

Public Workshop

Weaverville Airport Studies

November 10, 2004

6:30 P.M.

Weaverville Library Meeting Room

Trinity County is beginning the process to update the planning and design data that will assist in the evaluation of the aviation needs for the Greater Weaverville Area. The meeting is not a forum to discuss the relocation of the airport; rather it is intended to familiarize attendees with the airport and the pending update of the aviation forecast and airport layout plan to be approved prior to performing any additional relocation studies.

The topics to be presented at the meeting include a history of the airport, the design of the facility, use and role of the airport, status of the relocation, aviation forecast and facility needs for Weaverville and ultimately a review of the site selection process.

Trinity County will present the outline of the project, the work products and the timeline for completion. A brief question and answer session will follow the presentation.

1) Purpose of Studies

The studies are proposed to supply the County, the State and the Federal Government a estimate of existing, and realistic projections of the aviation needs for the Weaverville, Lewiston, Douglas City, Junction City / Central Trinity County Area. The inventory and projections will assist in developing an airport facility template that includes the length and width of runway and taxiways, aircraft storage capacity and aviation support needs. The studies and resultant plans developed by the County will require Federal review and approval prior to any further work on the relocation project.

2) Weaverville Airport History

Weaverville Airport was constructed in the late 1940's to replace the community's landing field located near the current golf course. The airport did not comply with design standards when constructed. Enhancements to the facility are few, consisting of construction of hangars, a turn around and navigational aids.

3) Airport Characteristics

The existing airport is 50' wide and 2980' in length. It is constructed parallel to Highway 3 and runs up hill at approximately 3.6% grade. Maximum design grade is 1.5%. Much of the airspace surrounding the airport includes obstructions consisting of trees and mountains. Airspace obstructions and gradient result in the "one-way" configuration of the airport. Aircraft takeoff south (downhill) and land to the north (uphill). A configuration that pilots familiar with the facility do not object to. Much of the old town portion of Weaverville and sensitive uses lie within the airports approach / departure zone. (Safety Zones) Due to close in obstructions and the surrounding terrain the airport is closed to night operations. (ALP and Penetration Map)

4) Function of the Airport

Weaverville Airport is a public use airport serving the community of Weaverville and the surrounding areas. The airport is included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems

(NPIAS) and is functionally classified a "community airport". To be included in the NPIAS an airport is considered necessary to provide safe and efficient facilities as part of an integrated system of airports to meet the needs of civil aviation, national defense, medical emergencies and the postal service.

A majority of the aircraft utilizing the airport is privately owned. Aircraft owners include businessmen with interests inside and outside the county, commercial pilots maintaining second homes in Trinity County, and the Sheriff's Department. The airport is also used by outside citizens for recreational access, business and government transport and timberland management. Emergency uses include the California Highway Patrol, Medi-vac, and Fire Suppression.

5) Previous Relocation Activities

Trinity County investigated airport relocation in the early 1980's. Potential sites were located at Union Hill, and two Locations on Musser Hill. Nothing came of those initial investigations until in the late 1980's. Proposed Bureau of Land management land trades included one of the considered sites on Musser Hill. The County entered into an agreement where the land was traded out to a Timber Land Company (SPI), which included a reservation that if the site were found to be suitable for airport purposes the County would receive the land from SPI at no cost. The agreement, which is no longer in force, together with the County's desire to determine if a new airport could be located in the Weaverville vicinity initiated a series of studies.

The first project began in 1996 and was funded as part of a System Plan update that included a site selection study. The Board of Supervisors appointed an ad-hoc committee whose purpose was to assist an Aviation Consultant in developing criteria upon which the site selection would be based. (Criteria) Utilizing the criteria the Consultant performed a paper search, and later, more detailed engineering to analyze potential sites. Thirteen sites held promise and through a ranking procedure three sites were selected for further study. (13 Sites) Also in the pool of potential sites is the existing airport. Final ranking was presented to the Board of Supervisors who ratified the ranking and in accordance with environmental procedures directed environmental studies to be performed on the three highest ranked potential sites, as well as at the existing airport, the "do nothing alternative".

The environmental studies were completed and the findings are presented in two volumes consisting of an Environmental Assessment (NEPA) and the Environmental Impact Report (CEQA). During the circulation of the documents (prior to adoption) public concern grew pertaining to the need for an airport, the location of the preferred site and the configuration and components of the proposed facility.

The circulation of the Environmental Documents concluded with considerable public concern being offered in the form of written comments on the project. The County and the FAA elected to withdraw the document from circulation with a view to perform additional analysis and studies and re-circulate at a later date.

During the County's and FAA's initial review of the planning efforts it became apparent that some basic assumptions utilized for the project are suspect and required further evaluation and qualification. Prior to performing any more environmental studies that base-line planning data for the Weaverville area aviation needs will be completed through an enhanced planning process.

6) Enhanced Planning Process

An enhanced planning process is proposed to comply with current FAA requirements. The process will include an evaluation of, and a plan for meeting the aviation needs for the Weaverville area.

a) Aviation Forecast

The aviation forecasts used in the initial planning were based on projections of historically reported aircraft operations. No basis is given for these numbers and actual operational statistics do not meet those reported and used for the project. Much has changed in aviation in recent years; general aviation is experiencing a form of renaissance with increased utilization at small facilities and a new "sport class" license may also have an effect at the airport. The county's growth patterns and population base have evolved in recent years. It is apparent that the aviation forecasts in Trinity County are in need of review and update.

The review will include an inventory of current operations, type of utilization and aircraft category. From this baseline projections may be derived utilizing accepted standards that will give a view of future needs for the facility.

b) Airport Layout Plan / Master Plan

Once the aviation forecast has been developed and approved by the FAA the physical characteristics for the proposed facility can be developed. Items such as length and width of runway, and support infrastructure consisting of aircraft storage and service areas can be incorporated. Other considerations include commercial aviation and aviation related service and industry needs.

Facility needs include an assessment of the airspace requirements and existing and planned uses of surrounding lands.

The ALP is a planning document that consists of a scaled drawing showing existing and future facilities and property necessary for operation and development of the airport. It is the key communication document and, when approved, the agreement between the County and the FAA.

The Airport Layout Plan includes a drawing showing the airport facilities, airport airspace, inner approach surfaces terminal area, land use and property map. Additionally it includes a narrative report. The approved ALP is a planning document that provides a picture of proposed facilities for the near term (5 years) and long term (20 years).

A current Airport Layout Plan that has FAA approval from the standpoint of safety, utility, and efficiency of the airport shall be required before a development project is approved.

c) Site Selection Review

After the development of the ALP a review of prior site selection process will be made. Any new information developed during the process will be applied to the assessment. The intent is to review the previously completed process and to incorporate any facility modifications that are required of the forecast and ALP development. The review will be an unbiased review conducted in compliance with current planning process. It is intended to review the previously considered sites together with any other potential candidate sites that may be identified.

6) Project Schedule

Recruitment of an Aviation Planning Consultant - December 2004 through February 2005

Aviation Forecast – March 2005 through July 2005

Airport Layout Plan / Master Plan - August 2005 through October 2005

Review of Site Selection – October 2005 through December 2005

The schedule is tentative and subject to review.