

THE NEXT DECADE

Gillespie County Airport

**Recommendations from the Airport Advisory Board
For the Future of T82**



INTRODUCTION

The planning cycle for airports is a crucial factor in being able to meet the needs and demands of the flying public, whether it is general aviation or fractional ownership aviation and Gillespie County airport is no exception. The airport master plan was completed in the fall of 2005 and now as we look forward we can see the requirement for a mid course correction in planning. The committee was put together at the request of the Gillespie County Airport Advisory Board with the request to look at the year 2015 and beyond and fill in the gaps left in the original master plan.

The continuing growth of the airport necessitates a look at all areas of the infrastructure to include

- 1. hangars**
- 2. auto parking**
- 3. terminal building**
- 4. rehabilitation of paved surfaces**
- 5. helipad construction**
- 6. airport staffing**
- 7. funding possibilities**
- 8. business park**
- 9. runway configuration**
- 10. community involvement**
- 11. navigation aids**
- 12. FBO status**

The document is meant to be flexible and serve as a guide to the airport manager, the Advisory Board and the Commissioners Court.

The airport being the dream of Hans Hannemann and Red Schroeder continues to be a jewel in the crown of Gillespie County and this document will hopefully aid in maintaining a future-focused outlook.

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HANGARS

It is recommended that the airport continue with the broad plan of development that applies public funds for airside and landside infrastructure investments, and invites private investment in the form of hangars and service businesses as leasehold improvements. The advantage of this approach is public funds are concentrated on infrastructure needs, while private funds support commercial services. This maximizes both infrastructure and services.

In T-82's Airport policy documents, infrastructure investments include all improvements and provisions necessary for the safe and reliable conduct of aircraft operations at an airport. For airside infrastructure, think of runway, taxiway, aircraft parking ramps, runway marker lights, PAPI, approaches and related easements, AWOS. For landside infrastructure, think of access roads, public car park facilities, security fence, and reasonable access to utility services of water, sewer, power, telephone. These are publicly funded investments.

T-82 Airport policy documents make reasonably clear that private investors are expected to pay for what they need to connect with, build on, and be served by the public infrastructure. Further, the policy documents are clear on minimum requirements of various types of hangars and service businesses. Our Airport policy documents make clear that private investors are expected to pay for what they need to connect with, build on, and be served by the public infrastructure. Further, the policy documents are clear on minimum requirements of various types of hangars and service businesses. The Airport Advisory Board has powers and responsibility to recommend to the Airport Sponsor plans for public infrastructure improvements to support future private hangar development sites of both T-Hangars for rent and Dedicated Private or Corporate Hangars.

Airport Infrastructure, Auto Parking

Airport Minimum Operating Standards, Section 11, paragraph e requires that developers of Corporate or Private Hangars, ".... Provide adequate car parking, whether inside the hangar or outside, for personnel who use the hangar building."

The same policy document, Section 6, paragraph h, requires that developers and operators of Aviation Service Businesses, "...lease sufficient land to provide adequate parking for customers and employees."

The same policy document, Section 7, paragraph d, requires that FBOs have parking sufficient for employees, customers, and rental cars if applicable.

Section IV of Airport Rules and Regulations deals with Vehicle Operations, and paragraph 6 of that document provides specific authorization for parking of personal autos inside T-Hangars when aircraft are out. The Airport Advisory Board has powers and responsibility to designate and appropriately post NO PARKING as may be required to maintain reasonable access to hangars.

TERMINAL BUILDING

The present conference room in the terminal building is too small to accommodate an Airport Advisory Board meeting. The interior walls of the terminal are non-weight bearing and can be moved without extensive renovations. It is recommended to enlarge the room by joining the present two rooms across the hallway and making it into an "L" shape and retaining the present sink arrangement. A new room access door in the present hallway will allow a second entry into the room and the exterior door will be an emergency exit.

RUNWAY AND TAXIWAY REHABILITATION

After rehabilitation of the airfield pavement during the FY2012 time frame, subsequently a watch should be maintained in case of premature failure of the paved surface.

HELIPADS

Significant helicopter traffic has taken place in the past and heavy helicopters from Fort Hood transit our airfield on a periodic basis. In order to separate the helicopters from the light general aviation aircraft it is recommended to construct a stand-alone parking spot on the northwest edge of the midfield ramp. Hopefully this project will be completed in the FY2012 time frame.

AIRPORT STAFFING

As the airport continues to grow more attention to repairs and rents will be required of the airport manager. Thought should be given to the hiring of an on-call handyperson who can respond to the repairs of airfield equipment. Additionally this person can be the on-call individual for when the airport manager is away from the airport for a significant time period.

FUNDING

Numerous avenues for funding streams from TXDOT-Aviation Division should be pursued for future projects and plans. These can include non-primary entitlement (NPE) funds, 90/10 split or 75/25 avenues. Whatever the project or plan there is a possible avenue for monies from other governmental agencies and they should be pursued. The right balance of revenues versus expenditures should be maintained but not to the detriment of a future project where other fund sources are available. The use of Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds affords the most return on investment and should be used whenever possible. With that said, shovel ready projects should be kept on the shelf in case of immediate use funds availability.

ADVERTISEMENT

The airport manager should maintain a readily available presentation that will inform and enlighten the public, advisory board members or city council on the value and utility of the airport. This should be a presentation that can be tailored to the specific audience. Pieces of this presentation should be stand-alone for individual groups.

Business Park

The 24 acre Business Park was created with the thought in mind of non-aeronautical use, however a quick look will show the south side to be ideal for businesses that deal with or utilize aviation. The Park offers the usual amenities found in many commercial business sites with the possible added benefit of airside exposure.

In order to provide this airside availability, the airport would have to make a substantial investment in infrastructure primarily in the form of a connecting taxiway from the ramp area to the northern side of the Business Park.

Assuming the current road infrastructure of the airport is maintained, this taxiway would necessarily have to cross Airport Road creating a potential dangerous mix of vehicle and aircraft traffic at the intersection. This could be addressed by several methods including signage, lighted crossing area and/or pilot/driver controlled gates. The above investments should qualify for TXDOT funding.

The value of this commercial property concept should be emphasized in aviation and business publications along with our own city/county economic development team.

RUNWAY EXPANSION

For the concept of extending the runway 300', a drawing overlaid on existing Airport diagrams demonstrates a simple solution for T-82 having a longer usable runway (see Addendum 2) within existing property lines. This creates a safer environment for aircraft to both run up and wait for their clearances. Currently both Pippen and York and Snowden Aviation face the danger of jet (and prop) blast via run ups and the blast from jets and large turbo props that are making the turn on to Runway 14. The area surrounding the proposed run up area is completely clear so that aircraft will not endanger property regardless of their direction. Additionally, the ability to add 300' to the takeoff roll will increase the ability for aircraft departing to carry additional payload such as passengers and fuel. Should TXDOT and the FAA approve and help fund this concept, the airport would get a significant improvement for a very modest investment. Additionally, the implementation of this plan would not cause a total disruption of airport activities during the construction phase.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Educate the community to help clear up major misconceptions regarding the role of GA. Establish a Speaker's Presentation for the airport manager and/or others to communicate benefits of the Airport/General Aviation to public. The presentation would use power point and collateral pieces provided by AOPA, the FAA, and others. The presentation would cover an overall picture of airport operations and benefits to the community. The presentation could be presented at an Airport open house, civillservice club, local governments and many others.

NAVIGATIONAL AIDS

Currently T-82 is served by a variety of FAA navigational aids. The most modern, a GPS Approach, is state of the art and offers substantial versatility. However, no navigational approaches are designed to offset local property and development incursions. It is therefore paramount that a continued vigilance is conducted to ensure that Avigation easements are preserved, pursued and obtained as necessary.

It is also necessary to maintain knowledge of the advancing science of navigation and obtain that technology for Gillespie County Airport. The more dependable and flexible these newly developed navigation/communication devices are, the more they will be used by air travelers to conduct business at T-82. It is therefore recommended that the highest level of approaches possible be identified by the Airport management and efforts be instituted to secure those for T-82.

ADDITIONAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION

For Gillespie County Airport to meet its potential, efforts must be made to acquire additional property to provide expansion opportunities. This includes not only land for hangars, but also taxiways, ramps and businesses. Not only will this allow the enterprises on the airport to expand, it will also allow for a buffer between the encroachment of development and the airport businesses. The Master Plan identifies several areas of expansion which should be explored for purchase. In recent times precedent has been set by seeking assistance from TXDOT in these matters. TXDOT has found this to be an appropriate expenditure of funds for its mission. Furthermore, this type of long term investment strategy in the Airport will in the future provide significant economic benefit to the County and City.

Additionally, proposed Runway extension and land acquisition to the South across Highway 16 may be a moot point. Due

to the anticipated \$40+ million dollar price tag for such a project, other alternatives discussed elsewhere in this plan perhaps are a more palatable and reasonable course of action.

FIXED BASE OPERATORS (FBO'S)

The heart and soul of any airport is the services it provides not only to air travelers, but also to the tenants on the field.

Currently T-82 has an exceptional crop of quality service providers. Everything from fuel, shelter, maintenance, flight instruction, to lodging is provided on the airport. These are all private enterprise developments which have proven to be a step above the average airport FBO's. Future private enterprise development is strongly encouraged as long as it meets the following criteria:

- 1. complimentary to current service**
- 2. provides full service for its specialty**
- 3. provides quality service**

Should the re-sale of any of the current FBO's occur, it should be monitored closely to ensure its adherence to those quality standards previously established. The lowering of standards by a newly acquired FBO may set a trend that devalues the investment of those currently established.

With additional land acquisition the opportunity for local aviation oriented entrepreneurs is prime. Gillespie County Airport offers not only economic opportunity, but also the ability for a business to operate in an exceptionally pleasant environment. In conjunction with the Economic Development Commission, the Airport Management should encourage any potential investors.

SUMMARY

This report addresses 12 subject areas of high importance to the continued growth and economic contribution to our community of our Airport. This Committee's recommendations by subject area are summarized:

- I. Hangars – Continue the policy focus of public investments for airport infrastructure, and private investment for hangars and services. To support this approach, the Airport Advisory Board shall recommend public infrastructure investments to support new hangar developments.***
- II. Auto Parking – Existing policies adequately define responsibilities of private investors to provide for parking of customers and employees. The Airport Advisory Board shall post NO PARKING areas as may be required to maintain reasonable access to hangars and businesses.***
- III. Terminal Building – The Airport Advisory Board shall develop plans and budget for modifications to the existing building to better serve current and future needs.***
- IV. Rehabilitation of Paved Surfaces – Maintenance actions are provided for in the FY2012 plan.***
- V. Helipads – Recommend development of plans and budgets for action in the FY2012 plan.***
- VI. Airport Staffing – Provide in Airport operations budget for one added part-time staffer.***
- VII. Funding Possibilities – Monitor costs sharing policies and programs with TXDOT Aviation and FAA to maximize this funding for our Airport.***
- VIII. Business Park – Recommend an aircraft taxiway to connect the Business Park to the airside of the Airport.***
- IX. Runway Configuration – Make the most of what we have; no expansion south of SH16 or north of Tivydale Road. Consider Runway extension and improvements within these limits.***

- X. Community Involvement – Highlight the economic contribution to the larger community of our Airport via educational material on the subject and suitable engagements to explain the concept.**
- XI. Navigational Aids – Incorporate new technologies to offer the best available aids to support Airport operations.**
- XII. FBO Status – Maintain high standards of service.**

