



NEWPORT BEACH

Aviation Committee Staff Report

July 27, 2020

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE AVIATION COMMITTEE

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TITLE: GAIP Ad Hoc Review of Fixed Base Operator Proposals

ABSTRACT:

On July 9, the County of Orange made certain materials related to the responses it received for its Request for Proposals for Fixed Base Operators at John Wayne Airport (JWA) available for public review. The Aviation Committee's General Aviation Improvement Program (GAIP) Ad Hoc Committee has reviewed the materials and conducted brief question and answer sessions with each respondent. The Ad Hoc Committee evaluated the respondents' proposed plans according to how closely they align with the City's goals for the JWA General Aviation Improvement Program (GAIP). The findings are summarized in the attachment to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Review and approve the GAIP Ad Hoc Committee's findings.
2. Recommend that the City Council uphold and communicate the findings to the County of Orange.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The County of Orange (County) intends to modernize the general aviation facilities at John Wayne Airport (JWA). The GAIP provides the framework for updating these facilities.

The City of Newport Beach (City) has closely followed the progression of the GAIP for several years in furtherance of the City's long-held position that it will "support any plan or project that maintains, and oppose any plan or project that proposes any significant changes to, the existing level of general aviation operations, [or] the current level of general aviation support facilities . . ." at JWA. (See, Council Policy A-17, Section E, Subsection 4).

The City and members of the Newport Beach community have, during the County's GAIP review and approval process, opposed changes that would adversely affect the mix of general aviation aircraft at the airport by reducing the presence of lighter GA aircraft and introducing more of the noisier GA jet operations, as such changes could eventually increase overflight noise and air quality impacts for city residents.

As the GAIP moved through the County's environmental review process, the City strongly advocated for a plan that, once built, would result in the least amount of adverse impacts on Newport Beach and surrounding communities. The City sought a plan that would:

1. Preserve the current balance of small planes and GA jets (the "GA mix")
2. Build the maximum number of individual hangars while preserving the current ratio of 40-, 50- and 60-foot hangars.
3. Move regularly scheduled commercial operations such as JetSuiteX to the airport's main terminal.
4. Not include a General Aviation Facility.

Thus, the City and local community groups expressed serious concerns when JWA staff recommended a project alternative that we believed would have the most noise and air quality impacts on our community and the other communities surrounding the airport. The Board of Supervisors ultimately found a compromise solution and adopted a plan for the GAIP that preserves space at the airport for general aviation propeller aircraft.

The approved plan sets aside more than 34 acres, the majority of the space available for general aviation, for the smaller and quieter planes. Further, it includes land use and lease restrictions on certain airport parcels to preserve these areas for smaller general aviation aircraft and limits the size of aircraft that can be stored on them for many years to come. The County's plan, adopted with the certification of the Environmental Impact Report in June 2019, includes two, full-service Fixed Base Operators (FBOs) and one new and one existing limited-service FBO. (FBOs are the private companies that provide services to the general aviation community.) Over Newport Beach's previously stated objections, the County's plan includes a General Aviation Facility (GAF); a space used for processing international general aviation passengers. The County did agree, however, to impose limits on the GAF's hours of operation.

A key component of the program involves determining what FBOs will be selected to enter into long-term leases with the County and eventually build out and operate the full- and limited-service facilities that serve the airport's general aviation users. The County issued the Request for Proposals for Fixed Base Operators at John Wayne Airport (JWA) in the fall of 2019 and the responses were due in December 2019. After an initial review of the proposals, the County asked some of the respondents to amend their proposals to better align with aspects of the project EIR. The amendments were due in the spring of 2020. A County-appointed panel then reviewed and scored the proposals.

In keeping with the Board's commitment to release certain portions of the proposals for public review in advance of the Board's selection of the FBOS, the County released the evaluation panel's scores, each respondent's conceptual renderings/layouts, and each respondent's responses to the questionnaire that was included in the RFP. The questionnaire contained questions on subjects of particular interest to the Newport Beach community, such as the respondents' proposed hours of operation for the FBO. (The documents can be found at ocair.com/generalaviation/gaimprovement.)

The County has outlined the following process for its review and selection of the FBOs. The OC Airport Commission is scheduled to consider the item on August 5 and the Board of Supervisors is scheduled to consider the item on August 11. At the August 11 meeting, JWA staff will ask the Board to select a respondent for each available site. County staff will return to the Board after negotiations with the selected respondents are completed for the approval of the final leases.

GAIP Ad Hoc Committee Review

The GAIP Ad Hoc committee is comprised of Aviation Committee members Jeff Cole, Steve Livingston and Sharon Ray. Council Member Diane Dixon, who also serves as Vice Chair of the Aviation Committee, assisted with the Ad Hoc's review.

The Ad Hoc committee members individually reviewed the documents provided by the County and then collectively conducted brief question and answer sessions with each respondent. It should be noted that all respondents accepted the Ad Hoc's invitation without reservation and several commented, during their discussions with the Ad Hoc, their desire to be responsive to Newport Beach's stated interests as they developed their proposals.

After the information-gathering process was completed, the Ad Hoc discussed and analyzed its findings in terms of how well each respondent's plan aligns with the goals the City has advanced for the GAIP. Their findings are summarized in the attached chart, titled Ad Hoc Committee Evaluation. For the full-service FBO proposals for the Northeast and Northwest parcels, the Ad Hoc considered and evaluated the following:

1. Does the proposed plan maintain the current balance of small GA aircraft and GA jets (aka, the "GA mix")?
2. Does the respondent intend to build the maximum number of individual hangars while preserving the current ratio of 40-, 50- and 60-foot hangars?
3. Does the proposed plan exclude a general aviation facility?
4. If the proposed plan includes a general aviation facility, did the respondent propose limited hours of operation?
5. What regular business hours has the respondent proposed for its FBO?
6. Does the respondent's plan exclude regularly scheduled commercial service from operating out of its FBO?

Further, the committee noted any programs or proposals for noise abatement, such as "fly quiet" or pilot education programs, raised by the respondents.

While the operations of limited service FBOs generally result in less noise impacts to the surrounding communities, the committee did review each of the proposals received and evaluated them based on how they sought to maintain the GA mix at the airport, provided hanger space for small GA aircraft and their proposed hours of operation.

The attached spreadsheet lists the committee's findings as to whether or not a respondent's plan aligns with the City's goals.

Next Steps

The Ad Hoc Committee will present its findings to the full Aviation Committee on July 27. On July 28, the City Council will review the information provided to the Aviation Committee and City staff will relay any additional comments provided by the committee during the July 27 meeting. Staff will ask the Council to authorize the Mayor to send a letter to the County summarizing the findings.

NOTICING

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

Attachment:

Ad Hoc Committee Evaluation