

SACRAMENTO COUNTY AIRPORT SYSTEM

Inter-Department Correspondence

February 2, 2010

TO: Toni Barry, Principal Environmental Analyst – DERA

FROM: Greg Rowe, Senior Environmental Analyst - SCAS

SUBJECT: Response to Questions About Executive Airport and Franklin Field

This memo responds to the email inquiry you sent to me during the morning of January 29, 2010 (reproduced below). As I mentioned during our brief phone conversation that morning, Senior Natural Resource Specialist Janae Scruggs was out town attending a conference during the week of January 25, and both Planning and Environment Manager Glen Rickelton and Airport Planner George Munson were furloughed on January 29. Before replying to the questions, below is some background information on Franklin Field (F72), which is one of the four airports comprising the Sacramento County Airport System. Most of this information can be found in the Draft Final Franklin Field Master Plan (October 2009), and is summarized in Chapter I ('eye') – Conclusions and Consultant Recommendations. The Draft Final Master Plan reports for both F72 and Executive Airport (SAC) are available on the County Airport System website by clicking on "Planning and Development."

Overview of Franklin Field

- The role of F72 is primarily as a training facility, safely serving the needs of new flyers and Sacramento River Delta area aviation users by providing basic airport services.
- F72 is uncontrolled and unstaffed, meaning it does not have an Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) or on-site airport personnel.
- Greater urban development within the Sacramento River Delta region brings the potential for greater aviation activity.
- Other airports are developing within the area that may well serve a similar purpose as F72 and may be equally or better suited to the task.
- F72 is at a crossroads because of development plans and nearby habitat preservation. In addition, F72 is located entirely within the boundary of a 100-year floodplain, so airport development would require additional measures to protect structures from flooding.
- The other Delta Airports, such as Sunset Sky Ranch and Mustang Airport, and others, are potentially well positioned to serve Delta Residents.

- The cost of improvements necessary to support additional aviation activity at F72 “...may be costly and may not be supported by anticipated additional operational revenues.”
- The County Airport System possesses more than adequate capacity at other system airports to absorb any potential relocation of aircraft from F72.

In light of these considerations, the principle recommendation of the master plan report is “...to hold off on the full scale implementation of the capital development program for Franklin Field Airport, for the near-term” (defined in the same chapter as a five-year time frame); see page I-5 for more details.

Responses

1. Bird Strikes at Franklin Field (F72). As far as I can tell from checking the computerized data base maintained by Janae for bird strikes at the County’s five airports (which includes McClellan), SCAS has no data on reported bird strikes at F72. (In fact, I could not even find a bird strike data folder for F72). The only reported strike in the FAA national bird strike data base occurred on December 12, 2005, when a PA-38 Tomahawk collided with an unknown bird that disintegrated upon impact with the wing. The fact that only one strike has been reported does not mean that strikes do not occur at F72, just that we have no record of *reported* strikes other than the 2005 event. Until recently the FAA estimated that only 20 percent of strikes nationally were ever reported to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) bird strike data base, although the most recent estimate is that perhaps up to 39 percent of strikes were reported for the period 2004 - 2008. The manager of Executive Airport and Franklin Field, John Downey, has no anecdotal information regarding strikes at F72. (See his email copied to you at 11:08 AM on January 29.)
2. Operations at Franklin Field: as noted in Chapter C of the draft final Master Plan, existing and historical operations levels at F72 can only be estimated because the airport is uncontrolled (no air traffic control tower) and unstaffed. Total annual operations during calendar years 2005 – 2007 were estimated at 36,000. (An operation is one takeoff or landing.) This is equal to a daily average of over 98 operations daily. There were eight aircraft based at F72 in each of those three years. The Master Plan study analyzed three future growth scenarios for F72, and recommended Scenario Two for the Master Plan. This scenario assumed an annual average growth rate in operations of 3.9 percent over the 20-year planning period, resulting in 64,204 annual operations in the year 2027, or a total increase of 78 percent through the 20-year planning period. Scenario Two assumed that Elk Grove Airport (aka Sunset Sky ranch airport or E27) would close in 2008, and that significant growth would be realized at F72 during the initial five years of the planning period. The draft final Master Plan states that the Annual Service Volume (ASV) capacity of F72 is 230,000 annual operations, well below the forecast for the year 2027.

3. Hanger and Aircraft Tie-Down Capacity at SAC and F72: I spoke on Friday morning with the Manager of F72 and SAC. There currently appears to be sufficient outdoor aircraft tie-down capacity at both airports. However, there is no inside hangar storage space available at SAC. At F72, the County Airport System executes ground leases with aircraft owners who wish to erect their own portable hangars. According to the draft final Master Plan for F72, there are currently eight portable T-hangars at F72 housing an equal number of aircraft (page B-7). The Master Plan estimates that up to 34 more T-hangars and/or shade hangars could be needed by 2027, but accommodating the additional hangars would necessitate building an additional airport access road (page D-19).

Text of Email sent by Toni Barry to Glen Rickelton, George Munson and Greg Rowe on January 29, 2010:

Last night the Parks Commission heard Mustang Airport. There were some questions that I promised to take care of. I am not sure who to direct this to, so I included all of you.

1. Do you have any data regarding bird strikes at Franklin Field?
2. What is the number of operations at Franklin? (daily and annually)
3. The applicant is stating that there is NO capacity for additional aircraft anywhere, and the Mustang project is accommodating an unmet need. Could you provide numbers about availability at Executive and Franklin? They probably will want to know both hanger and tie downs.

Thanks in advance. I don't need a long report or anything, just some facts that I can share with the Planning Commission and the applicant. The final hearing is February 22. Thank you. By the way the vote was 2-1 in favor of the application's approval.