

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 27, 2009

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Sanford B. Wanner, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Airport Site Selection Study

Overview

The Airport Feasibility Study was initiated in August 2006 as a result of the current owner of Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport (JGG) indicating a desire to sell the property. As part of the process, a Community Airport Committee was established by the Board of Supervisors (BOS).

The Williamsburg-Jamestown Airport is a privately owned, public-use facility that has been in existence since 1970. The current Virginia Aviation Transportation System Plan (VATSP) acknowledges that JGG serves an important element of the Greater Williamsburg Area (GWA) aviation demand. JGG is classified as a General Aviation Community (GC) airport within the State system. A GC airport provides general aviation facilities and services to business and recreational users.

During the Study process, input and discussion was coordinated with Kimball Consultants, the Community Airport Committee, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Virginia Department of Aviation (DOAV), and the general public. A public workshop was held on October 27, 2008, and a public comment period at each Committee meeting.

At the May 26, 2009, Board of Supervisor's Work Session the Committee recommended that the County pursue the best available options for the continuance of aviation services in the community, both in the short- and long-term, to include the next phase of the process which is a Site Selection Study. However, for the Site Selection Study phase, the County would be required to be a sponsor or adopt a role as a facilitator to identify an appropriate sponsor. A Site Selection Study is estimated to cost \$400,000 and Federal and State reimbursement is contingent upon construction of a new airport.

As result, the BOS provided guidance to determine what options are available to identify an appropriate Airport Sponsor(s) and to review the JGG's existing expansion restrictions.

FindingsAirport Sponsor(s)

The City of Williamsburg and York County were provided copies of the Study to review and to consider partnering with the County as an Airport Sponsor. After limited discussion with each locality, each would be willing to participate in the Site Selection Study but could not commit to being an Airport Sponsor or establishing an Airport Authority. The Site Selection Study would require several public input sessions and evaluation of multiple greenfield sites large enough to accommodate a new airport JGG with an estimated land area of 416 acres noted in the Airport Feasibility Study. The Site Selection criteria would include public road access, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, appropriate zoning, public utilities, and the ability to expand in the future. This could result in land acquisition of multiple parcels, potentially including parcels outside the County's boundaries. Enclosed are maps illustrating limited land area to accommodate a new airport. The maps denotes James City County's Primary Service Area (PSA) with water and sewer service

areas, special permitted land use designations, and environmental sensitive areas referencing James City County's Resource Protection Area and wetlands.

JGG's Expansion Restrictions

The Airport Feasibility Study identified numerous issues associated with the current JGG site which would likely preclude access to FAA funds. These issues include, but are not limited to, the following: Limitations imposed by the existing Special Use Permit, obstructions created by the closed landfill, substandard conditions in current runway safety areas and runway width, and difficulty in obtaining the required obstruction easements.

Recommendation

Due to the limited amount of land available within the PSA, the criteria for a new airport location and current limitations on JGG, staff recommends the County **not** be an Airport Site Selection Sponsor.



Sanford B. Wanner

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Enclosures