

REGIONAL AIRPORT STUDY'S VISION AND IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO WORKSHOP (MARCH 22, 2011)

Strongly support the proposal to extend Runway #1 at SFO to allow planes to take off over the Bay; want to know how environmental opposition to Bay Fill could be overcome

- Response: BCDC can consider Bay fill for airport noise reduction. Any fill would need to be the minimum necessary and provide significant noise reduction. Any proposal for new Bay fill would need additional public education and discussion.

Airport noise impacts on surrounding residents should be considered a more important problem than delays inflicted on air passengers using an airport.

- Response: Comment noted.

Flight redistribution among the three Bay Area airports should be a top priority to address both noise and delay issues without filling the Bay; there is enough runway capacity at the 3 airports to address projected demand.

- Response: The Traffic Redistribution is one of the key elements of the recommended Scenario B in the Study; it is intended to make use of available runway capacity and Oakland and San Jose Airports without Bay fill for new runways. RAPC will be working on ways to implement this recommendation in the future. Traffic redistribution will reduce overall aircraft delays at SFO, but it will also redistribute noise impacts to the other airports, which is an issue that will need to be addressed.

If delays and crowding at SFO get worse, airlines will see that OAK and SJC are underutilized and move/increase service there. If SFO wants to help this process along, it could implement peak period pricing. Also, landing fees should be restructured so that in addition to considering aircraft weight, they would consider the use of ATC resources. A Cessna 150 ties up airspace just like an A380 does.

- Response: The assumption that rising delays at SFO will increase use of OAK and SJC is the main assumption behind Scenario A, which is one of the primary Scenarios evaluated to serve future demand. The recommended Scenario B goes even further by distributing more airline traffic to OAK and SJC, and includes various demand management strategies (similar to those mentioned in the comment) to control delays at SFO and also provide incentives for airlines to use alternative airports.

Air passenger redistribution among the three Bay Area airports would be improved if there was high speed rail connection between airports (in tunnels), such that it wouldn't matter to the airlines which Bay Area airport they served; such a system should also tie into the planned California High Speed Rail system to connect travelers to other destinations in the State.

- Response: It is unclear how the airlines would respond to this type of system approach, but it would be extremely expensive to build and operate and would be well beyond the transportation resources projected to be available to the Bay Area in the next 25 years.

CalTrain connections between SFO and SJC should be encouraged.

- Response: Caltrain currently serves both airports, but a transfer is required to another transit connection to reach the airport terminals.

Airports should expand the insulation/sound proofing program

- Response: The three Bay Area airports have performed sound insulation on over 18,000 homes and several schools. The study recommendations do call on the Bay Area airports to confirm the long term noise impacts projected in this study for their airports and determine if additional mitigation measures may be needed, such as additional sound insulation in new areas subjected to higher noise levels due to growth in aircraft flights.

Higher density Transit Oriented Development (TOD) could expose more people to noise impacts

- Response: Yes, this issue has been identified in the airport noise analysis conducted for this study. Staff is suggesting that the regional agencies review the latest Focus Growth forecasts, which assign more people to TOD areas, some of which are in an airport's noise impact area. The goal would be to minimize/mitigate new TOD area's exposure to overflight noise.

A regional authority for the three Bay Area airports makes sense, but skeptical that it could happen; some areas that have this approach are in New York, Washington D.C, and in several European cities.

- Response: The staff of the Regional Airport Planning Committee has conducted an initial evaluation of alternative institutional for planning and managing the regional airport system. This work will be continued after this phase of the study is completed.

Involving the airlines in these discussions is important. What are the airlines doing to mitigate impacts?

- Response: There has been a significant reduction in airport noise levels as a result of FAA regulations that were put in place in the early 1990's requiring the airlines to transition their fleets to quieter aircraft; however, airlines generally respond to regulatory requirements, and while there are more recent requirements for newly manufactured aircraft that will mitigate noise, they will not achieve the same magnitude of reduction that the earlier regulations achieved, and noise around airports may start to increase again with growth in aircraft flights.

Contrary to popular myth, the science behind the man-made global warming theory is still not settled. Until the scientific community resolves this controversy, studies such this one should not accept global warming as an established fact.

- Response: The study estimates the amount of CO2 (the main product of greenhouse emissions as a result of fossil fuel consumption) produced from aircraft and air passenger vehicles in the future. Large portions of the scientific community are settled on the manmade influence, but comment noted.

OAKLAND WORKSHOP (MARCH 23, 2011)

Surprised that the East Bay noise impacts didn't get enough consideration; the analysis doesn't provide enough consideration of impacts to existing homeowners (homeowner in San Leandro)

- Response: The main purpose of the noise analysis was to assess changes in regional population to noise above the state standard for airports, based on different alternatives for meeting the Bay Area's long range aviation capacity needs. Changes in regional noise exposure were measured by the total Bay Area population inside the future 65 CNEL (state standard) and 55 CNEL noise contours. Because of the regional focus of the study, there were no detailed studies performed of noise levels within specific communities or neighborhoods. Evaluation of these localized impacts are more appropriately handled at the local airport level, through their planning studies and local community involvement forums. RAPC, as a regional planning body, does not have any direct role in resolving airport and community noise issues.

The Community Equivalent Noise Level (CNEL) noise metric is obsolete; single event noise impacts are a problem the study doesn't address. Also, the study doesn't address time of day noise issues with aircraft noise.

- Response: The limitations of the CNEL metric were initially raised by the members of the stakeholder Task Force for the study. The approach taken to recognize that larger set of community concerns with identifying airport noise problems was to add the 55 CNEL noise contour to the evaluation measures. This larger noise contour captures areas where airport noise complaints also often arise. The study did not have the resources to look at alternative noise metrics, but the Bay Area airports have done considerable work in this area. Time of day effects were addressed in the sense that the forecast of aircraft operations were adjusted for operations in the Day, Evening, and Night time periods (which influence the CNEL contours), based on the particular Scenario being evaluated and the changes it would produce in arrival and departure times of commercial flights.

The CNEL metric doesn't account for the shaking that residents experience in their homes when aircraft fly overhead, which can occur at frequent intervals.

- Response: Comment noted.

With the passage of the Airline Noise and Capacity Act in 1990, the FAA basically took away the ability of local communities to control noise at their airports and gave the airlines what they wanted. The airlines were going to retire and replace their older aircraft anyway.

- Response: Comment noted.

Growth in air cargo flights will increase noise. High Speed Rail should be used for air cargo.

- Response: The planned California HSR system, if designed to handle cargo, would probably not reduce flights significantly because only a portion of the air cargo flown into and out of Oakland Airport would be moving between the cities that HSR would serve.

The plan needs to look at moving air cargo out of Oakland Airport; Moffett Federal Airfield makes the most sense as an air freight airport because a good portion is generated in the South Bay. Also, using Moffett would mean fewer trucks between Santa Clara County and Oakland Airport, which would improve air quality.

- Response: Air cargo is projected to grow more at San Francisco Airport due to the projected growth in international air cargo and the fact that international flights are concentrated at SFO. If cargo facilities are to be developed at another airport, such as Moffett, the air cargo airlines would need to support this concept. Both UPS and FedEx have invested considerable resources in cargo hubs at Oakland Airport because of the efficiency of the location, which is very central to their customer base. New facilities at Moffett would add to their costs and would transfer noise to other communities who currently oppose any major changes in aviation activity at Moffett.

Travis AFB can't be considered as an air cargo airport because it is needed military use and there would be concerns with related security issues.

- Response: Any further consideration of using Travis AFB for civilian passenger or air cargo service would clearly need approval from the military. The study team has had some contact with Travis AFB planners, but it appears that Travis' military role may increase in the future, which would tend to make civilian joint use less likely if this occurs.

There is a lack of coordination between airports; Hayward Airport is supposed to be a reliever for OAK, but doesn't accommodate jets.

- Response: Hayward Airport does handle corporate jet operations. There are airspace issues between Hayward and Oakland Airports which would need to be addressed if Hayward were to handle more jet aircraft.

There should be more emphasis on regional High Speed Rail access to Bay Area airports, similar to London and Honk Kong; this would be more effective than BART

- Response: The California HSR system that is currently being planned would pass near, but not go into SFO and SJC. A connection to BART (SFO) or a shuttle bus (SJC) would be required. Locating a HSR station at the airport is not part of current HSR plans, and would significantly change the alignment and likely substantially increase the cost of the system.

BART should be extended to San Jose Airport

- Response: This is a similar issue to the comment above, in that the alignment for the planned extension of BART to San Jose does not contemplate serving the airport directly and altering the alignment to go into the terminal would add substantial cost.

Letting Oakland Airport become an international airport created all of the airspace problems.

- Response: The main airspace interactions between Oakland and San Francisco Airports occur with the early morning departure routes. The FAA's new NextGen air traffic control technologies have the potential to provide more precise separation of aircraft and reduce the amount of interaction between the two airports.

RAS RESPONSE TO PUBLIC WORKSHOP COMMENTS

The Study should address sea level rise because it will likely impact capacity.

- Response: Both Oakland and San Francisco Airports are currently looking at future sea level rise and ways to protect their runways.

Alameda Naval Air Station should be included as a resource for handling demand and increasing capacity.

- Response: The study does not assume that Alameda Naval Air Station is available for any form of aviation in the future.

Why does the study only recommend a long term noise Study for San Francisco Airport and not Oakland Airport?

- Response: Using either the 65 CNEL or 55 CNEL noise metric, the population exposure for San Francisco Airport in 2035 is very significant and also significantly larger than for either Oakland or San Jose Airports. Further, the traffic redistribution scenarios do not do much to reduce the exposed population. For that reason, the Study recommends that SFO confirm these noise trends using more sophisticated noise modeling tools and start to look now and measures to reduce the airport's long-term noise impacts on the Peninsula. RAPC staff mentioned at the community workshop that such a study could also have some benefits to other communities, depending on its ultimate scope.

Air quality is terrible near the Oakland Airport (can smell jet fuel in back yard).

- Response: The regional study has looked at overall increases in various types of emissions and the potential for different Scenarios to minimize these emissions (both those that lead to the formation of smog as well as contribute to greenhouse gas emissions). The scope of the study did not allow for analysis of localized air quality problems, and this would more appropriately be handled by the local airport operator.

There is a limit to the amount of air traffic the Bay Area can take.

- Response: Comment noted, but there are benefits to having an efficient air transportation system for the Bay Area as well. The Bay Area's economy and local job growth depend heavily on the Bay Area's airports. Setting a limit of flights is also difficult due to FAA policies and regulations designed to ensure reasonable access to air transportation facilities that have been paid for by the public.

Has there been any cost analysis of the recommendations?

- Response: Conceptual costs could be developed for some of the recommendations, but this has not been done to date. Many of the recommendations would be difficult to cost out because the costs are not known or because of the general nature of many of the recommendations. The only specific cost analysis conducted was to assess some of the basic costs for handling projected air passenger demand at several of the alternative airports-- Sonoma County Airport, Buchanan Field (Concord), and Travis AFB.

SAN JOSE WORKSHOP (MARCH 24, 2011)

Are there any other Bay Area airports with limitations on hours of use and what are San Jose Airport's curfew hours?

- Response: San Jose Airport's curfew was "grandfathered" in before the Airport Noise and Capacity Act was passed in 1990. Curfew hours are between 11:30 pm to 6:30 am. No commercial operations of aircraft over a certain noise level are permitted, but some business jets meet the noise limits and can use the airport during these hours.

There needs to be high speed trains shuttles in tunnels between the airports so airlines can schedule their flights at the least congested airport. HSR stations need to be in the airport terminal.

- Response: See responses above.

As long as the airlines think that HSR is competing with them, not complimenting their services, they will fight it. It will require education and consensus building.

- Response: Comment noted. The Study recommendations further suggest that the HSR Authority work with the airlines on joint ticketing arrangements so passengers can buy one ticket for their combined air and rail trip, similar to what is offered for some European HSR services.

There needs to be a seamless connection between Moffett Airfield and other Bay Area airports to accommodate the Expo 2020 event

- Response: If this event does occur at Moffett, the Bay Area transportation agencies will need to plan for good transportation access, including ways to get from the airports to the event.

Has any thought been given to building a new airport in the Central Valley because HSR will come up the Central Valley?

- Response: No, this has not been considered to date. A new Central Valley airport along the HSR line would create rather long access times for Bay Area air passengers, and there would need to be airline interest in constructing an entirely new airport because of the large costs that would be incurred.

Uncertainty of NextGen and HSR need to be considered carefully because large capital projects tend to be budget busters. There has been scathing criticism of the FAA's NextGen program, and the program may prove to be less effective than advertised.

- Response: Comment noted

Encourage electronic meetings and telecommuting to reduced business traffic.

- Response: Rising costs for business air travel may make these types of substitutes more attractive in the future, but so far, there has not been much data available that can be used to project future trends.

RAS RESPONSE TO PUBLIC WORKSHOP COMMENTS

The California High-Speed Rail Peer Review Group's November 2010 report raised a number of questions that collectively called into question the CHSRA's business plan. Until the issues raised by these reports are properly addressed by the CHSRA, any ridership projections or other documents published by the Authority should be considered unreliable. Were the assumptions used for HSR prepared by RAPC's consultant or did the study just use the HSR Authority's forecasts, which have been criticized for their methodology?

- Response: The study used the portion of the HSR Authority's forecasts that addressed the estimated diversion rate from air to rail between different California regions, rather than a specific number of HSR riders estimated by the HSR Authority. The study also looked at actual air to rail activity for other HSR systems in Europe and Japan, and the overall rate used in this study appears reasonable when compared to the results for these systems. HSR is estimated to divert 6% of total Bay Area air passengers to rail in 2035.

Would the Study recommendations change if there was no HSR system?

- Response: Under the Baseline forecast, both the main Scenarios (Scenarios A and B) would be able to accommodate projected future demand without a HSR system. These Scenarios have, as their main elements, traffic redistribution, demand management programs at SFO, and a modest set of new FAA air traffic control technologies. However, with the High Forecast of 2035 air passenger demand (20% higher than the Baseline), HSR would be an essential element of the strategy to serve this level of demand.

Given that the Study used the HSR Authority forecast in some way, the study report should include a footnote saying that a UC Berkeley study concluded the HSR study was flawed.

- Response: The Study reports describe how the HSR Authority ridership numbers were used, and given the reasonableness of the overall diversion rate for air passengers who would switch to rail (see above), this footnote is not necessary.

How was travel time calculated for Air travel versus HSR?

- Response: Like most transportation travel behavior forecast models, the HSR models include various components of a traveler's time--the ground access time to/from the HSR station or airport and ground origin or destination, the terminal time (which for airports includes the time to get through security screening), and the wait time for a plane or train.

Maybe if the airlines were authorized to run their own trains on HSR they would be more interested in supporting the system.

- Response: While this concept has not received much attention to date, it is an interesting idea.

Traffic redistribution is going to require airline participation and they are not indicating any interest in participating. They have pulled flights from SJC and put them in SFO. How do you get the airlines to the table?

- Response: This is something that RAPC intends to pursue as part of the recommendations. Airlines have a short-term planning horizon and have traditionally not been part of the regional airport system planning process, despite efforts to engage them. Their mission is to make money, not to achieve our regional planning goals; however, they should be interested in issues such as rising delays at SFO and the need to upgrade air traffic control technologies, so hopefully these types of issues will elicit more interest in the future in RAPC's work.

When the new SFO Terminal opens (Terminal 2), SFO may get back to the types of capacity problems and major delays they experienced before 2000. Airlines will then start putting more flights at San Jose and Oakland Airports, but until there is an economic incentive to find other solutions, they will not disperse their flights.

- Response: The study also assumes that rising delays at SFO will cause a natural shift in service to other airports. This is essentially how Scenario A was defined. Scenario B goes beyond the assumed shifts in Scenario A and distributes more air passenger traffic to San Jose and Oakland Airports, but these larger shifts may require new demand management approaches at SFO.

The entire transportation network needs to be examined together, airports, BART, Caltrain, etc. and maybe all modes needs to be placed under one transportation authority.

- Response: Clearly airport use and ground accessibility are closely related. However the key driver for airport use is the service decisions that the airlines make, which would not be under the purview of any new authority. The current institutional arrangements do provide for coordination of regional transportation and airport plans through RAPC and through the normal work of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Letter from City of Mountain View: “The City of Mountain View opposes general aviation, commercial aviation and/or air cargo operations at MFA. The City supports maintaining the airfield as a secured Federal/military airfield under NASA Ames’ authority” “The City is not opposed to future study of the potential for airfield use related to emergencies such as natural disasters...”

- Response: Comment noted.

In response to the referenced letter from Mountain View which opposes any future expansion of activity at Moffett Federal Airfield, it should be noted that Moffett is a federal airport that belongs to all taxpayers. Though it wouldn’t be a good commercial airport, it would be an excellent General Aviation reliever airport. Mountain View’s position is very provincial by proposing to take this federal resource out of circulation.

- Response: Comment noted.

Regarding the proposal to put Expo 2020 at Moffett Federal Airfield – would this require closing the airport?

- Response: We will need to investigate this further.

The discussion didn’t really address the goal of making airports more “convenient”. The “improvements” to extend BART to SFO have resulted in more expensive and less convenient connections relative to the Caltrain connection at Millbrae which used to have a frequent and free shuttle to SFO before BART was built.

- Response: Comment noted.

These so-called transit improvements to SFO and OAK come with higher fares that suppress demand by gouging travelers going to and from the airport. Unfortunately, airports tolerate this because they need to maximize parking revenue.

- Response: Rising costs affect the delivery of all public transportation services. These transit options will be essential over the long term as congestion increases on the regional road system and people need reliable ways to get to and from the airports.