and environmental assessment studies. An Austin-based environmental firm, Hicks & Company, is assisting WSA. In addition, a Study Advisory Committee, consisting of various public and private agencies and groups, will provide guidance and review the consultant's analysis. If a suitable site is selected, an airport master plan and environmental assessment will be prepared. The study's four phases are anticipated to take approximately 18 months to complete.



Key components of each of the four phases are highlighted below:

Phase 1: Feasibility Study – This study will determine if the Central Texas region exhibits sufficient demand to support a new general aviation airport. A survey of existing aircraft owners will be conducted to determine the current level of interest in relocating to a new facility. Demographic data will be analyzed in order to locate areas of demand for general aviation services. An estimate of the activity levels (based aircraft and operations) that a new airport could anticipate will be prepared. Based on the estimates of activity and the survey data, a template airport layout will be developed for use in the

site selection phase. This template will include the envisioned land envelope necessary to accommodate the runway(s), FAA required safety areas, and all terminal area and support facilities needed to support a general aviation airport. Once the facility needs are determined, capital costs for development will be estimated and a financial feasibility analysis will be completed.

Phase 2: Site Selection Study – Potentially suitable areas to accommodate the “Template Airport” will be identified. These potential areas will be identified based on topography, proximity to demand, ground access, known development constraints, and other factors. Up to three candidate sites will be selected from the potential areas. These sites will be subject to a more detailed screening in order to determine which site has the best potential to accommodate a general aviation airport. Coordination with a variety of public and private groups and agencies will be initiated during this phase. A “Recommended Site” will be selected at the conclusion of the Site Selection Study.

Phase 3 – Airport Master Plan – An FAA-required, site-specific master plan will be completed that builds on the data developed in the Feasibility and Site Selection studies. The master plan, which serves as a blueprint for airport development, will determine exactly how the required facilities (runway, taxiways, hangars, access road, etc) will be placed on the Recommended Site.

Phase 4: Environmental Assessment (EA) – The final phase currently under contract is the preparation of an EA for the Recommended Site. A variety of potential impacts including noise, wetlands, endangered species, farmlands, air/water quality, floodplains, historic and archaeological resources, and biotic communities will be explored. It is anticipated that the site selection screening process will eliminate any sites with apparent “fatal flaws.” Public agency coordination will be a critical component of the EA.

All Phases: Coordination - Throughout the entire process, public informational meetings will be held at key junctures to keep all interested parties informed as to the study’s progress. This web site will be updated, as appropriate, with new information, schedules, and findings as they become available.

ONGOING EFFORTS

The first public information meeting was held on November 20, 2002. At this meeting the consultant team discussed the process for completing the study.

The Consultant Team has initiated the Feasibility Study. In December, surveys were mailed to area aircraft owners. A variety of data (existing area airports, demographic, area mapping, etc.) is being collected and analyzed.

CONTACTS

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