

Safford 
Regional Airport
Master Plan
Update 2000
Safford, Arizona

Introduction 

1.1 STUDY BACKGROUND

The City of Safford received and executed a grant from the FAA in May 1998 to conduct an airport master plan study. In June 1998, the first Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held to present the scope and purpose of the study, define the Plan's goals and objectives, and identify the key issues at the airport to be addressed within the scope of the Plan. Although the 1990 Master Plan addressed several issues and made recommendations for future development, a number of current issues required attention. This Airport Master Plan addresses those issues.

Since this study was initiated in 1998, the Master Plan uses 1997 as the base year for the collection of data – the latest “complete” year. However, more recent data has been noted throughout the Study, where appropriate. The base year represents the “existing conditions” of the Study.

1.2 STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to update the January 1990 Airport Master Plan. This master plan is designed to be responsive to the goals and objectives of the Safford Regional Airport. The study provides guidelines for the twenty-year master planning future that will satisfy aviation demand, support land use compatibility planning with community development plans, and minimize environmental impacts.

The Master Plan should serve as a tool to enable the City of Safford to make rational aviation investment plans and ensure that airport facilities remain viable in providing long-term aviation benefits to the community.

1.3 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Careful preparation of goals (broad policy statements) and objectives (specific, attainable, and measurable actions) are essential to the success of a master plan process. The goals and objectives selected for this study were designed to meet

community guidelines, address relevant public concerns, and consider the different interests and factors that exist at the airport.

The following study goals and objectives were compiled as a result of pre-project research and the first Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting held in June 1998. They were used throughout the study to guide the work effort.

Goal: To provide airport facilities and services for all users in a fiscally responsible manner that maximizes safety, efficiency, and opportunity for use.

Objectives:

To develop the airport in a manner that balances the need to conform to physical design standards as established by federal, state, and local agencies, with community needs and the financial constraints.

To document rationale for recommendations through a complete investigation of concepts and alternatives on technical, economic, and environmental grounds.

To establish an action plan for the state and federal future capital improvement program.

Goal: To develop aviation demand forecasts that are responsive to expected socioeconomic factors and demand levels in the Safford area.

Objectives:

To develop estimates of short- (2005), intermediate- (2010), and long-term (2020) aviation activity levels at Safford.

To identify the possible characteristics of future air travel demand.

Goal: To ensure airport compatibility with local land use patterns and plans.

Objectives:

To define airspace requirements of the airport and identify existing and potential obstructions to these.

To identify airport influence areas (AIA) to address off-airport land use issues.

To identify specific recommendations regarding compatible land use development adjacent to the airport and associated need for coordination amongst the varying interests (City and County government, community residents, etc.).

To identify on-airport land uses and assess their impacts on the contiguous areas.

To examine alternative uses of airport property, considering site constraints, that would enhance compatibility.

To strive for the minimal amount of environmental impact in the development of the airport facilities.

To identify potential conflicts between Airport use and development related to adjacent land use and offer strategies for dealing with them.

Goal: To produce a plan for airport development that meets the needs and desires of the Safford area.

Objectives:

To develop a public awareness of the airport planning and development process.

To encourage and utilize comments from all sectors of the aviation community in developing an airport master plan update that can be adopted, endorsed, and implemented.

To ensure that the public, along with federal, state, and local officials, have an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process during the development of the plan.

To develop a phased program of specific airside and landside facility improvements to accommodate the forecasts of future aviation demand for Safford.

1.4 ISSUES

Early identification of airport issues facilitates the formulation of the Study's strategy. Airport issues of greatest concern were defined by meeting with personnel associated with the airport in the early stages of the planning process and soliciting discussion during the first PAC meeting held June 18, 1998. As a result, the following issues were identified:

1.4.1 Compatible Land Use

In the early stages of the master planning process and during the June 1998 meeting, the PAC and airport-related staff noted that assuring compatible land use development adjacent to the airport was considered the most important issue requiring attention during the master planning process. This issue evolved throughout the planning process.

As part of the off-airport land use planning effort, it was noted that additional recommendations to build on the City-adopted Airport Influence Area (AIA) were needed. Since two jurisdictions (City and County) exist at and around the airport, it was also noted that State law requires that the adjacent jurisdiction review any development within a three-mile radius of community development.

In October 1999, the City, in coordination with the PAC, took the 20-year master planning process one step further in terms of land use planning. The City identified "ultimate" development plans (beyond 2020 - the master planning window) in an effort to look at the airport's adjacent land use requirements nearly 50 years down the road. This produced a conceptual development scenario that included the extension of Runway 8-26 under the assumption that Runway 12-30 would become the crosswind runway. Consequently, this effort resulted in the identification of long-term land acquisition needs and areas of compatible land use development concern. Please see Section 5.4, Beyond 2020, for additional details.

1.4.2 Auto Access

The existing airport access roadway requires improvement. The previous master plan proposed rerouting the access road. The current PAC stated that relocation was not a significant development priority for the airport. However, preliminary discussions

revealed concerns over potential conflict with future helicopter operations just south of the access road.

1.4.3 Hangar Demand

Hangar demand has been increasing. In addition, the FBO hangar is in poor condition and inadequate in size to accommodate current aircraft maintenance and storage demand. Since this development is ineligible for FAA funding, other funding is needed.

1.4.4 Terminal Building

The PAC identified the terminal building as inadequate and inflexible. There is a need for a conference room as well as more lobby space. During firefighting season, there are nearly 100 people in and out of the terminal area. A separate Terminal Building Study has been programmed for future funding by the airport. However, the PAC requested that preliminary terminal building requirements be addressed in the Master Plan.

1.4.5 Aircraft Fuel Storage and Dispensing

Aircraft fueling and storage was identified as an issue in the early stages of the master planning process. However, the underground storage tanks have been replaced with new aboveground tanks which are in compliance with current environmental regulations. In addition, the self-serve fueling island has been removed – all fueling is now done by truck.

1.4.6 Helicopter Operations Area

Helicopter parking needs have remained a high priority for the airport. During peak periods for the helicopters, the apron becomes congested and, occasionally, the crosswind runway is closed and converted to helicopter parking -- this happens during military exercises and firefighting operations.

1.4.7 Utilities

The airport's existing utility infrastructure is inadequate. While some utility improvements are eligible for federal funding, other utility improvements are not. Thus, funding alternatives are necessary.

1.5 APPROACH

The study approach was designed with guidance from the FAA Advisory Circular 150/5070-6A, *Airport Master Plans*. This approach required a series of interdependent steps for systematic development of the airport master plan.

The methodology incorporated four basic phases. First, study purpose, program goals and objectives, and airport issues were identified. Next, airport requirements were defined based on forecast activity. Alternatives were then identified and evaluated, with one subsequently selected to best serve the future needs. Finally, the selected (preferred alternative) was planned and programmed.

The development of the plan took place within the context of a public coordination program to assure community input at each important decision stage. The work program, designed to accomplish the study objectives, was organized according to the following tasks.

<u>TASK</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1	STUDY INITIATION
2	INVENTORY
3	AVIATION DEMAND FORECASTS
4	FACILITY REQUIREMENTS
5	ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS
6	ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW
7	LAND USE ANALYSIS
8	AIRPORT PLANS
9	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
10	ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION
11	MASTER PLAN DOCUMENTS

The first task, Study Initiation, concluded with the preparation of this chapter – Chapter 1, Introduction. Thereafter, the completion of tasks 2 through 9 produced Master Plan Chapters 2 through 9. In addition, appendices were produced for support materials not included in the chapters.