

MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Martin P. Black, AICP, ICMA-CM, City Manager

DATE: May 2, 2007

RE: Airport Development Proposals Update

Background

Three years ago, the Venice City Council passed a resolution stating "the existing airport will remain in its current location and will not be moved."

This formal action was based on information provided in a report from Dufresne-Henry Inc., a consultant hired by the city to update the airport master plan in the late 1990s. The consultant reported in 1998 the results of a conceptual airport analysis that showed the cost in 1997 dollars to move the airport from its existing location would be about \$68 million. In March 1998, the council authorized staff to continue the planning process for the existing airport and rejected consideration of airport relocation.

Resolution 2004-26 was passed on July 27, 2004 by the City Council as a formal reinforcement of the decision by the prior council not to move the Venice Municipal Airport, primarily as a result of concerns for alternative higher intensity uses of the airport.

As part of the city's existing strategic plan, City Council adopted as one of its major goals the establishment and maintenance of a sustainable airport. Last year's work program included efforts towards securing funding for development of an airport waterfront park and marina, the completion of an appraisal of airport lands/facilities to set market comparable lease parameters, commencement of an update of the airport master plan, and pursuit of funding to re-construct runway 13/31.

Recent Activities

The city was successful in obtaining state and federal funding to complete reconstruction of runway 13/31 and we completed the overall airport appraisal analysis. The airport master plan update is nearing completion after several months of public review and consideration by the Airport Advisory Board.

We received several unsolicited inquiries from private developer interests who have confirmed their willingness to undertake aviation-compatible development at the airport that may include hotel facilities, a conference center, marina, restaurant and/or commercial office, entertainment and retail uses.

City Council confirmed that the City Attorney, Airport Manager, City Manager and Councilman Moore would represent the City in any preliminary reviews of these developer proposals prior to their consideration by the Airport Advisory Board and ultimately City Council. After review of these initial proposals, the committee determined that none of the submittals clearly met community expectations and recommended that City Council approve setting a workshop to hear formal presentations from each group outlining their capabilities and willingness to enter into a public design charrette that would allow community expectations and desires to formulate the scope of any future development at the airport. This workshop was held on April 25, 2007.

Current Status

The April 25, 2007 workshop provided insight into each of the development interests and has allowed for additional background to be considered on each group. More importantly, the opportunity for public comment also provided a clearer picture of community priorities and concerns that will set the framework for coordination with other comments received over the course of the past year during the airport master plan update.

Airport Manager Fred Watts, City Attorney Wayne Hall and I met today and recommend the following course of action be considered by City Council:

City Council Requested Action

1. Authorize staff to engage an independent urban design consultant to develop and lead the implementation of the public design charrette previously recommended by city staff and encumber funds necessary for this work from the Airport Fund balance.

With the pending completion of the Airport Master Plan, there are community choices that must be weighed relative to on-going and future activities at the airport. Engaging the community in an intensive public design charrette will provide clearer alternatives that balance the proposed and expected aviation needs with overall community values. This process is recommended to clarify the costs and benefits of different scenarios. It is critical that the community be provided an opportunity to understand the interrelationship of airport operations and master plan features to other community interests. Engaging an independent land use consultant experienced in the design charrette process will also allow staff to formalize recommendations regarding the appropriateness and extent of involvement of the various development teams.

2. Confirm the following staff recommendation regarding areas inappropriate for development based upon our review of the airport master plan, adopted comprehensive plan, city council strategic plan, and community values:
 - a. South Harbor Drive (see Exhibit 1): the view corridor along Harbor Drive from Airport Boulevard south to the city limit line at Caspersen Beach is in the process of transformation back to a public beach and open space area as a result of the closure of the waste water treatment plant and provision of public park amenities. Any change to intensify existing land uses along the east side of Harbor Drive adjoining this area has the potential to dramatically alter the community character that exists and that will be re-enforced through the addition of public park and open space areas. This recommendation would have the effect of precluding any new traffic generation or buildings that might negatively impact upon the residential and public open space areas that exist on the south end of the island. As a result of changes that may be deemed necessary for airport safety operations to the area of the existing golf course driving range and club house facilities, our recommendation retains this area for discussion of alternatives during the public design charrette and does not preclude alterations to the existing golf course layout in this area necessary in order to maintain golf course uses.
3. Set a workshop with the Airport Advisory Board this month prior to their final consideration of the airport master plan in order to jointly review airport operational needs and community priorities. The workshop would allow for the final draft to be presented to both the Airport Advisory Board and City Council and for your joint considerations to be evaluated prior to the final recommendation by the Airport Advisory Board.

While some limited development may be appropriate to consider at the airport that is compatible with the community and aviation operations, several of the development proposals clearly call for projects that would overwhelm the existing Venice character. City Council confirmation of the following base line understandings for entering the public design charrette process would be advantageous to communicate to the independent consultant and to clearly indicate to the parameters:

- A golf course, open and available as a public course will be maintained at the airport.
- Golf course operations shall be consistent with comparable public courses, including that rates must be reasonable, competitive and within prevailing rates in the community (these are the existing terms from the VGA lease).

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- If changes are required to the existing golf course to meet airport safety and operational requirements, the course shall be designed to meet Audubon International certification standards for environmental protection, to reduce water quality and fertilizer impacts and to establish wildlife habitat areas.
- Access to the airport will be provided through a new primary driveway from US Business 41 in order to reduce existing traffic impacts to the residential areas on the island.
- All infrastructure costs to serve the project must be borne by the tenant and none by the city or airport.
- Limits to development intensity must be met with no beach front development.

Please do not hesitate to call or see me with any questions.

cc: Charter Officers
CMO Staff
Finance Director
Airport Manager (w/distribution to AAB)

EXHIBIT 1

