

# Airport Planning - Why? And What to Expect...

## Why Airport Planning?

On average, the FAA recommends an airport complete a master plan update every 7-10 years, depending on the issues and variables at play at a particular airport.

An airport planning study will establish new objectives and revisit the role of your airport, perhaps redefining or at a minimum reaffirming its current role. The “planning period” of an airport master plan covers 20 years. As such, a planning study will be the key component in providing the necessary guidance to accomplish identified airport development goals over the next 20 years.

FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5070B, Airport Master Plans, represents current FAA guidance applicable to airport master planning. As described in the AC, airport master plans are prepared to support the modernization or expansion of existing airports or the creation of new airports. The process is intended to be flexible and allow the airport to identify and address its specific needs.

The FAA requires several basic elements be included in a master plan process. These include:

- Inventory
- Aviation activity forecasts
- Facility requirements
- Alternatives evaluation
- Preparation of Airport Layout Plan drawings
- Capital Improvement Plan

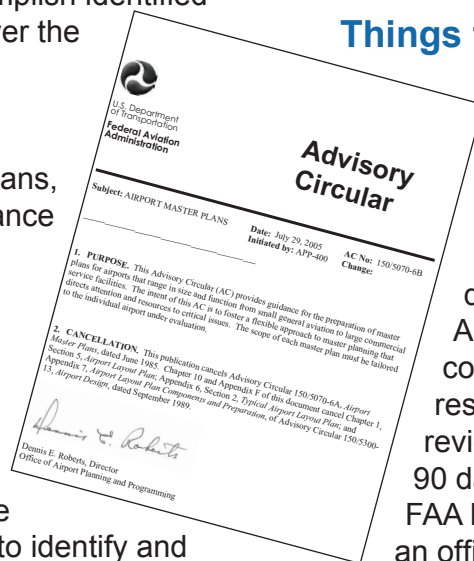
A good public involvement program and the study of any environmental considerations are also key to a successful master plan, as well as being major areas of emphasis for the FAA in today’s airport planning process. At many airports, the planning study will also give consideration to the

airport as an engine for commerce, industry and economy — not just a mode of transportation. As previously mentioned, the planning process is meant to be flexible and allow the airport to address specific needs. Common items of emphasis in a master plan are included below. Additional elements can be determined during the process.

- Runway Extension/Widening
- Hangar Development Alternatives
- Land Use Compatibility Planning
- Instrument Approach Improvements

## Things to Consider...

Once a planning project has officially kicked-off, the process will take, on average, 9-14 months to complete. At the end of the process, both the master plan and Airport Layout Drawing (ALP) drawing set are sent to the Division of Aeronautics and/or FAA for review and comment. Depending on workload and responsiveness of the agencies, this review process can take anywhere from 45-90 days. Once any comments from the state/FAA have been addressed, you will have an officially signed and approved ALP (they do not officially approve the ALP/master plan narrative report).



**Remember, it is your airport and is your planning study. The key to a successful plan in developing one that fits the goals and identifies and addresses the needs of *your* airport!**

**If at any time you have questions, feel free to call an ACEC Aviation Committee member!**

