



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: INFORMATION: Review and Approval of
Aviation Forecasts

Date: May 31, 2002

From: Director of Airport Planning and
Programming, APP-1

Reply to
Attn. of:

To: All Regional Airports Division Managers

Thorough regional review of the aviation forecasts contained in an airport master plan is of critical importance. We transmitted guidance on the need for accurate aviation forecasts in a memorandum dated May 28, 1998. To reiterate this memorandum, the FAA should review a sponsor forecast to ensure it is realistic, supported by information in the study, and provides adequate justification for the airport planning and development being recommended. A forecast that is either too high or too low can jeopardize a project by affecting environmental and funding decisions.

Airport sponsors should be encouraged to develop local forecasts. These forecasts usually consider trends at the airport and in the surrounding community. The forecasts should be reasonable, credible, and capable of being used in subsequent planning efforts.

The local forecast should be consistent with the current FAA Terminal Area Forecast (TAF). The following is provided to assist in determining consistency with the TAF and approval actions associated with forecasts.

- Large, Medium and Small Hub Airports – Locally developed forecasts for operations, based aircraft, and enplanements are considered to be consistent with the TAF if they meet either of the following criteria:
 1. Forecasts differs by less than 10 percent in the first 5 years, or
 2. Forecast activity levels do not affect the timing or scale of an airport project.
- Other Commercial Service Airports - Locally developed forecasts for operations, based aircraft, and enplanements are considered to be consistent with the TAF if they meet any of the following criteria:
 1. Forecasts differs by less than 10 percent in the first 5 years, or
 2. Forecast activity levels do not affect the timing or scale of an airport project, or
 3. Forecast activity levels do not affect the role of the airport.
- General Aviation and Reliever Airports – At general aviation and reliever airports where the five year forecast exceeds 100,000 total annual operations or 100 based aircraft, the locally developed forecasts for operations, based aircraft, and

enplanements are considered to be consistent with the TAF if they meet any of the following criteria:

1. Forecasts differs by less than 10 percent in the first 5 years, or
 2. Forecast activity levels do not affect the timing or scale of an airport project, or
 3. Forecast activity levels do not affect the role of the airport.
- At general aviation and reliever airports where the five-year forecast does not exceed 100,000 total annual operations or 100 based aircraft, the forecast does not need headquarters review. These forecasts should be provided for use in the annual update of the TAF. Upon review of the updated TAF, APO-110 may require additional information if the forecast exceeds normal expectations without adequate justification.

If the local forecast varies considerably from the TAF, then differences must be resolved before proceeding any further. Inconsistencies with forecasts should be worked out at the local level before seeking APO-110 involvement. If the forecasts cannot be resolved locally, a request for APO-110 involvement and a package containing the necessary information should be sent to APP-400. APP-400 will review the package for completeness before delivering it to APO-110 for action. APO-110 has committed to review master plan forecasts for large hub airports within 45 days. If an expedited review is required, the 45-day clock will start when the package is delivered to APO-110.

The FAA, through APO-110, issued a report in July 2001 entitled, "Forecasting Aviation Activity By Airport," that contains guidelines and methodologies to help airport sponsors in developing forecasts. This report can be accessed on APO's website at <http://api.hq.faa.gov/pubs.asp> or through the link provided on the APP-410 website. Following these techniques will ease the resolution of conflicts over forecasts and will help expedite the resolution of inconsistent forecasts. It will also lead to consistent forecasts for use in assessing environmental impacts and supporting funding decisions.

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