

December 29, 2000

**TO:** Commissioners and Alternates

**FROM:** Will Travis, Executive Director (415/352-3653 [travis@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:travis@bcdc.ca.gov))  
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**SUBJECT:** San Francisco International Airport Briefing on Environmental Studies  
(For Commission consideration on January 4, 2001)

On January 4, 2001, representatives from San Francisco International Airport (SFO) will further brief the Commission on the status of SFO's planning for a possible runway reconfiguration project. At a briefing on November 16, 2000, SFO staff described their project alternatives. On January 4, 2001, the scope of SFO's environmental documents will be presented; the Commission and the public will then be provided an opportunity to comment on the scope of the studies. At BCDC's January 18, 2001 meeting, the mitigation alternatives being considered by SFO will be discussed. At the Commission's February 1, 2001 meeting, BCDC's staff and consultants will present an overview of the entire project.

Each project alternative being considered by SFO will be evaluated pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) before a permit application and federal consistency determination for the project can be considered by the Commission. As part of this process, BCDC is participating in an integrated multi-agency task force which is monitoring the adequacy of environmental review and project alternatives. The Commission's staff has been requested to concur with the selection of project alternatives described at the previous briefing and in the attached "Status Summary 2." All of the regulatory agencies have expressed their concern that non-Bay fill alternatives (Alternative 2 described on pages 2 and 3 of the "Status Summary") are inadequate. The attached excerpt from the minutes of the multi-agency task force presented to the lead agencies (FAA and San Francisco's Office of Environmental Review) in May 2000 summarizes the regulatory agencies' position on this vital issue. This problem has been compounded by a Federal Aviation Administration decision to not consider any non-Bay fill airspace and/or runway capacity enhancement measures at all in the federal environmental documents. If these shortcomings are not resolved, the staff believes it will be difficult for SFO to convince the Commission that all alternatives to filling the Bay have been fairly and comprehensively analyzed.

Mike Monroe suggested that for Moffett Field the project team should contact NASA for a letter on their position. Mike also commented on the new North Bay airport indicating that the resource agencies can add additional explanation for removal of this alternative due to the major restoration projects planned for this area. Dan Gargas had questions about the route and schedule for implementing high speed rail. Matt said that the timeline to build the high speed rail between San Francisco and Los Angeles is beyond the forecast for completing the reconfiguration project. Don added that the airlines would kill the high speed rail project if this was a stand alone alternative to the project.

### Alternatives

Matt provided a brief presentation on arrival and departure delay differences between each of the alternatives. For BX-2, he expects arrival delay would be similar to BX refined. Departure delay would be equal to or greater than BX refined because the 1/19 runways under this alternative reconfiguration would have a greater number of intersections with the 10/28 runways.

Mike Monroe asked how the current departure delay compares to the numbers forecast for alternative reconfigurations. He also expressed that there needs to be a better way to understand what these delays mean to the traveling public in simple terms. Don mentioned that expressing delay in terms of minutes/operation does not provide enough of an understanding of delay costs. The alternatives need to look at delay in terms of travel costs and environmental costs. The task force would like to have a better understanding of the range of metrics used to evaluate delay and what that means to the average traveler.

Hillary explained that we will continue to evaluate BX-2 and provide additional information to the task force on this alternative at the June meeting, as available. The agenda for the June meeting could also include discussion about delay. Camille mentioned that we would pursue putting together a presentation on delay and how it relates to SFO for the June meeting.

Camille stated that the project team desires interim concurrence from the task force on alternatives. Hillary explained that the project team wants to have general concurrence on the direction of the alternatives evaluation so that the efforts of the consultant team are spent appropriately. A formal concurrence is not required at this time, this would occur in about August.

Don Neuwirth presented the agencies opinion on the status of the alternatives analysis and the additional information needed by the agencies before concurrence could be provided per the NEPA/404 MOU. The agency comments are provided as an attachment to the minutes.

It was agreed that the contents of Don's presentation could be used as an indicator of concurrence on the direction of the alternatives analysis. OER and FAA will report back

## **REGULATORY WORKING GROUP**

Prior to Preliminary concurrence on Project Alternatives, we request the following:

### **Purpose and Need:**

We request the opportunity to review "the complete statement of Purpose and Need. The entire chapter is relevant to our analysis of potential alternatives.

### **Alternative 1 (No Action Alternative):**

We request that current environmental processes be described as a baseline against which all other alternatives can be assessed. Also we encourage SFO to pursue ATC technological enhancements to increase capacity without additional tarmac.

### **Alternative 2 (System Management & Technological Enhancements):**

We encourage all innovations listed in the status summary to be considered independently, jointly and in conjunction with any runway reconfiguration. This would assure maximum capacity with minimal fiscal and environmental cost. We also suggest the inclusion of the following ATC system improvement initiatives and other technologic enhancements:

- NASA's Terminal Area Productivity and Advanced Air Transportation Technologies Projects (AVOSS, AILS, FMS-CTAS, LVLASO, pFAST, TMA, and SMA)
- All components of the National Airspace System Architecture Free Flight Phase 1, 2 & 3 program that could be operational within the life of the project
- ADS-B- Automatic Dependence Surveillance -Broadcast
- All relevant recommendations from the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security (1997)
- All relevant recommendations from the FAA's GPS Transition Plan
- Paired Approach Concept and other operational measures
- Underground high speed rail transit connection between SFO and Oakland International Airport (SB 1562)
- High speed ferry connection between SFO, Oakland Airport and appropriate terminals for passengers and/or cargo.

### **Alternative 3 (A3)**

We suggest dropping 3B because it is the functional equivalent of 3A.

### **New Alternative 3B (Baby BX or BX-2)**

We urge equal evaluative effort be taken to assess this moderate fill alternative. Initial review encourages an optimistic perspective that most of SFO's objectives can be met with this limited fill alternative.

### **Alternative 4 (BX Refined)**

We urge that further refinements can reduce the fill acreage and size of runway separation.

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**Alternative 5 (F2)**

We urge that this alternative be dropped because of apparent airspace conflicts, excessive fill, massive stagnation, possible utilities conflict and potential adverse impacts on recreational resources. Elimination of this alternative will allow comprehensive assessments of realistic alternatives.

**Alternatives Eliminated from Further Study**

We request complete analysis, not summaries, of reasons for elimination of alternatives.

**Potential Borrow and Disposal Sites**

Agency review of all potential borrow sites in the SF Bay and Ship Channel raise significant adverse impacts. We therefore request elimination of all Bay borrow sites from consideration. If In-Bay sites are dropped, the hydrologic model can be expanded to analyze two mitigation scenarios, yet not exceed 12 model runs. Also, any importation of fill must be verified not to contain exotic marine species. To the maximum degree feasible dredge materials should be reused on-site or in approved restoration projects.

**Potential Mitigation Sites**

We anticipate an extended discussion regarding potential mitigation sites.

Finally, we continue to urge the Lead Agencies to implement a peer review process and continue to involve the public in this vital effort. Before we are requested to concur with the Alternatives, we request an opportunity to review all public comment received by 19 May, 2000. Thank you.