

APPENDIX B

San Pedro Valley News-Sun

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF ARIZONA }
COUNTY OF COCHISE } SS.

Pamela Harlan being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he/she is the
Agent to the Publisher of the SAN PEDRO VALLEY NEWS-SUN, a newspaper of general
circulation published in Benson, Cochise County, State of Arizona; That the

City of Benson

Request for Proposal's

Municipal Airport Site Selection and
Master Plan Study

a copy of which is hereto attached, was published in said
newspaper for 1 consecutive week(s), the first
publication being in its issue dated the 11th day of
May, 19 89, and the last
publication being in its issue dated the _____ day of
_____, 19 _____.

Pamela Harlan

Subscribed and sworn to before me 19 day of

May, 19 89.

Elizabeth H. Martell

My Commission expires April 21, 19 90.

LEGAL NOTICE

City of Benson
Request for Proposals
Municipal Airport Site Selection
and Master Plan Study

The City of Benson is seeking
proposals for professional and
technical services from qualified
consultants with appropriate ex-
perience in airport planning and
engineering. The objective of the
study is to analyze, document,
and recommend a site for a mu-
nicipal airport which will qualify for
inclusion in the State and Federal
airport systems.

The scope and character of
the proposed study is fully de-
scribed in the request for pro-
posal packets available at
Benson City Hall. Proposals
meeting the guidelines as de-
scribed in the request for pro-
posal packets shall be ac-
cepted by the city until 4:30 p.m.,
Mountain Standard Time, Friday,
June 9, 1989 at City Hall, 160 S.
Huachuca Street Benson, Ari-
zona. Mailing address P.O. Box
2223 Benson, AZ 85602.

Any questions concerning this
R.F.P. should be directed to Mr.
Larry Kreps, Benson Planning &
Zoning Administrator, (602) 586-
2003.
Publish May 11, 1989

San Pedro Valley News-Sun

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF ARIZONA }
COUNTY OF COCHISE } ss.

Pamela Harlan being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he/she is the
Agent to the Publisher of the SAN PEDRO VALLEY NEWS-SUN, a newspaper of general
circulation published in Benson, Cochise County, State of Arizona; That the

Public Notice AIRPORT MEETING

The City of Benson, via a state grant, has contracted with Coffman Associates to conduct a Benson Municipal Airport site selection and mini master plan. The consultants will conduct this study in three phases. The phase I report to the city will be conducted at 6:00 P.M. on October

Benson the Beautiful

***"Clean up,
Paint Up,
Keep it up!"***

Airport Meeting - City of Benson

A copy of which is hereto attached, was published in said
newspaper for 1 consecutive week(s), the first
publication being in its issue dated the 19th day of
October, 19 89, and the last
publication being in its issue dated the _____ day of
_____, 19____.

Pamela Harlan

Subscribed and sworn to before me 26 day of

O.C., 1989.

Elizabeth H. Martell

My Commission expires April 21, 19 90.

San Pedro Valley News-Sun

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF ARIZONA }
COUNTY OF COCHISE } ss.

Pamela Harlan being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he/she is the
Agent to the Publisher of the SAN PEDRO VALLEY NEWS-SUN, a newspaper of general
circulation published in Benson, Cochise County, State of Arizona; That the

Public Hearing

City of Benson

Airport Site Selection

PUBLIC HEARING
AIRPORT SITE SELECTION
The City of Benson City Council will hold a PUBLIC HEARING TO review the Phase II report from Coffman Associates, and to select the best of four sites as the location for the future Benson Municipal Airport.
This PUBLIC HEARING will be held on Monday, December 18, 1989 at 8:00 P.M. in the City Council chambers, 160, South Huachuca, Benson, Arizona.
Richard J. Saenz, Mayor
Publish: November 30, 1989

a copy of which is hereto attached, was published in said newspaper for 1 consecutive week(s), the first publication being in its issue dated the 30th day of November, 19 89, and the last publication being in its issue dated the _____ day of _____, 19 _____.

Pamela Harlan

Subscribed and sworn to before me 7 day of

Dec., 19 89.

Elizabeth H. Martell

My Commission expires April 21, 19 90.

San Pedro Valley News-Sun

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF ARIZONA }
COUNTY OF COCHISE } ss.

Agnes Rose Baird being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he/she is the
Agent to the Publisher of the SAN PEDRO VALLEY NEWS-SUN, a newspaper of general
circulation published in Benson, Cochise County, State of Arizona; That the

City of Benson – Public Hearing

Airport Site Selection

LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC HEARING
Airport Site Selection
The City of Benson City Council will hold a PUBLIC HEARING to select the site for a future municipal airport. During this Public Hearing, Coffman Associates will present an evaluation of a new candidate site and will also present an economic assessment of what an airport could do for Benson and the surrounding communities. The PUBLIC HEARING will be held on Monday, February 19, 1990 at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, 160 S. Huachuca Street.
Richard J. Saenz – Mayor
Publish: February 1, 1990

a copy of which is hereto attached, was published in said
newspaper for 1 consecutive week(s), the first
publication being in its issue dated the 1st day of
February, 19 90, and the last
publication being in its issue dated the _____ day of
_____, 19 _____.

Agnes Rose Baird

Subscribed and sworn to before me 16 day of
Feb., 19 90.

Elizabeth H. Martell

My Commission expires April 21, 19 90.

Area pilots backing city airport proposal

By Laurie Tipling

Local pilots and aeronautics supporters say Benson would be better off with an airport.

"Benson could become a more viable commercial center if it had an airport," said John Cook, a pilot who is employed with the Adult Protective Services.

Cook said Benson represents a "turning point" for pilots who want to fly south. "They could land here and stay overnight — revenue for the city."

Jack Comaduran, Substation Supervisor for AEPCO, is also a pilot. He pointed out the convenience aspect for the community, as well as the potential for new businesses.

"Commuter aircraft would give us a tie to Phoenix and Tucson, bringing business into town that would have otherwise had to go somewhere else to gas up," he said.

Funding for an airport, up to 90 percent, is available through a state program and 95 percent is available through a federal government aid program.

Gary Adams from the Department of Aeronautics said: "Businesses won't relocate to an area without an airport. It's a proven statistic."

More money is available now, he said, especially for secondary airports — those with less than 10 based airplanes and less than 2,000 operations (take-offs and landings) per year.

The Department of Aeronautics will work with the community on everything from safety studies to environmental studies, Adams said. "It's yours. You have to live with it, and we want you to be happy with (the airport)."

Gerald Patton, J-6 resident and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base employee, pointed out another aspect in favor of an airport being built here — jobs for the community. Patton has announced his candidacy for the House of Representatives.

"If we could attract small companies that are labor intensive to employ our people here," he said, "we stand a much better chance of keeping our children here."

Fuel taxes, user fees, and hanger rentals are various ways an airport would generate revenue, he said.

Mahlon MacKenzie, a broker at ERA Realty and a pilot, echoed the concerns of other pilots — Comaduran and Cook — when he expressed concern over vandalism of their planes and others' at the air strip they currently use. "We'd like a little security for these aircraft," he said.

MacKenzie said the first thing to look at when considering a piece of land for a runway is the direction of the winds. "They should be east-to-west with a slight southerly orientation. The length and any obstacles also need to be considered."

He said an ideal location would be between Benson and Kartchner Caverns. He felt the Caverns would get more visitors that way.

Red Taylor owns the airport that many of the local (and some out-of-state) pilots currently use.

Taylor is sentimental about his airport. He learned to fly there in 1956. "I thought, hell, I'll just buy it and keep it from being turned into anything else."

Taylor said he thinks it would cost as much to excavate a new airport as to buy his, already complete.

A committee of interested people will be presented by City Manager Paul Nordin at the next City Council meeting for appointment to an Airport Advisory Committee.

"It will bring in more tax dollars that otherwise were not here," he said.

Nordin compared it to "tapping the freeway" when the shopping center, Burger King and the Best Western motel were built.

New airport on horizon ... sooner or later

By Laurie Tipling

Construction of an airport in or near Benson may begin sooner than expected, although some people say it is still a ways off.

Representatives from the Aeronautics Division of the Arizona Department of Transportation met with city officials and members of Benson's Airport Advisory Committee last week.

The city's inquiries about obtaining funds for site selection and construction of an airport have been answered with enthusiasm. "We're kind of excited about this. We haven't built an airport for a while," Gary Adams, of ADOT's Aeronautics Division, said.

Now that the ball is rolling, the Aeronautics Division will submit a request to the state Transportation Board to set aside a certain amount of money, undetermined at this time, for Benson's airport project.

The board meets in December, so it may be as late as January before funds are available for the city to go ahead with site selection and an airport layout plan, Adams said. "It generally takes six months for a site analysis to be completed. I don't anticipate any problems."

After the board's approval, Adams said he will send a grant agreement to the city — a reimbursement program in which Benson will pay for services as the project goes on, then ADOT will reimburse the city.

"A lot of smaller communities aren't able to operate that way, though, and the engineering firms will send us the bill directly," Adams said.

Proposals from airport engineering firms will be accepted for consulting on the project. A project advisory committee will review, make comments and guides the consultant, Adams said.

The committee's size could be as large or small as the city decides, but Allen Samuels, an airport engineer who attended the meeting, suggested, "You don't have to limit the committee just to people interested in aviation. It's better to face problems up front than later down the road."

"Think big on the sight analysis," Samuels said. "Once you get going, you don't want to come up short of land."

He said the city needs to obtain enough public land to generate adequate revenue to support the airport. Samuels also suggested, "As the community grows it's best to be further out of town." This also will help keep down possible irritation to the noise, he said.

Any projects that generate revenue are not eligible for federal or state reimbursement — such as an industrial park or fuel tanks — which would be built at the city's expense, Adams said. However, things like the runway, taxiway, lights, wind comb, tie downs and land are all eligible for the grant money, he said.

"We'd like to get you out of the dust and dirt and mud," Adams said.



(News-Sun photo by Laurie Tipling)

BENSON AIRPORT — Mayor Jim Mellentine (center) discussed the future Benson Airport with Gary Adams (right) and Allan Samuels,

both are with the aeronautics division of the State Transportation Department.

Land purchase first item in airport plan

By Laurie Tipling

A five-year plan shows Benson acquiring land for a municipal airport between 1990 and 1991.

The plan, designed by Allen Samuels—program administrator for the airport development program with the aeronautics division of ADOT—is one of the steps towards securing an airport for Benson in the near future. In this plan he allows \$252,000 for land acquisition. In 1992-93 the city is to secure fire protection for the airport at a cost of \$90,000 and in 1993-94, \$288,000 will be spent on drainage, apron, utilities, lighting and other required items.

The city has received a \$27,000 grant to contract for a site selection study. The Airport Advisory Committee has come up with three sites and would like to submit at least two more to the consulting firm to study. The three sites include two west of Highway 90 and the current airfield.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Larry Kreps is sending a letter to the Federal Aviation Administration requesting entry into the national airport system and giving them a copy of the draft of request for proposal. If the FAA approves it, the committee will then advertise for bidders on the site consultation, he said.

The committee considered a variety of aspects when coming up with these sites and the consultants will be required to look even deeper into the pros and cons of each site. Mentioned at a recent committee meeting were growth patterns in the area — the consultants will have to consider this in order not to put the airport in the middle of a growing residential area. "Our growth pattern would not necessarily be to the west. It would probably be to the southwest," Kreps said. The committee of pilots feels it is important for the airport to be reasonably close to the community because in a small city like Benson there isn't any mass transportation — bus or taxi service — and it would be difficult for pilots to land a plane on the far outskirts of town and try to find transportation into Benson.

A benefit of building the airport on the west side of Benson would be that pilots from east Tucson would tend to base their aircraft here. Getting the appropriate infrastructure — gas, water, electric and sewer — to the site is also a major consideration. The airport cannot be any closer than 30 minutes from airports in Willcox, Tucson or Sierra Vista.

April 5, 1989

Public meeting this month to pick Benson Airport site

By JAC POLSGROVE
News Editor

PHOENIX — Plans released last week by the state Department of Transportation outline how a public Benson Airport will get off the ground in the next few years.

The plans, outlined in an ADOT "Five-year Transportation Facilities Construction Program" publication covering fiscal years 1990 to 1994, call for a total of \$500,000 to be spent by the state and the city of Benson in the next four years on development of a Benson Airport. The balance of the funds for the airport would be paid by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Currently, a Benson Airport Advisory Committee is studying several sites in the area upon which to locate a public-use airport, according to Larry Kreps, Benson's Public Works Administrator.

The committee will release its list of the sites during a public hearing to be held in Benson sometime in October, he said. Also attending the meeting will be ADOT and FAA representatives.

Kreps said public notices advertising the hearing will be published in the News-Sun and posted around town once a date and location have been set for the hearing.

At that time, the committee will release its list of sites and will choose a top choice for the airport's location. Several leading sites are located in west Benson near the intersection of Interstate 10 and state Route 90. The committee also can opt to focus expansion of the current airport east of town.

Funding for the study comes from a \$27,000 grant received by the city last spring.

During a committee meeting last spring, members voiced support for locating the airport west of town so as to attract residents from east Tucson. The new airport cannot be any closer than 30 miles from airports in Willcox, Tucson or Sierra Vista.

Under the state Transportation Department's five-year plan, an estimated \$180,000 would be spent in 1990-91 to purchase land for the airport. Of that sum, \$162,000 would come from the state and \$18,000 would be funded by the city of Benson. The FAA would pick up the balance of the cost of buying land.

In 1992-93, \$100,000 is set aside for development of fire protection at the airport. Of that, \$90,000 comes from the state and \$10,000 would be local dollars. Again, any expenses above and beyond that are expected to be picked up by the FAA.

In 1993-94, the largest construction work would take place at the airport. The state would kick in \$198,000 and the city \$22,000 for the grading, draining and surfacing of a runway apron. Other work to be performed at the airport includes construction of utilities, a parking lot for cars, and fences. Additional cash needed to complete the project would again come from the FAA.

Money for the airport expansion comes from taxes paid by aviators. Flight property taxes, aviation fuel taxes and aircraft registration fees all are used to help maintain and expand airports in Arizona.

Federal dollars come from taxes on airline tickets.

Over the next five years an estimated \$245 million has been proposed to be spent on Arizona airports. Of that sum, \$52 million comes from the state, \$13 million is local funding and some \$180 million is money funnelled through the FAA.

10/1/90

San Pedro Valley News-Sun

Benson Airport site meeting is set for Monday

By JAC POLSGROVE
News Editor

A public meeting to discuss potential sites for a new Benson Airport has been scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 30 at City Hall.

At the meeting, Phoenix-based Coffman Associates, an airport planning and consulting firm, will discuss about 13 proposed sites for the local airport, according to Larry Kreps, Benson's planning and zoning administrator.

During the meeting the consulting firm will reveal its short list of three to five sites that it recommends as the location for the new airport, he said.

Also attending the meeting will be representatives from the city, the Federal Aviation Administration, the state Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division and the director of Cochise County's Planning and Zoning Department, Kreps said.

In July, the city hired Coffman Associates to conduct a site selection study and develop a "mini" master plan for the proposed airport. Benson officials used a \$27,000 state grant and \$3,000 in local dollars to hire the firm.

Coffman Associates specializes in airport development projects, and has done work on facilities in Tucson, Ajo, Casa Grande, Coolidge, Sierra Vista and other Arizona cities, as well as work in other states.

The study is to be conducted in three phases over a nine-month period, beginning in July.

The first phase of the report will be a presentation to the city on the consulting firm's progress to date. That presentation is the one scheduled for Monday night.

During the first phase of Coffman Associates' research, the firm has conducted an inventory of possible airport sites, compiled a report on aviation forecasts in southeast Arizona, put together a list of requirements for a Benson Airport, and analyzed the potential development of the 13 leading spots upon which to locate an airport.

The Monday report to the public will cover that work and.

Following the Oct. 30 meeting, Coffman Associates will resume further study of the leading three to five sites for the airport and early in 1990 is expected to release the second phase of its study: selection of a final location for the airport, Kreps said.

Another public meeting will be held at that time, he noted.

Then, the consulting firm will pull together a final report for public presentation sometime in April 1990.

The state Department of Transportation earlier this month released a five-year plan that included

\$500,000 funding for development over the next four years of a Benson Airport.

Several leading sites for the Benson Airport are located west of town near the intersection of Interstate 10 and state Route 90.

During a meeting of a Benson Airport Advisory Committee last spring, members voiced support for locating the airport west of town so as to attract aviators from east Tucson.

Under the state Transportation Department's five-year plan, an estimated \$180,000 will be spent in 1990-91 to purchase land for the airport.

Of that sum, \$162,000 would come from the state and \$18,000 would be funded by the city of Benson.

The Federal Aviation Administration is expected to pick up the balance of the cost of buying the land.

Then, in the three years after that work is expected to get under way constructing the airport and developing fire-fighting systems at the facility.

Money from that project will come from city coffers, the state Department of Transportation and the FAA, with the lion's share coming from the federal government.

Airport site narrowed to 4 plots west of Benson

Mescal location draws fire

By JAC POLSGROVE
News Editor

Four sites west of Benson have been selected as the potential home of a municipal airport.

During a Monday, Oct. 30 meeting of the Benson Airport Advisory Committee, a site 2 miles north of Mescal, two locations south of Interstate 10 on state Route 90 and a parcel just southwest of Benson were selected for further study.

The committee selected those sites (please see accompanying map) at the recommendation of Coffman Associates, a Phoenix-based airport consulting firm that has been retained by the city to develop a master plan for a municipal airport.

Thirteen sites ringing Benson have been studied by Coffman Associates during the past three months. During the Monday meeting, the consultants reviewed those locations and recommended that the four finalists be studied in more detail.

However, at least one of the possible airport sites is already drawing fire. That location, the parcel 2 miles north of Mescal on Mescal Road, is on state land and is adjacent to the Old Tucson movie set used primarily as the setting for Western movies and television shows. Currently, the ABC television network is shooting portions of "The Young Riders" there.

During the meeting, Daniel P. Aylward, general manager of Old Tucson, told the committee his company opposes the Mescal site, which was the top-ranked location by

Coffman Associates. (Please see accompanying story.)

Aylward told the committee that Old Tucson officials consider the Mescal site "a serious problem."

"Jets aren't a part of Western series," he said. Aylward noted that several committee members had said earlier in the evening that an airport is necessary to help spark economic development in the Benson area.

Construction of an airport near the movie set would be "taking a negative step in economic development," since fewer movies might be shot there.

Larry Kreps, the city's planning and zoning administrator, echoed Aylward's comments about the Mescal site.

Kreps recommended that the Mescal site be disregarded since extending city services to that location would be expensive. "It would cost us a fortune to develop an infrastructure that far out," he said.

However, Dan Barrera, chairman of the committee, said he supported continued study of that location. He said such a site is attractive since it is all state-owned land.

The other top three sites are all a blend of state and privately-owned property.

Barrera said he supported further study of the Mescal site due to "interest on my behalf because of the ownership of the land."

Other committee members agreed.

The report by Coffman Associates was the first of three phases that combined will make up a nine-month study costing \$30,000. About \$3,000 of that sum comes from city coffers; the balance comes from a \$27,000 state grant.

During the first phase of the study, which culminated in Monday's public hearing, Coffman Associates inventoried land in the Benson area and selected 13 potential sites for the airport.

They then evaluated the 13 sites and ranked them in descending order of preference based on environmental and engineering factors, such as topography, floodplain location, land-use patterns and nearby residential uses, access by roads and prevailing wind patterns.

The 13 sites were then ranked in order of preference, with Coffman Associates recommending four sites for further, detailed evaluation. The top-ranked site was the Mescal property.

The committee's acceptance of the consultant's four recommended sites sets the stage for the second phase of the study, which will include a projection for the expected cost of an airport, detailed land-use requirements and other factors that could affect development of an airport at the four locations.

A second public hearing will be held so Coffman Associates can discuss their findings regarding the four sites, according to James M. Harris, one of the principals of the firm.

The next public hearing will probably be held sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, Harris said.

At that meeting, a final recommended site for the airport will be reviewed. The third and final phase of the airport study will focus solely on that site, with a final public hearing to be held sometime in the spring.

During the Monday meeting, which drew a crowd of about two dozen area residents, Harris noted that much of the cost of developing an airport in the Benson area will be paid by the state or federal government.

About \$500,000 has been set aside in the state's transportation budget in the next five years to cover the cost of developing an airport in Benson.

Gary Adams, a representative from the state Department of Transportation's Aeronautics Division, said the state funding is available for development of a Benson municipal airport.

"Short and simple, yes, I have the money in the bank," he said.

Harris noted that Benson's share of the cost of development of the airport will be between 4 and 5 percent of the total.

The Federal Aviation Administration will pay 91 percent of the cost of the airport, which will be built on a site about 400 acres in size, Harris said.

The remaining 9 percent of the airport's cost will be split between Benson and the state of Arizona, he said.

Harris, when questioned by a reporter, declined to speculate on how much the total cost will be to develop an airport. He said those figures will be available once the second phase of Coffman Associates' report is completed in late November or early December.

When pressed for an estimated figure, he noted that construction of just a 4,300-foot runway at an airport outside Phoenix recently was built at a cost of about \$450,000.

Coffman Associates has recommended a 5,700-foot runway in Benson, with that slab extended to 7,000 feet by the year 2010.

Harris could not provide figures on other costs of developing an airport, including navigational systems, firefighting equipment, lighting and support facilities.

Harris said studies done by Coffman Associates predict a Benson airport would house about 23 airplanes by the year 2010. Currently, a privately-owned airstrip east of town is home to about two airplanes.

However, the 23 airplanes at the Benson airport would only represent a small percentage of the total expected usage of the airport, he said.

An estimated 26,000 "operations" — take-offs and landings — would occur at the airport 20 years from now, he said.

That means, on average, by the year 2010 about 72 airplanes would either land or take off daily, using his projections.

Harris said much of the traffic would be small planes using the airport as a stopping off point on cross-country travels or pilots flying in to visit Kartchner Caverns State Park or other area attractions.

However, included in the usage of the airport would be an estimated 300 "operations" a year by military aircraft. Harris said most of the military uses would probably come from helicopter training flights in rural areas.

Mescal location leads airport list

By JAC POLSGROVE
News Editor

A site about two miles north of Mescal is the leading contender as the location for a new Benson municipal airport.

That location, the top-ranked among 13 potential sites, is located on Mescal Road three miles north of Interstate 10 and the Mescal/J-Six interchange. It is directly across Mescal Road from the Old Tucson Mescal movie set, which currently is being used as the setting for the ABC television series "The Young Riders."

Hugh Reilly, executive director of marketing for Old Tucson, said an airport across from the Mescal site "would be a concern."

"The noise (from an airport) would certainly affect us," he said.

Reilly said flying airplanes would not pose a major concern, since filmmakers could "just halt the shooting" when an airplane flew overhead.

However, the noise of engines starting at the airport could interfere with movie-making at the set, which is closed to the public.

During a public hearing held Monday, Oct. 20 at City Hall, Coffman Associates of Phoenix released a 52-page report that is the first phase of an "airport site selection and master plan study."

That report, broken up into four sections, detailed various aspects that will affect construction of a city-owned airport in the Benson area.

The study led off with a nine-page "inventory" that detailed land-use development patterns and ownership in the area, a rough outline of transportation trends and airspace and air-traffic control patterns in the Benson area.

A second 22-page section dealt with forecasts for aviation demands in the Benson area, followed by a 12-page outline covering requirements for a Benson airport.

A final section, containing nine pages, consisted of a "preliminary site analysis" covering 13 proposed locations for a Benson airport. That section examined the 13 sites surrounding Benson.

Of the 13 sites, eight are west of Benson. One was directly north of the city, while the remaining four were east of town.

The report examined all of the sites' advantages in categories such as the locations' proximity to the city, highway access, runway orientation, acquisition costs, site development costs, floodplain setting, community disruption, future anticipated area development and other related matters. Scores ranging from 1 to 10 were given to all of the sites in each of the 11 categories and the 13 prospective airport sites were then ranked in order of preference.

The top sites are:

- The leading contender, Site A (see accompanying map), is located about 11 road miles west and north of downtown Benson and three miles north of the Mescal/J-Six interchange on Interstate 10. Coffman Associates gave it an overall score of 85 out of a possible high of 110.

This location is owned by the state and is free of development. The closest residential land is about half a mile to the south, although the Old Tucson Mescal movie set is directly across the road from the proposed port.

The second-highest-ranked location, Site D on the map, is about 1.5 miles west of downtown Benson and is one-half mile south of the

intersection of Interstate 10 and Skyline Road (milepost 299 on I-10). It received a score of 77 out of 110, eight points less than the top-ranked site.

Some of the land is privately-owned, but the majority is held by the state.

- The third-ranked spot, Site I on the map, received the same score — 77 — as the second-favorite site and is adjacent to and south of Interstate 10, just west of state Route 90. It is about four miles from downtown Benson.

This site is nearly free of development, with the exception of two clusters of buildings. The land is primarily privately-owned, although the state does hold some of the property.

- The fourth-ranked location, Site H on the map, is located farther south of the I-10 and Skyline Road interchange than the second-ranked choice. Coffman Associates gave this site a 72 score.

One disadvantage to this site is that an underground pipeline cuts through part of the parcel being considered. The closest residential land uses are more than a mile to the northwest.

The other sites — which were rejected Monday by the city's Airport Advisory Committee — in order of ranking are:

- Fifth: Site E, 72 score. Located about six road miles to the west and north of the Benson downtown area, it is about a mile north of I-10 and slightly northeast of the Skyline Road interchange.

- Sixth: Site J, 68 score. This is the existing Benson Airport east of town on Airport Road. It is privately owned.

- Seventh: Site F, 67 score. This location is about seven road miles west and north of downtown Benson and is about three miles due north of the I-10 and state Route 90 interchange. The state owns most of the land.

- Eighth: Site C, 66 score. Located 10 road miles south and west of downtown Benson. It is two miles due south of I-10 at the Mescal/J-Six interchange and is just north of the boundary of Coronado National Forest. Most of the land is privately owned.

- Ninth: Site B, 64 score. Situated about 13 road miles north and west of Benson, it is north and east of the top-ranked site and is five miles from I-10 on Mescal Road.

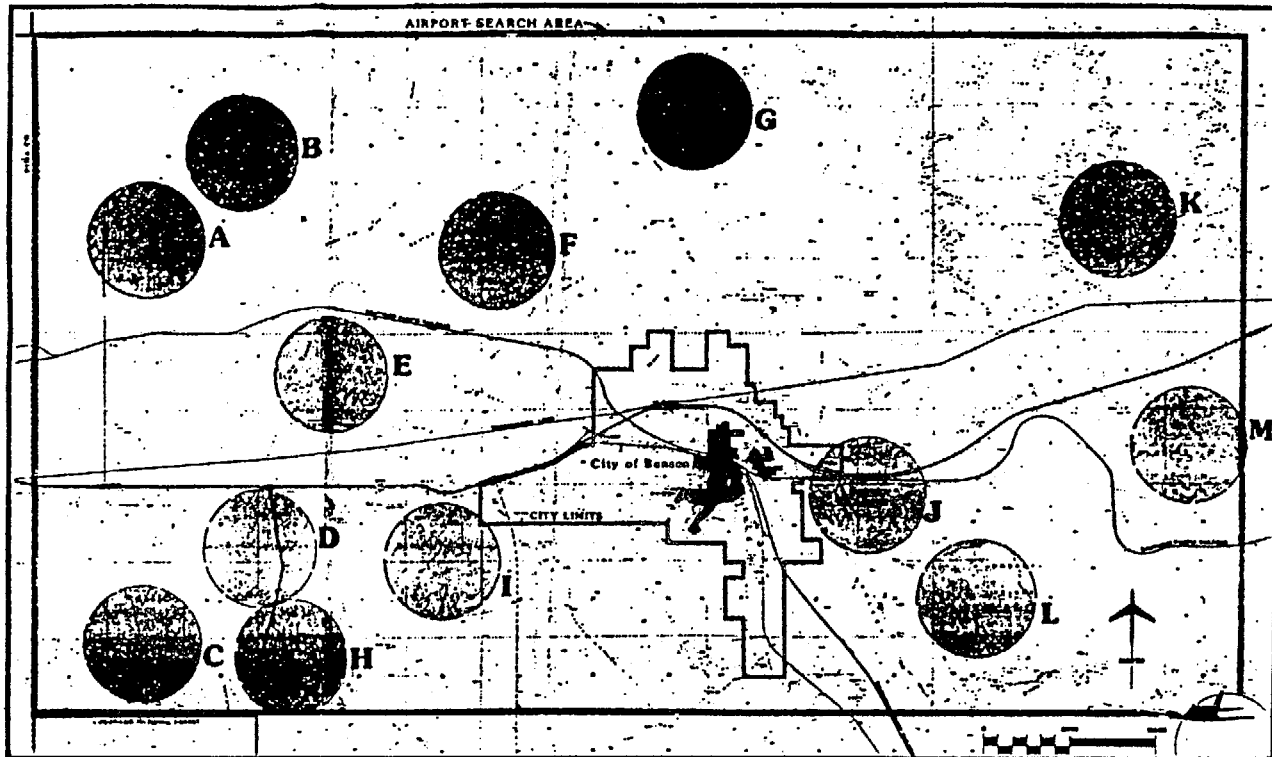
- Tenth: Site M, 63 score. Located on the south side of I-10 about nine road miles east of downtown Benson. Almost all the land is owned by the state.

- Eleventh: Site K, 59 score. Located north of I-10 about seven road miles to the east and north of downtown Benson.

- Twelfth: Site L, also a 59 ranking. Located south of I-10, two miles east of U.S. Highway 80 and about four miles east and south of downtown

Benson. A new one-mile road would be needed to gain access to this site, which is almost all privately owned.

- Thirteenth: Site F, a 52 rating. Located nearly seven road miles to the west and north of downtown Benson. It is about three miles due north of the I-10 and state Route 90 intersection. Most of the land is owned by the state.



Metro/State 11-31-89

Benson officials making plans for airport

By Joe Salkowski
The Arizona Daily Star

Benson city officials plan to build a regional airport they hope will stimulate business in the city.

City officials met with consultants last night to decide on possible locations for the airport, said Larry Kreps, Benson's planning and zoning administrator.

Kreps said the airport probably will be built near Interstate 10 and Arizona 90, about 45 miles southeast of Tucson.

"We know of three individual businesses who have passed us by because we don't have an airport, and there may be others," he said.

"We hope it will be a stimulus for economic development here."

The nearest airfield to Benson is in Sierra Vista, just over a 30-minute drive from town, Kreps said. That distance is important because the federal government will not fund the construction of an airport within a 30-minute drive of another field, he said.

City officials expect federal funds will pay 90 percent of the bill for the project, which is usual for most new airports, Kreps said.

Federal money would be matched with \$500,000 allotted for the project in the Arizona Department of Transportation's five-year budget. The de-

partment gave Benson \$27,000 in January to help plan the airport, Kreps said.

Kreps did not know how much the airport will cost, but said the city may have to hold a bond election to match \$5,000 of the state's grant and pay for the rest of the project.

The airport, which could serve as home to as many as 30 planes in its first year, should be completed in five to seven years, Kreps said.

It also could serve as an alternative to Ryan Field for small-plane pilots who live on the eastside of Tucson, Kreps said.

Ryan Field is 15 miles southwest of Tucson.

Council to pick top site for new city airport Monday

Facility expected to cost \$7.8 million

By JAC POLSGROVE
News Editor

A site immediately west of Benson and north of the intersection of state Route 90 and Interstate 10 is the leading contender as the setting for a Benson Municipal Airport, according to a study released Monday.

An airport there is expected to cost more than \$7.8 million, the study noted.

Two leading alternate sites are outlined in the report. One spot is on Mescal Road about two miles north of Mescal Lakes and immediately east of the Old Tucson Mescal movie set. The other is located about a mile south of I-10 and half a mile west of SR 90.

The Benson City Council is expected to select the location for a new municipal airport at a meeting set for 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 18 at City Hall.

The selection of the site for the airport will come after a presentation by officials with Phoenix-based Coffman Associates, an airport consulting firm. The consulting firm reviewed five sites west of town and made recommendations about each in the study released Monday.

The council has final say over which site is picked.

Coffman Associates earlier had reviewed 13 prospective locations ringing the Benson area at an Oct. 30 meeting of the city's airport advisory committee. The committee picked four of the 13 sites for further study by Coffman Associates.

In addition, one other leading location emerged in the past few weeks and was also studied by

Coffman Associates. That spot was not among the first 13 considered, but it is the top-ranked one in the report released Monday.

The study by Coffman Associates identified the five top sites by letter designation. (Please see accompanying illustration.)

The top-ranked site is marked E1 on the map, and is located north of the intersection of SR 90 and I-10 and just south of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks.

"In consideration of its location, environmental conditions and estimated development costs, Site E1 appears to have the best overall potential for the development of the Benson Municipal Airport," the study noted.

While site E1 was the top-ranked contender, two other parcels — sites A and I — "also present a number of potential benefits to the siting of the proposed Benson Municipal Airport," the study said.

"Site A is the least expensive to develop, however, it is the farthest of the sites from the interstate, would require the use of an unpaved portion of Mescal road (at least during the initial period of development), and would necessitate a railroad crossing," the report observed.

"Site I is located the closest to downtown Benson and the closest to Kartchner Caverns, however, it is the second most expensive site to develop and is roughly 47 percent more expensive than site E1," the study continued.

Sites D and H were considered the least desirable for the development of the airport, due to "existing and

potential land uses in the immediate vicinity, the presence of the El Paso Natural Gas pipeline, rough terrain, and high site preparation costs, particularly for Site H," the study concluded.

The Coffman Associates study predicted it would cost \$7,025,800 to develop an airport at Site A. That cost includes \$480,000 for property acquisition, \$3,365,200 for site preparation, \$1.8 million for runway and apron paving, \$1 million for hangar and building construction, \$110,000 for access road construction and \$376,300 for utilities.

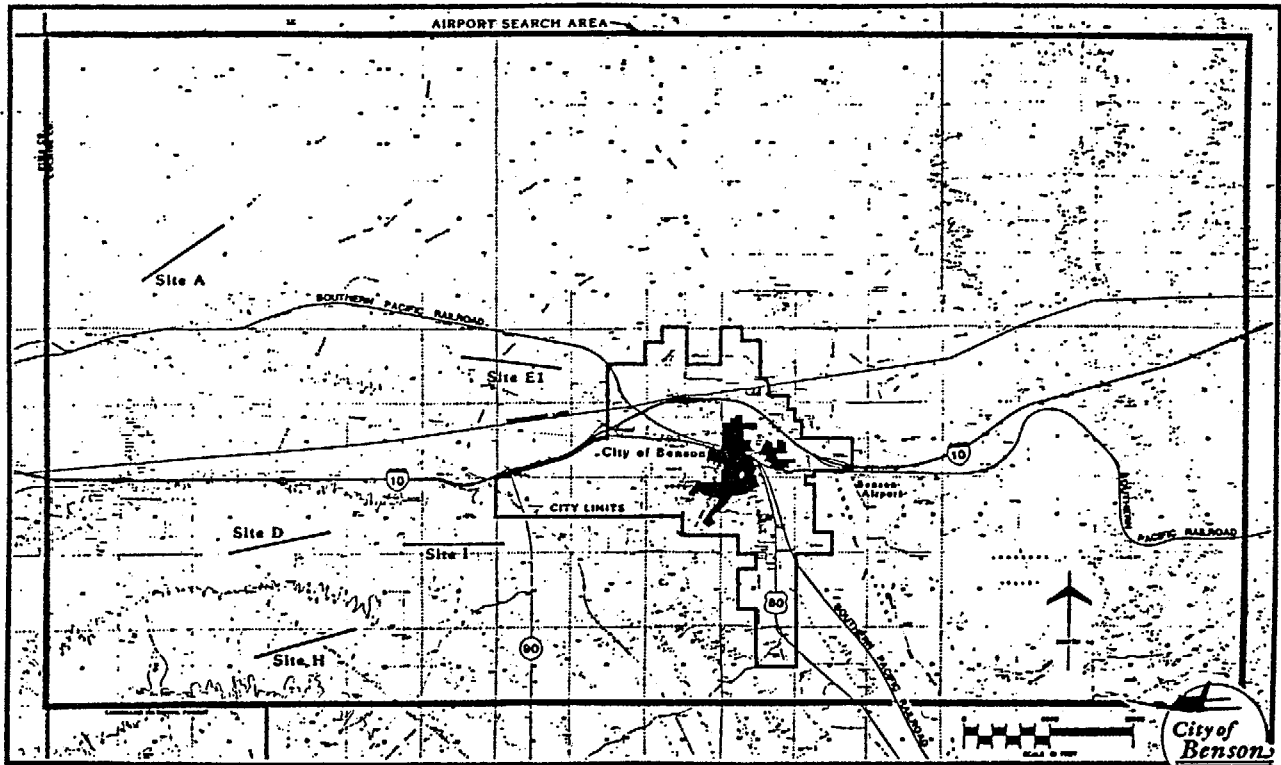
Building an airport at Site E1, the leading contender, would cost about \$7,833,600, including \$720,000 for land purchases, \$3.6 million for site preparation and grading, \$1.8 million for runways, \$1 million for hangars and buildings, \$351,000 for utilities and \$275,000 for an access road.

The other top-ranked location, Site I, would cost \$11,542,100 for an airport to be built, including \$1 million for land, \$7,348,600 for site preparation and grading, \$1.8 million for a runway, \$1 million for hangars and other buildings, \$110,000 for an access road and \$209,200 for utilities.

The projected costs for the two lesser-ranked locations call for \$9,893,500 to be spent at Site D and \$13,648,700 at Site H.

Copies of the report are available for inspection at City Hall and the office of the San Pedro Valley News-Sun.

Meetings of the City Council are open to the public and are held at City Hall, 160 S. Huachuca St.



TOP SITES — Five spots west of Benson are the leading finalists as the location for a new municipal airport. The top-ranked of the five spots is located north of the intersection of state Route 90 and Interstate 10 and is marked "E1" on the map. The Benson City Council

will meet at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 18 at City Hall, 160 S. Huachuca St., to review the five sites and receive a report on all leading locations from a consulting firm. The council is then scheduled to pick the new airport's location.

Airport plans put on hold

15th site to be considered

By JAC POLSGROVE
News Editor

The Benson City Council has put off deciding on a final site for a municipal airport while a consultant reviews yet another possible location for the facility.

Coffman Associates of Phoenix, an airport consulting firm, in past months has reviewed 14 possible sites for a municipal airport. Their work was being done under a \$27,000 grant jointly funded by the state Department of Transportation and the city of Benson.

After narrowing the list down to five finalists, two representatives from Coffman appeared before the council on Monday, Dec. 18 and reviewed the five top contenders.

But Councilman David DiPeso said he wasn't impressed with any of the sites and pushed for the review of another spot, located north of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks about 2-1/2 miles east of Mescal Road.

After two hours of council discussion and public comments about the proposed sites, the City Council opted to table making a decision on the final site and directed City Manager Paul Nordin to discuss financial terms with Coffman and work out a way for DiPeso's site to be reviewed for consideration at some future meeting.

The council's meeting came on the heels of an earlier gathering on Monday of an Airport Site Selection Committee which unanimously

recommended that the City Council approve a site located about a mile north of the intersection of Interstate 10 and state Route 90.

However, strong opposition for that site was voiced by some of the estimated 50 people who packed City Hall for the Monday night council meeting.

Kaye Getzwiller, who owns a ranch upon which part of the top-ranked site would be located, said she doesn't support construction of an airport. "I don't think the whole thing is sensible," she said.

Max Barnett, who also lives near one of the airport site finalists, said he "question(s) the necessity" and the "current and future use" of a municipal airport.

Although some criticism was directed toward the airport sites, much of the concern voiced at the meeting — especially among council members themselves — was the financial viability of a municipal airport.

Councilman Dick Hamilton asked where the money for an airport would come from.

Coffman estimates the cost for a fully-developed airport built in stages over the next two decades to range from a low of \$7 million to as much as \$13.6 million, depending upon the location.

Of that sum, the Federal Aviation Administration has said it will pay 91 percent, with the state and the city splitting the balance.

Based on those estimates, the city's share would still come to a minimum of more than \$300,000 and could be as high as double that sum. City officials have repeatedly said in the past — and said so again Monday — that they plan to build the airport without having to raise taxes or hold a bond election.

Nordin confessed to the council that he "was surprised at the magnitude" of the estimated built-out costs of the airport.

He said development of the facility will be vying against "competing projects" such as landfill needs, development of Fourth Street, a city park expansion project and the need to expand the city's wastewater facility.

Hamilton said he thought the "priority of this airport ought to be down near the bottom" of the list.

Mayor Richard Saenz agreed with concerns about the cost of developing the airport. "Where in the heck are we going to get the money?" he asked.

Saenz also noted that the city faces an uncertain future with the state Legislature eyeing reduction of state-shared revenues, the cost Benson will have to begin paying Cochise County to house prisoners and the expense of operating an ambulance service.

Council members at first toyed with the idea of canceling the airport study outright, but Nordin suggested they "let the study go through to its logical conclusion."

Nordin said the study could be modified to reflect DiPeso's suggestion that another site be considered. Nordin recommended keeping the study alive.

"We're already 90 percent pregnant, we might as well have the baby," he said.

DiPeso agreed, predicting, "We'll need an airport in the future."

Hamilton agreed to go along with expanding the study to include DiPeso's recommended location, but asked if Coffman would charge more to add the new site.

"We think that would be reasonable," said James M. Harris, a Coffman representative.

Under the terms of the agreement between the city and Coffman, the consulting firm agreed to look at a specific number of sites. In reviewing 14 locations, it apparently has fulfilled that requirement.

Nordin and Coffman representatives will meet in the future to determine how much more the consulting firm will be paid to review DiPeso's suggested site.

While the review of DiPeso's recommended site is undertaken in the weeks ahead, its examination does not kill the chances for the other five top sites to ultimately house the airport.

The five sites still in the running are:

- A parcel immediately east of the Old Tucson Mescal movie set on Mescal Road. That spot is about 2 miles north of Mescal Lakes and is Saenz's favorite.

"I like Site A (the Mescal location) myself," Saenz said.

Old Tucson officials have in the past expressed concern about having an airport next door.

However, several people at the meeting downplayed Old Tucson's predictions that the airport there would hurt their business, which in turn would have a negative economic impact on Benson.

"Old Tucson's never brought any money to me," Saenz said.

- The previously top-ranked site located north of the intersection of I-10 and SR 90.

- Two parcels located south of the Skyline exit on Interstate 10. Both locations would have interrupted existing ranching operations and were low-ranked options by Coffman's representatives. They appear to have slim chance of winning council approval.

- A tract immediately west of SR 90 and about 1-1/2 miles south of its intersection with I-10.

Benson officials, residents weigh airport proposal

By Joe Salkowski
The Arizona Daily Star

A pilot flying over Benson's airport would have difficulty distinguishing the single dirt runway from any number of unpaved roads near the small Southern Arizona town.

Planes rarely land there, usually passing over the city on their way to airports in and around Tucson, about 45 miles to the northwest.

Some city officials believe a new airport would bring both planes and business to Benson, and have commissioned a \$30,000 study to look into the idea.

But the proposal has yet to find much support among the city's 4,000 residents or their elected officials, many of whom feel the city has better things to do than investing in the air.

"The council feels that Benson might need a new airport someday, but not right now," said Vice Mayor Dick Hamilton. "I can't see how the benefit would outweigh the expense."

Construction and operation costs for a new airport in Benson could run anywhere from \$7 million to \$13.6 million in the next 20 years, depending on where it is built, according to Coffman Associates, a Phoenix-based airport consulting firm.

Federal and state grants would pay for more than 95 percent of those costs, a factor that weighed heavily in the city's decision to study a new airport. Such grants are not available for upgrades to current airports.

But that study showed Benson would have to pay at least \$340,000, a figure that has dampened enthusiasm for the project among Benson officials.

"When we got this proposal back, I must say that one of the more shocking things I saw was the cost," Benson Mayor Richard Saenz said last week during a council meeting.

"Though we liked the concept of a new airport, in all-good conscience I must say that (the cost) will be a major consideration," he said.

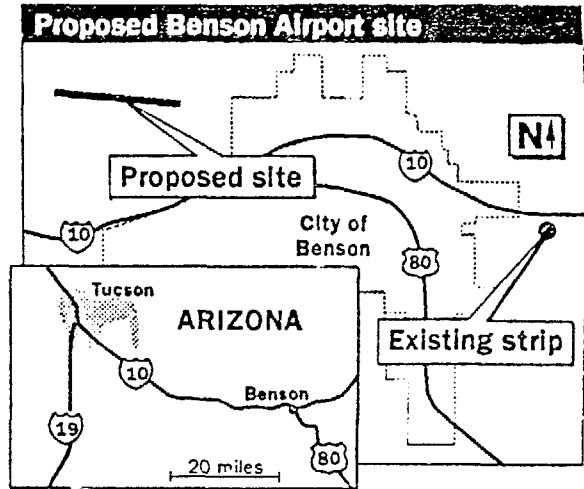
The council was scheduled to vote on a site at that meeting, but tabled the proposal instead to reconsider both the sites the consultant selected and the financial commitment choosing one of those sites would entail.

The site the consultant prefers cuts into Kay Getzwiller's ranch northwest of town, and under preliminary plans the access road to the site from Interstate 10 would pass through land owned by her and another local rancher, Dave Harlan.

"That road is going right down the middle of me — the whole thing would be a mess," Getzwiller said at last week's meeting. "I don't think the whole thing is sensible — including the airport itself. The road certainly isn't."

Harlan said he probably could live with the airport if the access road were routed away from his property. But he said an airport shouldn't be built on the assumption that it will spur economic development in Benson.

"The concept has some credence, but I think we're getting the cart before the horse," he said. "I would



Jon Hassen, The Arizona Daily Star

like to see some information that shows an airport would indeed solve some of our economic problems."

Allan Samuels, an airport engineer for the Arizona Department of Transportation, said many industries require an airport to do business.

"Industries frequently look for airports in a new site like they used to look for available railroad tracks one hundred years ago," he said. "Without an airport your community is handicapped in appealing to modern industry."

Gary Adams, director of the state Transportation Department's aeronautics division, told those at last week's meeting that an airport would definitely bring business to Benson.

"Airports, whether you agree with them or not, mean business. They bring tax dollars to communities, and carry economic development wherever they go," he said.

But Harlan said such promises aren't enough.

"If it can be shown with reasonable certainty that there would be a substantial payback on the investment within, say, the next five years, it (the airport) would indeed gain priority in my mind over other things the community plans to do with its money," he said.

City Manager Paul Nordin said the city could afford to pay for the airport, but only at the expense of other planned city projects such as construction of a landfill, upgrading the city's waste-water plant and improvements to city streets and parks.

"Right now the airport is at the bottom of that list," Hamilton said. He added that there aren't many people in town willing to make such sacrifices for an airport.

"I've lived here for 50 years, and I know the people. There aren't many who want the thing built. If anyone did want it, they certainly didn't say so at the public hearing," he said.

Councilman Jim Crawford agreed, saying the airport may have to wait a few years. "We need to look at other things on the burner before doing this," he said.

But Crawford feels Benson needs a new airport — eventually.

"I think that in the long run if we're going to do any development, we need as many avenues of transportation as possible, and nobody could deny that," he said.

"It's something in the city's future. I don't think it's going to happen this year or next, but it will be something we'll need to look at down the road."

Benson Airport hearings scheduled Feb. 14 and 19

By JAC POLSGROVE
Managing Editor

Plans to build a proposed municipal airport west of Benson will be the focus of two meetings in coming days.

A meeting of the Benson Airport Planning and Advisory Committee has been scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14. That meeting, which is open to the public, will be held at City Hall, 160 S. Huachuca St.

And on Monday, Feb. 19, the Benson City Council is expected to review a final site being studied as the possible location of the airport. The council also meets at City Hall and its meetings are also open to the public.

The advisory committee meeting will feature a presentation by Coffman Associates, a Phoenix-based airport consulting firm, of a recent study conducted on a 15th possible site for a municipal airport.

Previously, Coffman examined 14 proposed sites ringing Benson and proposed five finalists, a recommendation approved by the City Council.

In December, following further

study of the five final sites, Coffman again presented a review of those locations to the council. At that time Councilman David DiPeso proposed that yet another possible site be studied. That site is located immediately north of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks and a couple of miles east of Mescal Road.

The council later approved spending about \$300 as its share of about \$3,000 needed to pay Coffman to study DiPeso's suggested site. The balance of the cost of the expanded study was picked up by the Arizona Department of Transportation's aeronautics division.

Representatives from Coffman will appear at both the airport advisory committee and the City Council meetings to review the 15th site.

In addition, the council previously asked Coffman Associates to prepare an "economic assessment report" that will detail the projected economic benefits to the Benson area from construction of a municipal airport.

That report will be made public during the airport advisory committee meeting.

Council picks site for airport

By JAC POLSGROVE
Managing Editor

A site northwest of Benson has been selected as the future home of a proposed \$9.3 million municipal airport.

But city voters will probably first get a chance to speak at the polls on whether a Benson Municipal Airport should even be built.

By a 4-1 vote, the Benson City Council on Monday, Feb. 19 chose a site north of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks and about three miles west of North Ocotillo Avenue as the home of a proposed city-run airport.

At that meeting, the council also directed City Manager Paul Nordin to look into getting measures placed on a June election ballot seeking non-binding advice from Benson residents on whether any city funds should be spent on building the airport. If advisory measures about whether to build the airport are placed before the public, they would most likely be voted on during a June election when Benson residents will be asked whether or not to issue \$430,000 in bonds to pay for expansion of Lions Park.

In picking the final site for the home of the proposed municipal airport, the City Council acted contrary to the recommendations of consultants hired to study sites for the airport and a council-appointed Benson Airport Advisory Committee, both of which suggested locating the airport at another location west of town.

During a Wednesday, Feb. 14 meeting of the airport advisory group, panel members voted unanimously in support of site "E-1," which is located roughly southeast of the council's selection, "F-1."

Site E-1 — the parcel recommended by the airport advisory group and the Phoenix-based consulting firm of Coffman Associates — is located directly north of the intersection of state Route 90 and Interstate 10 and immediately south of the railroad tracks. That site has drawn some criticism, primarily from residents of the area.

Site F-1 — the council's pick — was initially recommended by Councilman David DiPeso late last year and later was studied as part of a supplemental \$3,000 review by Coffman Associates. No one spoke in opposition to site F-1 during a Monday public hearing held prior to the council's vote.

A third-ranked proposed location — site A — was not seriously considered at the council meeting. That site is located directly east of the Old Tucson Mescal movie set on Mescal Road.

DiPeso made a motion to select site F-1 as the home of the proposed airport, with Councilman Jim Crawford seconding the motion. Mayor Richard Saenz and Councilman Dan Barrera voted along with Crawford and DiPeso in favor of site F-1, while Councilman Jim Mellentine cast the sole "no" vote. In a move that sidestepped taking a stand on the matter, Councilman Dick Hamilton only answered "present" during the voting — which counted as neither a no, yes or abstention. Councilwoman Sylvia Rothermich was absent from the meeting.

According to the supplemental study conducted by Coffman Associates, the long-term cost of building an airport at site F-1 is more

expensive than any of the three top-ranked contenders

Coffman Associates projected development cost estimates — over about a 20-year period — pegged site A at \$7 million, site E-1 at \$7.8 million and site F-1 at \$9.3 million.

Of the expected \$9.3 million tab for development of site F-1, the Federal Aviation Administration would pick up 91 percent of the cost, with the state Department of Transportation and the city of Benson splitting the 9 percent balance — or about \$420,000 each, spread over the next two decades.

Much of the additional expense at site F-1 stems from a planned three-mile road leading to the airport from Ocotillo Avenue that is projected to cost about \$825,000.

During a public hearing held prior to the council's vote, Leslie Stafford of Coffman Associates reviewed her firm's recommendations on site F-1. Stafford said there are "not a lot of opportunities here to squeeze a runway in" although there is one flat piece of land that is "adequate."

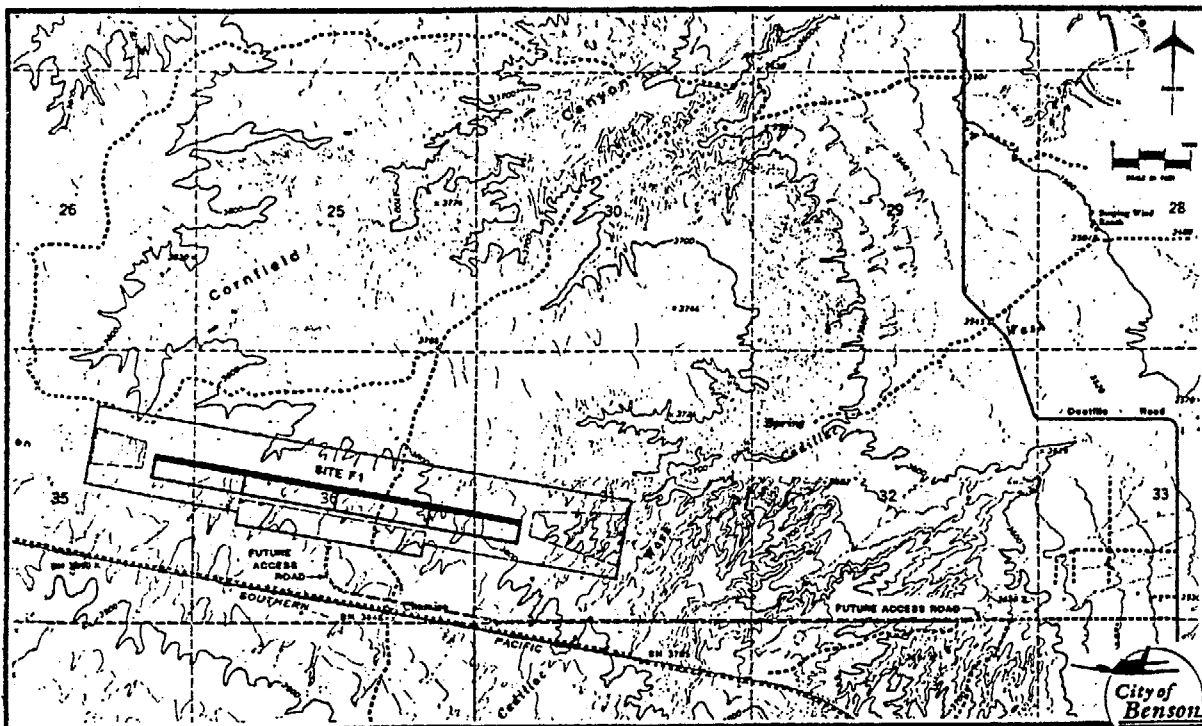
Stafford said the access road running from North Ocotillo Avenue to the airport would have to pass "through fairly rough terrain."

Another negative factor is the proximity to site F-1 of high-power electric transmission lines nearby that would "not be preferable" in locating an airport, although FAA guidelines would allow construction of a field at the site, she said.

During the public hearing, nine people addressed the council about the airport.

Virgil Haverty of Benson said site F-1 would not be opposed by him. He said building an airport at the F-1 site would force pilots traveling from Tucson to drive to Ocotillo Avenue to get to the facility. And that would draw some extra dollars into the community — a situation that appeared to draw strong support from the council.

Access roads to the other sites generally lead to intersections on Interstate 10 west of town.



AIRPORT'S NEW HOME — This site west of Benson was picked Monday, Feb. 19 by the City Council as the new home of a proposed municipal airport. Access to the airport will be gained via a proposed road, shown on the illustration above running west from North Ocotillo Avenue to the airport, located three miles to the west. The airport is expected to eventually cost about \$9.3 million.

Benson merchant Wally Zearing — owner of Zearing's Mercantile on East Fourth Street — questioned the need for an airport at all. Zearing said the council should be focusing its energy on helping local businesses that "are closing at an alarming rate."

"Why don't you think of our town first?" he asked the council.

However, St. David resident Harold W. "Bud" Frerer said the city would be getting a bargain on the airport since the state and FAA are picking up more than 95 percent of the tab.

"I believe that this airport will be really advantageous to the community," Frerer said.

Gary Adams of the state Department of Transportation told the council that it will be at least five to seven years "before there is an airport ready for planes to land out there."

Adams told the council it is making "a wise move on your part" to continue studying the feasibility of an airport, noting that "it's not binding on the community that you actually go out" and build the airport.

Adams noted that airports are "one of the keystones of economic development" for communities.

Mayor Richard Saenz later echoed Adams' comments. Saenz said that when he discusses Benson with potential industrial firms that might want to locate here, one of the first questions he is asked is "where's the rail spur" in relation to the location of the airport.

Saenz said Benson lost a potential industrial firm last summer to Eloy in part because this city did not have an airport.

Benson officials select another site for airport

By Joe Salkowski
The Arizona Daily Star

Benson officials have chosen another site for a new airport about three miles northwest of town, but are not sure they will need it.

The Benson City Council decided last week to continue studying a proposed airport for the city.

The site, about two miles north of Interstate 10 and three miles west of Ocotillo Road, was chosen after another proposed location just to the south drew criticism from area residents.

"It's still closer to me than I'd like," said Kay Getzwiller, who owns a ranch about a mile south of the new site.

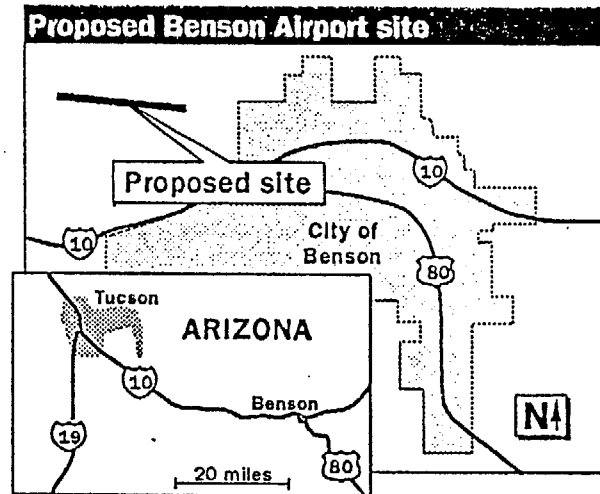
The site originally recommended by Coffman Associates, a Phoenix-based airport consulting firm working for the city, would have required an access road through Getzwiller's ranch.

The new location — about 45 miles southeast of Tucson — also provides easier access to Ocotillo Road, which city merchants hope would lead airport users into downtown Benson.

Coffman estimates a new airport would generate \$33 million in economic benefits to Benson in the 20 years after construction begins.

It would take \$9.3 million to build and operate the airport during its first 20 years. Federal and state aviation grants would pay for 95 percent of those costs, meaning the airport would cost Benson about \$466,000.

City Manager Paul Nordin has said Benson could afford the airport, but that it would have to compete for



The Arizona Daily Star

funding with other city projects, including a new landfill, an upgrade of the city's waste-water plant and improvements to streets and parks.

"I don't think it (the airport) is feasible — there's too many things to do first," Getzwiller said.

Wallace Zearing, who owns Zearing's Mercantile in Benson, said money proposed for the project would be better spent revitalizing the city's downtown.

"The city should concentrate on doing something for its businesses, which are closing at an alarming rate," he said. "You have to have a living, growing town before you build an airport."

Councilman Dick Hamilton proposed that the issue be put to an advisory vote on a June ballot, to gauge public opinion on the airport.

"We've had a lot of discussion, but not much has been heard from the people who'll pay for it," said Hamilton, who asked city staffers to come up with wording for the resolution. "We need to get people's view on this."

Shoot down airport

To the Editor:

Once again the Benson Airport is on the front burner. For the life of me I don't know why. What can possibly be the advantage of spending so much taxpayers' money — be it city, county, state or federal — for something that will benefit so few people?

There could hardly be more than a handful of people in this area that would benefit from an airport and there are private ones that I'm sure could be used.

Instead of the airport, let them put in a good golf course. Something that everyone can use and which may hold some of the people that come to visit Kartchner Caverns for more than the few hours it takes to go through the cave.

While I'm at it, I view the prison as undesirable for Benson. There are few businesses in town that cannot live without the prison, but who could survive if the tourists packed up and left?

Gordon Davenport
St. David

Airport questions

To the Editor:

Locating an airport at either Mescal site over 12 miles away seems an interesting proposition. Some basic questions need to be answered.

Why would anyone who flies hundreds of miles want to drive an additional 12 miles to rest, sleep, eat, etc? The answer is simple: they won't.

Those services will be provided in an area directly surrounding the airport.

How will Benson businesses prosper with an airport situated so far away? The answer is again simple: they won't.

Go ahead, Benson. Build this airport near Mescal and the growth you subsidize will not be your own.

Patrick Daniels
Benson

Vote on airport

To the Editor:

The airport is on hold. How could it ever have gotten out of the holding pattern?

The need for an airport in Benson rivals the need for a boat basin in St. David.

To start with, the \$8-14 million construction cost is not free. It comes straight from the taxpayer. This is a group to which most of us belong.

Next, what guarantee is there that it will be used enough so the day-to-day expenses can be met and not subsidized by the city?

Who wants that kind of traffic flying around, anyway? This is a nice quiet community. Let's keep it that way.

I would think it should come to a

vote before any more money is spent.

Gordon Davenport
St. David



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