ACRP Problem Statement 18-03-20  Recommended Funding Amount: --

Improving Airport Master Planning Through Meaningful Stakeholder and Public Participation

ACRP Staff Comments

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TRB Aviation Committees Comments

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN AVIATION COMMITTEE: There is value in a case study approach to present methods used and their effectiveness. The proposed research should consider FAA's recent update of their AC on public participation and present new information not contained in AC, while meeting FAA requirements.

Association Committee Comments

NASAO (MEMBER): This is a priority for Minnesota. A number of master plans have failed due to inadequate public participation. This resulted in costly re-work of these plans. Would be interested in avoiding the negative consequences of inadequate public involvement.

Review Panel Comments

Not recommended. As proposed, this problem statement would appear to be duplicating guidance that FAA is already working on.

AOC Disposition

This problem statement was brought for discussion from the list of not-recommended problem statements. It was agreed that there is already sufficient guidance from the FAA and industry associations on this topic. No funds were allocated.
1. **Problem Statement Title:**
Improving Airport Master Planning through Meaningful Stakeholder and Public Participation

2. **Background:**
The airport master planning process is an essential step to receive AIP funding. FAA’s guidance on Airport Master Plans was updated over 3 years ago, but air transportation is evolving ever faster. NextGen, UAVs, Google, Uber (ground and perhaps air), and just air service itself is ever changing. FAA’s guidance on Citizen Participation is currently being updated for the first time since 1975.

How can airports make the best use of engaging its “public” (stakeholders, employees, tenants, citizen’s groups for developing master plans that can respond to the industries uncertainty\(^1\) and volatility?

3. **Objective:**
A guidebook containing valuable information for airport managers and planners, including case studies and the identification of best practices to assist airport internal and external stakeholders in optimizing the usefulness of the master planning process, and ways in which said process can help airport managers articulate to the external public and stakeholders the need to solve challenges they face:

   - Stakeholder involvement methods, including the identification of the airport’s role for economic development: what are the forms of stakeholder involvement in the airport master planning process that lead to a better acceptance or even an improvement of the plan?

   - Incorporation of public and stakeholder input (for instance of airlines) in the master planning process: how do stakeholder’s comments influenced a component of a master plan and what are methods of introducing flexibility in the master plan?

   - Development of multiple airport improvement options: can the planning process let alternatives/solutions emerge that were different from those envisioned initially before the process began?

4. **Proposed Tasks:**
   - Review of current airport master plans (completed within the last 5-10 years) to identify:
     - Whether public and stakeholder participation to the plans was meaningful or not, in influencing the(1) planning process or (2) specific project proposals (ALP projects)
     - What factors seemed to impact this usefulness (list non exhaustive, subject to potential refinements):
       - Airport Master Plan stakeholders/supporters/opponents:
         - Airport Governance

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\(^1\) See ACRP Report 76: Addressing Uncertainty about Future Airport Activity Levels in Airport Decision Making
• Political Subdivisions (cross boundary impacts)
• Management Strengths/Tenure
• Tenant Support (airlines)
• Business Community support
• Prior media coverage/goodwill (lack of negative stories, etc.)

- Economic and Financial aspects:
  • Financial Resources
  • Demand Strengths/Diversity (Aeronautical/non aeronautical revenues, economic drivers)
  • Community’s regional economics (employment/Labor force participation/ unemployment/Gross Metropolitan Product, etc.)
  • Bond Ratings (Tracking Largest and/or most relevant bond)
  • Rate-making Structure (residual vs compensatory vs Hybrid)

- Local Constraints:
  • Operational Constraints
  • Development Constraints (inside/outside fence)
  • Environmental Constraints (habitat, water resources, noise)
  • Public input: What level? What form? What influence?

- Timeline (concept to completion) and gap identification
  - What additional elements beyond those mandated/suggested by federal guidelines contributed to improve the airport master planning process (identification of what worked in specific cases and could be transferred to other airports)
  - Compilation of airport planners’ best practices, through research interviews across airport size
  - Identification of areas where the airport master planning process can be improved to face the new challenges of the air industry

5. **Estimated Funding:** $250,000.

6. **Estimated Research Duration:** 12-15 months.

7. **Related Research:**
   - Integrating Airport Access Planning with the Metropolitan Surface Transportation Plan (RFP under way)

8. **Process Used to Develop Problem Statement:**
   - Initial meta-analysis of public participation in airport planning, including research interviews with airport planners across the country; thorough literature review receiving valuable feedback from anonymous expert reviewers; exchanges with colleagues; conversations with airport and municipal officials around the preparation of a call for papers.
   - Use of criteria to compare and contrast airport master plans against Part 150 studies/EISs, e.g. do airport master plans include economic development/economic impact sections? Which ones do, which ones do not?
   - Review with expert mandated by TRB committee, Dr. Dave Byers.
9. **Person Submitting Problem Statement and Date:**
Simon Mosbah, Ph.D., Consultant, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, U.S. Advisory Services, 3/20/2017