SGU REGIONAL AIRPORT MASTERPLAN

PLANNING SUCCESSFUL TOMORROWS

1 – INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

I. AIRPORT HISTORY

Prior to the St. George Regional Airport's completion in 2011, the City of St. George, Washington County, and the surrounding region, were served by the St. George Municipal Airport. The municipal airport was situated atop a mesa, directly west of the St. George downtown area, which is now the site of Dixie Technical College. Due to the location of the airport atop a mesa, the runway was limited to a length of 6,607 feet, which would not accommodate the growing commercial service and general aviation business jet fleet in the future. SkyWest Airlines operated to and from the municipal airport and would have been forced to accept fewer passengers per flight given the limiting runway length, especially on warmer days. Because of this fact, the St. George City Council decided to build a replacement airport at a preferred site approximately 6 miles southeast of downtown St. George, at the site of an abandoned airport[1]. This replacement airport became what is known today as the St. George Regional Airport (SGU or the Airport).

Downtown St. George

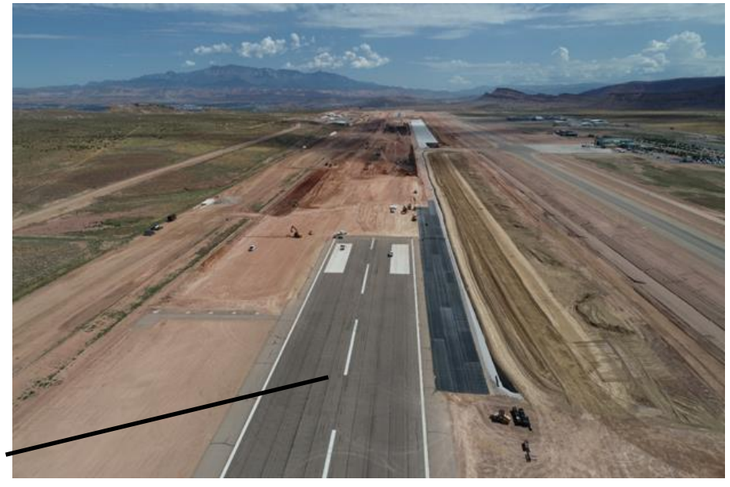
Former St. George Municipal Airport (Closed 2011)

St. George Regional Airport Passenger Terminal

SGU opened in January 2011 and, as a greenfield airport and with passenger terminal, was the City of St. George's largest construction project in the city's history. The total cost of the project was less than $160 million, where approximately $123 million was funded by the FAA, approximately $10 million from Washington County through the Transient Room Tax, and approximately $23 million from the City of St. George through transportation and water/sewer funds that were later repaid. The City of St. George also received $3 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009 for construction of the passenger terminal building. No property tax, income tax, or sales tax was used to fund the City of St. George's financial obligation for the project.

SkyWest Airlines moved their St. George commercial service operations from the municipal airport to SGU as soon as it opened in early 2011.

Several years after opening, a large portion of the Airport's sole runway (Runway 1-19) had to be reconstructed because of major heaving and cracking due to the fact that the runway was constructed over blue clay that is common in southern Utah. Blue clay in southern Utah is a broad term that refers to bluish or purple sediments that expand as they absorb water, causing damage to structures built on top of it. From May 29th to September 6th, 2019, the runway was closed in order to be excavated and repaved. The total cost of the runway repair project was approximately $25.8 million.



Runway 1-19 being reconstructed in 2019

[1] Washington County Historical Society, 2020.

II. SPONSOR/LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The Airport sponsor (owner) is the City of St. George. Within the City of St. George local government, the Airport is managed under the Transportation and Engineering department, located at St. George City Hall. The Transportation and Engineering department also manages stormwater and drainage, pavement management, transportation resources, streets, and public construction projects.

III. FAA ROLE

The FAA plays a major role in many facets of airport development and management. Most importantly, the FAA administers development grants to aid the sponsor in making AIP-eligible development projects financially feasible. These development grants are provided by the FAA through the ACIP to airports that are included in the NPIAS.

In addition to airport development grant administration, the FAA also oversees the airport master planning process. Airport master plans are comprehensive studies of an airport that describe short and long-term development goals for the airport to meet future demand, typically within a 20-year period. Airport master plans must adhere to standards developed by the FAA in order for future development projects to be approved for federal grants. As the governing body of airport master plans, the FAA must approve the aviation demand forecasts and ALP elements of the master plan.

IV. STATE ROLE

UDOT's Division of Aeronautics plays a role in developing a state plan for the future of its commercial and general aviation airports. UDOT, as the sole state authority over Utah's airport system, has the ability to direct funding to certain development projects that affect the future capabilities of an airport. According to the Utah State Aviation System Plan, the UDOT Division of Aeronautics administers all state funding for public-use airport capital project construction and maintenance, disburses aviation fuel tax revenues back to airports where fuel was purchased, operates a small fleet of aircraft to serve state elected officials and employees who travel around the state and to neighboring states for official business, maintains its own agency aircraft and aircraft operated by other state agencies, operates and maintains state-owned air navigation aids, and promotes the growth and development of aviation at all levels throughout Utah. The UDOT Division of Aeronautics utilizes a continuous airport system plan, known as the Utah Continuous Airport System Plan (UCASP) that determines which system airports are most essential to Utah's transportation needs and economic objectives, identifies projects which have the greatest potential to improve the performance of Utah's airport system, and demonstrates how investment improves the performance of the Utah airport system relative to established performance measures.

The UCASP classifies airports based on activities served, economic indicators, facilities, accessibility to the public, and demographics. The UCASP classifies SGU as a National Airport, with the ability to accommodate a high level of commercial service and general aviation activity and serve major population centers or tourism destinations in the State of Utah.

Appendix A: Technical Supplement

A Technical Supplement is included as an appendix and is intended to accompany Master Plan document to provide additional technical explanation for aeronautical concepts, planning criteria, and serve as a resource for stakeholders to better understand different elements of the Airport Master Planning process. In addition to the chapters of the Master Plan, the objective of the Technical Supplement is to help the reader understand more complex elements of airport design, steps of the master plan process, and planning considerations that affect the St. George Regional Airport.

V. MASTER PLAN PROCESS

What is a Master Plan?

A Master Plan is an official FAA and UDOT planning document. This document reflects the City of St. George's goals for the Airport and depicts future airport development over the next 20 years.

Master Plan Elements

Inventory

The inventory provides an overview of the Airport including airport property, airside facilities, landside facilities, terminal area, and support facilities. The information presented serves as the basis for the development of aviation forecasts as well as the baseline data to be used in the facility requirements chapter.

Market/Service Area

The market and service area reviews key demographics, market characteristics and reviews the service area including other airport options for both commercial service and general aviation.

Forecast

The forecast outlines future growth of significant area of activity over a 20-year period at the Airport. The FAA requires that all airport planning efforts be based upon an approved forecast methodology as the resulting analysis assists in determining the facility requirements for meeting future demand. Key elements of the forecast include commercial passenger enplanements, aircraft operations, based aircraft, itinerant GA passengers, and annual instrument operations.

Environmental Overview

The environmental overview provides a review of the existing environmental setting at the Airport and examines how future activities associated with the Master Plan may affect environmental conditions at the Airport and surrounding area. The review includes a discussion of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that have been incorporated by the Airport as part of its Environmental Stewardship Program as well as a detailed analysis of the environmental categories listed in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Orders 5050.4B and 1050.1F (previously 1050.1E) and the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321-4347 or NEPA).

Facility Requirements

This facility requirements presents the airside and landside facilities necessary to accommodate existing and forecasted demand at the Airport in accordance with FAA design criteria and safety standards. The facility requirements are based upon several sources, including aviation demand forecasts, FAA AC 150/5300-13A, *Airport Design*, and 14 CFR Part 77, *Safe, Efficient Use, and Preservation of the Navigable Airspace*. The findings serve as the basis for the formulation of airport alternatives and development recommendations. The facility requirements consist of airside requirements, passenger terminal requirements, parking and roadway access requirements, GA and landside requirements, and support facility and utility requirements.

Alternatives

The alternatives document a variety of proposed development scenarios to accomplish the recommended facility improvements proposed in the facility requirements. The scenarios are evaluated against several evaluation factors to determine if the recommended improvements enhance the safety and efficiency of the Airport and meet future demand while minimizing environmental and community impacts.

Implementation Plan

The implantation plan provides guidance relevant to the implementation of the airport development and master plan objectives by presenting a realistic capital improvement program and order of magnitude unit-based cost estimates for each project. The proposed development actions are derived from the preferred airport development alternatives, as well as through the airports existing capital improvement program. The project phasing plan prescribes a plausible phasing schedule for implementing the proposed improvements over the 20-year planning period.

Public Participation

Passenger Survey

Passenger surveys provide direct feedback from users of the Airport. As part of the master planning process, a survey was developed to gauge the interest of passengers on what they would like to see added to the Airport and what their commercial travel preferences may be. This will allow the Airport to better understand their passenger market and ensure future development will provide an enjoyable and convenient travel experience for passengers.

Steering Committee

The steering committee is advisory to the master planning process. The committee provides technical input, reviews documents, and provides guidance. The committee communicates information to both constituents and the planning team.

Public Meetings

Public involvement is a required component of all Airport Master Plans. Public meetings allow the Airport to receive feedback and perspective from neighbors.