

# LAUGHLIN BULLHEAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

AIRPORT MASTER PLAN

*Final*





**FINAL  
AIRPORT MASTER PLAN**

for

**LAUGHLIN/BULLHEAD  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
Bullhead City, Arizona**

**Prepared for the  
MOHAVE COUNTY AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

by

**Coffman Associates, Inc.**

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## INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION

The Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport Master Plan Update has been undertaken to evaluate the airport's capabilities and role, to forecast future aviation demand, and to plan for the timely development of new or expanded facilities that may be required to meet that demand. The ultimate goal of the Master Plan is to provide systematic guidelines for the airport's overall maintenance, development, and operation.

The Master Plan is intended to be a proactive document which identifies and then plans for future facility needs well in advance of the actual need. This is done to ensure that the Mohave County Airport Authority (MCAA) can coordinate project approvals, design, financing, and construction in a timely manner, prior to experiencing the detrimental effects of inadequate facilities.

An important result of the Master Plan is reserving sufficient areas for future facility needs. This protects development areas and ensures they will be readily available when required to meet future needs. The intended result is a detailed land use concept which outlines specific uses for all areas of airport property.

The preparation of this Master Plan is evidence that the MCAA recognizes the importance of

air transportation to the community and the associated challenges inherent in providing for its unique operating and improvement needs. The cost of maintaining an airport is an investment which yields impressive benefits to the community. With a sound and realistic Master Plan, Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport can maintain its role as an important link to the national air transportation system for the community and maintain the existing public and private investments in its facilities.

The MCAA initiated this Master Plan in 2007 to re-evaluate and adjust as necessary the future development plan for the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport. The last Master Plan for Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport was completed in October 2000. Since that time, the MCAA has invested considerable funds into the rehabilitation of airfield pavements, most recently in 2007 with the complete reconstruction of Runway 16-34. All general aviation facilities have now been moved to the existing airport site east of Runway 16-34. General aviation facilities were formally located along State Route 95 west of Runway 16-34 - the original airport site. This area along State Route 95 has been redeveloped for commercial uses. Revenues from land leases in this area support the operation and development of the airport. The new departure building has been added since 2000 and the main terminal building was rehabilitated in 2007.





## **MASTER PLAN** **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The primary objective of the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport Master Plan is to develop and maintain a financially feasible, long term development program which will satisfy aviation demand and be compatible with community development, other transportation modes, and the environment. The accomplishment of this objective requires the evaluation of the existing airport and a determination of what actions should be taken to maintain an adequate, safe, and reliable airport facility to meet the air transportation needs of the area. The completed Master Plan will provide an outline of the necessary development and give responsible officials advance notice of future needs to aid in planning, scheduling, and budgeting.

Specific goals and objectives of the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport Master Plan are:

- **Preserve Public and Private Investments**

The MCAA, the United States Government (through the Federal Aviation Administration [FAA]), and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) have made considerable investments in the airport's infrastructure. Private individuals and businesses have made investments in buildings and other facilities. The Master Plan will provide for continued maintenance and necessary improvements to the airport's infrastructure to ensure maximum utility of the private facilities at Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport and ensure the continued use of publicly-funded facilities.

- **Be Reflective of Community Goals and Objectives**

The Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport is a public facility serving the needs of the local residents and businesses. The Master Plan needs to be reflective of the desires and visions the local

communities have for quality of life, business and development, and land use. The Master Plan will consider existing community planning documents for surrounding communities in the ultimate design and use of the airport.

- **Maintain Safety**

Safety is an essential consideration in the planning and development at the airport. The Master Plan will focus on maintaining the highest levels of safety for airport users, visitors, employees, and surrounding communities.

- **Preserve the Environment**

Protection and preservation of the local environment are essential concerns in the Master Plan. Any improvements called for in the Master Plan will be mindful of environmental requirements.

- **Attract Public Participation**

To ensure that the Master Plan reflects the concerns of the public, the local communities, airport tenants, airport users, and businesses throughout the region, the Master Plan process will include an active public outreach program to solicit comments and suggestions and include them in the final Master Plan, to the extent possible.

- **Strengthen the Economy**

In continuing support of the area's growing economy, the Master Plan is aimed at retaining and increasing jobs and revenue for the region and its businesses.

### **MASTER PLAN TASKS**

The Master Plan will accomplish these objectives by carrying out the following:

- Determining projected needs of airport users through the year 2027.





- Reviewing the potential for enhanced air service as well as expanded cargo activities.
- Examining the need for, and location of, a new passenger terminal building and cargo facilities.
- Identifying existing and future facility needs.
- Evaluating if portions of airport property might be considered “excess” by the FAA and, therefore, may be suitable for non-aviation development.
- Developing a realistic, common-sense plan for the use and/or expansion of the airport.
- Developing land use strategies for the use of airport property.
- Evaluating the land acquisition requirements (if any) for future airport facility development and/or safety requirements.
- Establishing a schedule of development priorities and a program for improvements.
- Analyzing the airport’s financial requirements for capital improvement needs and grant options.
- Coordinating this Master Plan with local, regional, state, and federal agencies.
- Conducting active and productive public involvement through the planning process.

## **MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS AND PROCESS**

The Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport Master Plan Update was prepared in a systematic fashion following FAA guidelines and industry-accepted principles and practices. The Master Plan Update for Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport has six general elements that are intended to assist in the discovery of future facility needs and provide the supporting rationale for their implementation.

**Exhibit IA** provides a graphical depiction of the process and elements involved in the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport Master Plan Update.

Element One encompasses the inventory efforts. The inventory efforts are focused on collecting and assembling relevant data pertaining to the airport and the area it serves. Information is collected on existing airport facilities and operations. Local economic and demographic data is collected to define the local growth trends. Planning studies which may have relevance to the Master Plan are also collected. Information collected during the inventory efforts is summarized in Chapter One, Inventory.

Element Two examines the potential aviation demand for aviation activity at the airport. This analysis utilizes local socioeconomic information, as well as national air transportation trends to quantify the levels of aviation activity which can reasonably be expected to occur at Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport through the year 2027. This includes commercial airline enplanements, air cargo, general aviation based aircraft, and annual aircraft operations by type. The results of this effort are used to determine the types and sizes of facilities which will be required to meet the projected aviation demands for the airport through the planning period. The results of this analysis are presented in Chapter Two, Aviation Demand Forecasts.

Element Three comprises the facility requirements analysis. The intent of this analysis is to compare the existing facility capacities to forecast aviation demand and determine where deficiencies in capacities (as well as excess capacities) may exist. Where deficiencies are identified, the size and type of new facilities to accommodate the demand are identified. The airfield analysis focuses on improvements needed to serve the type of aircraft expected to operate at the airport in the future, as well as navigational aids to increase the safety and efficiency of operations. This element also examines aircraft storage hangars and apron needs. The findings of this analysis are presented in Chapter Three, Facility Requirements.



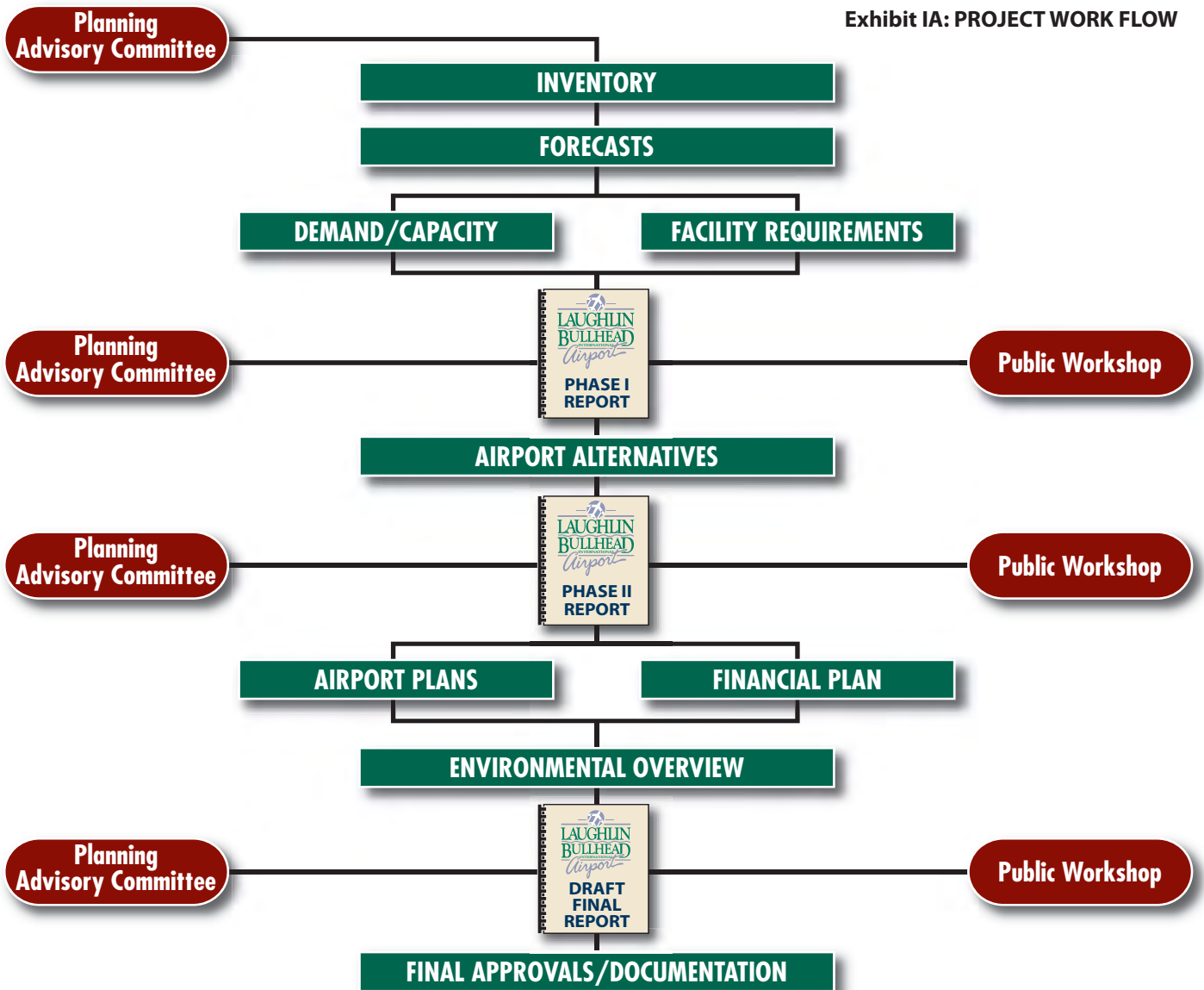
Element Four considers a variety of solutions to accommodate the projected facility needs. This element proposes various facility and site plan configurations to efficiently and effectively use the available airport property. A thorough analysis is completed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each proposed development alternative, with the intention of determining a single direction for development. These results are presented in Chapter Four, Airport Development Alternatives.

Element Five comprises two independent, yet interrelated work efforts: a recommended development plan and an environmental overview. Chapter Five, Airport Plans, presents a graphic

and narrative description of the recommended plan for the use, development, and operation of the airport, and a review of federal environmental requirements applicable to Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport. The official Airport Layout Plan (ALP) drawings used by the FAA in determining grant eligibility and funding will be included as an appendix to the Master Plan.

Element Six focuses on the capital needs program. This program defines the schedules, costs, and funding sources for the recommended development projects. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) will be included in Chapter Six.

**Exhibit IA: PROJECT WORK FLOW**





## **COORDINATION**

The Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport Master Plan Update is of interest to many within the local community. This includes local citizens, community organizations, airport users, airport tenants, area-wide planning agencies, and aviation organizations. As an important component of the regional, state, and national aviation systems, the Master Plan Update is of importance to both state and federal agencies responsible for overseeing air transportation.

To assist in the development of the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport Master Plan Update, the MCAA identified a cross-section of community members and interested persons to act in an advisory role in the development of the Master Plan. As members of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), the committee members reviewed phase reports and provided comments throughout the study to help ensure that a realistic, viable plan was developed.

To assist in the review process, a series of draft phase reports were prepared at three milestones in the planning process as shown on **Exhibit IA**. The draft phase reports allowed for input and review during each step of the Master Plan process to ensure that all Master Plan issues were fully addressed, as the recommended program developed.

Three public information workshops are also included as part of the plan coordination. The public information workshops allowed the public to provide input and learn about general information concerning the Master Plan. The Master Plan report was also available on the internet via the consultant's web page: [www.ifp.airportstudy.com](http://www.ifp.airportstudy.com).

## **BASELINE ASSUMPTIONS**

A study such as this typically requires some baseline assumptions that will be used throughout the analysis. The baseline assumptions for the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport Master Plan Update are listed below:

- Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport will continue to operate as a commercial service airport serving Bullhead City in Arizona and the Town of Laughlin and related gaming industry in Nevada.
- Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport will continue to pursue commercial service opportunities.
- Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport will continue to pursue air cargo opportunities.
- The airport will operate under the direction of the MCAA throughout the planning period.
- Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport intends to seek general aviation and corporate business aviation based tenants and transient operations.
- The aviation industry on the national level will grow as forecast by the FAA in its annual Aerospace Forecasts.
- Population and employment in the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport service area will continue to grow as forecast by the State of Arizona.
- The gaming industry in Laughlin, Nevada will continue to grow.