

Gillespie Field Development Council
Agenda Item #5
January 17, 2012
Gillespie Field 70-Acre Redevelopment Project (Cajon Air Center)
Final Program Environmental Impact Report

After the Gillespie Field Airport Layout Plan Update Narrative Report was completed in 2005 it was determined the planned development on the former Cajon Speedway site would need to be analyzed under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) before it could proceed. The County began work on a Program Level Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) to meet CEQA requirements. The Program EIR is now complete and ready to be presented to the County Board of Supervisors (BOS). The GFDC is asked to make a recommendation to the BOS to approve the Gillespie Field 70-Acre Redevelopment Project, certify the Program EIR and authorize DPW to apply for and accept grant funds for construction of the project.

Project Description

The redevelopment has two main components:

- 1) Construction of infrastructure facility improvements to be developed by the County, and
- 2) The private development aviation use facilities, including hangar spaces, aircraft tie-downs, maintenance space, and aviation office and business space, which would be developed by private developers and investors.

The site would remain under County ownership, and leases would be executed with private developers for development of the aviation use facilities. Private development would obtain building permits from City of El Cajon.

The purpose of the redevelopment as outlined in the Program EIR includes the following project objectives:

- To meet the existing unmet and forecast market demand for based aircraft storage facilities
- To comply with Federal grant assurances by maintaining the highest and best use of airport properties.
- And to promote general aviation and attract tenants and users to Gillespie Field to increase the airport's value as a revenue-generating asset to the County and surrounding communities.



The project area is outlined in yellow

Potential Significant Environmental Effects

The Program EIR analyzes potential environmental impacts that would occur as a result of the proposed project, and all impacts were found to be less than significant, with the exception of Biology, Hazardous Materials, and Traffic.

- **Biology:** The project would impact the San Diego Ambrosia, a federally-endangered plant species, and surrounding non-native grassland. These impacts would be mitigated through transplanting the ambrosia to the Mission Trails Regional Park.
- **Hazardous Materials:** Historically contaminated soil and groundwater could cause potential impacts that require measures to protect human health and safety during construction.
- **Traffic:** All project impacts would be fully mitigated to less than significant with the exception of traffic. The project would increase traffic on surrounding roadways, and an impact would occur at the SR-67/Bradley interchange. Impacts to this interchange can be mitigated through the construction of the SR-67/Bradley Avenue Interchange Project for direct impacts and payment into the County's TIF program for cumulative impacts. However, because it cannot be guaranteed that the new SR-67/Bradley Avenue interchange would be completed prior to construction, these direct impacts would be considered *significant and unmitigable*.

Public Comment

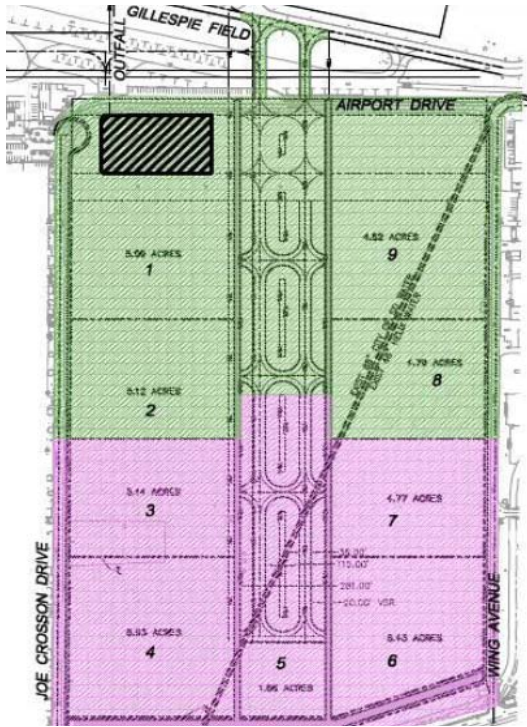
The Draft Program EIR was circulated for a 45-day public review period, and was extended by an additional week through November 7 at the request of the general public. Notices were sent out to surrounding land owners, responsible agencies, and stakeholders, and published in the Union-Tribune. During their regular meeting on September 20th, the Gillespie Field Development Council approved a motion to submit a letter endorsing their support of the proposed project. In addition, the County held a public Open House to on October 5th to give opportunity to ask questions about the PEIR.

In total, 87 comment letters were received during public review. The 70 comment letters in favor of the project were from the aviation community or those that support economic growth and job creation. The seven comment letters against the project mainly focused on concerns about noise and safety in the surrounding neighborhoods under the flight path. The general responses are that the EIR concludes that noise would not increase beyond FAA thresholds with the project and that the project would not change the flight paths authorized and monitored by FAA. The County has taken extra steps to meet with residents to address noise and safety concerns for current flight operations.

Ten comment letters were received from responsible agencies and stakeholders including Cities of El Cajon and Santee, Caltrans, Fish and Game, and the Regional Airport Authority to name a few. These comments were more focused on the specifics of the EIR analysis that were addressed by making edits in the Errata and preparing Response to Comments. Both Cities' comments were centered on how to integrate their plans and regulations with the County's.

Next Steps

The Final Program EIR, including responses to public comments, will be brought before the Board of Supervisors for certification on March 14th, 2012. On a parallel track, Airports is also working with FAA to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to NEPA. This document does not require County Board approval because FAA is the lead agency. Staff anticipates public review of the EA could start in February, with approval of the EA in May.



The area in green shows the first four parcels planned for private development

Grants

Prior to this year, the County has received grants, totaling \$403,000 from the FAA for planning and environmental costs associated with the project. In addition the County has invested approximately \$1 million in Airport Enterprise Funding on costs not covered by Federal Grants.

Once NEPA requirements are complete, staff plans to apply for an additional \$2.7 million to complete environmental work, such as moving the San Diego Ambrosia, and complete the full design of the project as part of our Airport Capital Improvement Program.

Once the design is complete County airports plans to apply for grants to construct the project. Our ACIP shows includes a request for \$15 million in 2014 to complete grading, drainage and street improvements for the entire parcel and \$11.5 million the following year to complete infrastructure needed before the private development can begin on the first four parcels.

Staff estimates full public costs for the project at \$30.6 million with \$28.1 contributed by the FAA and \$2.5 contributed by the AEF. The investment needed to fulfill this plan is significant but there are substantial benefits. The Cajon Air Center will provide facilities and services to meet forecasted growth and provide substantial economic benefit to the region. It does not increase capacity beyond existing forecasts. County airports has met with the FAA to discuss this plan and they've indicated they fully support the project, although they are unable to commit to full funding at this time because of federal budget challenges.

Private Development and Request for Proposal

Assuming the federal funding is granted as expected, Staff will develop the draft RFP and criteria and brief to Gillespie Field Development Council in September 2013. After considering GFDC comments we plan to publish the RFP in approximately Nov 2013, subject to funding, and developing a short list of qualified developers in mid 2014. After more detailed submittals, final selection of developers is targeted for January 2015.

Staff will then complete leases with the selected developers and present them to the BOS in mid 2015, with private construction expected to starting by January 2016, after the taxiway to the first four parcels is complete.

Recommended Motion

Staff has prepared the following motion: *The Gillespie Field Development Council recommends the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors approve the Gillespie Field 70-Acre Redevelopment Project, certify the Program Level Environmental Impact Report and authorize DPW to apply for and accept grant funds for construction of the project.*