



City of Santa Barbara
Airport Department

DATE: May 25, 2016
TO: Airport Commission
FROM: Hazel Johns, Airport Director
SUBJECT: Master Plan Update: Traffic Study

RECOMMENDATION:

That Airport Commission receive a presentation and comment on the status of the Draft Airport Master Plan with respect to revised long-term traffic analysis.

DISCUSSION:

Environmental Review

The Draft Santa Barbara Airport Master Plan was released for public review and comment on June 19, 2014. The public were invited to comment on the plan and to comment on the scope of the proposed Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Comments generally pertained to water quality and biological resources.

The Draft EIR was released for public review and comment on August 31, 2015 following a rigorous review of environmental impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology, hydrology, land use, public services, and transportation. Staff identified mitigations to reduce all of these impacts to less-than significant levels except for the long-term cumulative transportation impact. Sixteen public comment letters were received pertaining to biology, sea level rise, land use compatibility, and traffic.

Significant Impact

The Draft EIR identified the following Class I (significant, unavoidable) impact:

Impact T-3: Cumulative project impacts to traffic and circulation in the long term (South Fairview Avenue/Hollister Avenue). Implementation of the Master Plan would result in one intersection (South Fairview Avenue/Calle Real) functioning at level of service (LOS) E during the PM peak hour and three intersections (South Fairview Avenue/US 101 Southbound Ramps, South Fairview Avenue/Hollister Avenue, and Kellogg Avenue/Hollister Avenue) functioning at LOS D during the PM peak hour. Master Plan implementation would result in no additional trips

through South Fairview Avenue/Calle Real but an additional 24 PM peak hour trips through South Fairview Avenue/US 101 Southbound Ramps, 36 PM peak hour trips through South Fairview Avenue/Hollister Avenue, and 15 PM peak hour trips through Kellogg Avenue/Hollister Avenue. These trip contributions exceed significance thresholds for cumulative traffic impacts as established by the City of Goleta and the City of Santa Barbara.

No feasible mitigation measure were identified. However the Draft EIR included a recommendation that if City of Goleta implements the La Patera Lane overpass identified in the Goleta General Plan, the Airport should contribute a fair-share contribution to construction.

Methodology

The Airport is in a unique setting; while it is in the City of Santa Barbara, the traffic demand it generates occurs largely in the City of Goleta. Recognizing this, the City of Santa Barbara Traffic Management Strategy applies a separate threshold for defining a significant traffic impact for the Airport:

A significant project-specific traffic impact would result of a project's net peak-hour traffic generation would increase the volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio at an intersection to .77 or greater, or would increase the V/C ratio by .01 or more when an intersection is already operating at .77 or greater V/C ratio during peak hours.

The Airport also reviews traffic impacts using the *County of Santa Barbara Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual* as it was adopted by the City of Goleta for the purposes of environmental review in the City of Goleta. This increases the complexity of completing a traffic study, but it allows interested parties to compare traffic generation from projects in Goleta and at the Airport.

Traffic Study

A draft traffic study was prepared in September 2014. It was revised in May 2015 to address concerns that traffic counts were originally conducted outside of UC Santa Barbara's class schedule. Additionally, the study relied on a run of the 2006 City of Goleta Traffic Model, but it was updated in 2015, so staff prepared an additional run.

The City of Goleta provided a comment letter on the Draft EIR on October 30, 2015 expressing concerns about the adequacy of the analysis of the traffic study (among other concerns). Specifically, Goleta's concerns pertained to:

- 1) Traffic contribution from changes in land use on the northwest quadrant of the airfield,
- 2) Revised Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan projects (i.e. Direct Relief)

- 3) Assumptions for the Ekwil Street and James Fowler Road extension projects.
- 4) Mitigations not considered:
 - a. Traffic diversion away from Hollister Avenue
 - b. Constructing an overpass at David Love Place
 - c. Providing shuttle bus service connecting the Goleta Amtrak Station and the Airline Terminal.

The Airport's traffic consultant is currently preparing further revision to the traffic study to provide more detail on the proposed development on the north side of Hollister Avenue, to consider the contribution of Ekwil Street after its anticipated construction in 2020, and to remove the contribution of the no-longer proposed James Fowler Road extension. Additionally, Goleta Staff advised that an overpass at La Patera Road is again a reasonably foreseeable future project in the Goleta Capital Improvement Plan. Therefore, the traffic study will include its construction in the intermediate term as potential mitigation for cumulative traffic impacts.

Recirculated Draft EIR

The revised traffic study will constitute "significant new information" pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15088.5. Therefore the Draft EIR will be re-released for public review and comment prior to submittal to Planning Commission for certification and City Council for adoption.

Next Steps

The Airport's traffic consultant expects to complete the traffic study revisions by June 3, 2016. Staff will complete revisions to the Draft Environmental Impact Report in June to again be available for public review and comment in July 2016. Following the completion of the public review process, Staff will again complete response to comments, make necessary revisions to prepare a Final EIR for certification by Planning Commission. Upon completion of environmental review, the Airport Master Plan will be submitted to City Council for adoption in Fall 2016.

PREPARED BY: Facility, Planning, and Development