City of Santa Monica®

Information Item

Date: April 24, 2017

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Susan Cline, Director of Public Works

Subject: Update on Airport Runway Shortening

Introduction

On February 1, 2017, the Settlement Agreement between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the City of Santa Monica (City) was approved and entered as a Consent Decree that, among other things, allows the City to shorten the runway by approximately 1,500 feet and operate a runway of 3,500 feet at Santa Monica Airport (SMO) until December 31, 2028. On February 28, 2017, the City Council awarded RFP# SP2500 to AECOM/Aeroplex (AECOM) for reducing Runway 03-21 at Santa Monica Municipal Airport (SMO) to 3,500 feet per the Consent Decree.

During discussions at the February 28 meeting, Council inquired about a potential phased interim project, removal of pavement at the ends of the runway, and evaluation of future uses of the excess runway area. This report provides an update on those topics, as well as an update on the overall status of the runway shortening project.

Discussion

Execution of Feasibility Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with AECOM

On March 16, 2017 the City of Santa Monica executed Feasibility Professional Services Agreement 10436 (CCS) with AECOM for reducing Runway 03-21 at SMO to 3,500 feet. The agreement includes an initial feasibility phase to provide alternatives for Council consideration and future selection; and ensures appropriate compliance with applicable

environmental review requirements, the required scope being dependent upon the alternative selected. Phase one consists of this feasibility analysis for design alternatives, which will be presented to Council for comment and direction on May 24th, 2017. Phase two consists of preconstruction services including all design work necessary to develop a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP), which will be the basis for the design-build agreement expected to be awarded by September 2017. Phase three is the construction phase based upon the scope of work covered by the GMP and will shorten the runway by the end of December 2017.

Meetings with the FAA

The City and AECOM organized meetings with FAA staff to present preliminary conceptual options for the runway shortening, and to discuss the potential for an interim phase that could be implemented prior to the start of runway shortening construction. In attendance at the meeting were staff from Public Works Administration; Airport and Civil Engineering Divisions; personnel from AECOM and Aeroplex; staff from various divisions within the FAA; and Caltrans Division of Aeronautics. The FAA had no substantial concerns with the preliminary options for runway shortening.

Staff will present the final alternatives for Council consideration at the May 24th Council meeting.

Interim Shortening Discussion

An interim phase to provide a shortened runway for immediate implementation was explored and would have likely involved re-striping and minor pavement maintenance excluding modifications of the existing the runway lights, signs and navigational aids. The interim solution would possibly generate unfavorable conditions including the reduction of operational safety at the airport, extension of the project completion date beyond the end of 2017, and being perceived as not in the spirit of the Consent Decree. The project team discussed the interim phase with the FAA and as further explained below, the interim shortening work is not supported by the FAA or recommended by staff.

Runway Considerations

Interim shortening by summer would not allow enough time for the relocation of Runway End Identifier Lights nor the Precision Approach Path Indicator navigational aid. Both of these features are currently operational at SMO and taking them out of operation to install an interim phased project would result in a non-standard and an unsafe operation.

Specifically, the Runway End Identifier Lights are flashing strobe lights that enable a landing pilot to identify the beginning of the runway in a sea of city lights. The Precision Approach Path Indicators provide the landing pilot with a set of lights located adjacent to the runway that indicate if the aircraft is too high, too low or on the correct glide slope to land in the desired location on the runway in a safe manner. Therefore, operating the airport without these features is contrary to safety standards

Taxiways Considerations

An interim project phase would also require aircraft to “back-taxi” (taxi against the direction of arriving traffic and then turn 180 degrees to depart) at both ends of runway, which is considered to be a nonstandard operation, extends aircraft time on the runway, and subsequently decreases safety.

Airspace Considerations

The runway thresholds (runway ends) would have to be relocated as part of any interim shortening of the runway. As a result, the approach and departure procedures would need to be updated by the FAA for the interim shortening and potentially again when the final design changes are implemented. Updated procedures are published to the aviation community on a 54-day cycle. Given the construction schedule for an interim solution, the FAA would not have time to

update and publish the new procedures. It should be noted that the goal is to complete all required work in time to meet the FAA December 7, 2017 deadline for publication of updated approach and departure procedures, and if that date is missed, the City would have to wait for the February 1, 2018 publication. Hence, time is of the essence

During meetings with City staff, the FAA indicated the implementation of an interim phase with one or more of these non-standard features may not be consistent with the Consent Decree. In the FAA's view, under the Consent Decree the City should operate the airport in accordance with the minimum applicable Federal standards.

Future Repurposing of Land Outside the Shortened Runway

Section III of the Consent Decree acknowledges that the City may use property no longer needed for the Airport (released land) with a shortened runway, and that the City may transition the released land from aeronautical to non-aeronautical uses that are safe and compatible with the operation of the Airport.

The full range of options available for the repurposing of future released lands – from leaving the unused runway surface in place to removing excess runway surface - has not yet been explored. While some individual Council members have expressed preferences for how the excess runway surface could be repurposed, there has been no Council action or direction on the range of options for future uses of released land that might be combined with removal of excess runway surface. If directed by the City Council, staff would develop, evaluate, and present possible future uses for the excess runway area after completion of the runway shortening in compliance with environmental review requirements.

Functionally, the potential future uses of excess runway surface or released land is separate from the runway shortening project. In other words, the runway shortening project is not dependent on or linked in any way to future uses of the excess runway

surface, but rather a standalone, distinct, and separate project which should proceed in an expeditious manner independent of future project(s) that may repurpose the excess runway surface. Furthermore, it should be noted that completion of the runway shortening project does not limit the City's authority to make improvements to any future excess runway surface or released land. In fact, allowing the shortening project to proceed independently and expeditiously will in turn allow for a robust, encompassing discussion regarding the future use of excess runway and released land, as is appropriate for such an important matter.

Given the above, staff is pursuing a more streamlined runway shortening construction project - one that involves re-striping, minor pavement maintenance, and related modifications of the existing runway lights, signs and navigational aids to allow the project to stay on schedule for completion by the end of December 2017.

Outreach

Staff will present the information in this report to the Airport users and stakeholders on April 25, 2017 and the Airport Commission on May 2, 2017. Staff will keep records of any feedback received at these meetings.

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