

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Air Transportation Advisory Committee May 2, 2019**

The Air Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) convened at 1:00 p.m. on May 2, 2019, at NCTCOG Offices.

#### **Voting Members in Attendance**

Sharlette Wright, Chair, Cleburne  
Regional Airport  
Judy Demoney, Midway Airport  
Scott Gray, Denton Enterprise (Remote)  
Ty Helton, City of Greenville Remote  
Joel Jenkinson, Addison Airport  
Linda Pavlik, Pavlik and Associates  
Eric Pratt, Mesquite Metro Airport  
Ken Pyatt, SKY Helicopters, Inc.  
Wayne Sanderson, Mineral Wells Airport  
Pat Stewart, Granbury Airport  
Karen VanWinkle, Arlington Municipal  
Airport

#### **Non-Voting Members in Attendance**

Aaron Barth, Meacham Airport  
Joe Hammond, Spinks Airport  
Dave Fulton, TxDOT  
Greg Miller, TxDOT  
Darrell Phillips, Dallas Executive Airport  
Bobby Waddle, Chair Emeritus  
Executive Board

#### **Others in Attendance**

Trent Ballard, City of Arlington  
Colin Bible, Garver USA  
Haley Cuevas, Dallas Executive Airport  
Dave Fulton, TxDOT  
Russell Julian, UAS Werx  
Bill Macke, TxDOT  
Frank McIlwain, Garver USA  
Greg Miller, TxDOT  
Michael Mitchell, KSA Engineering  
Dillon Pettijohn, DFW Airport  
Carla Ruge, Denton ISD  
Phil Waigand, Metro Empowerment

#### **NCTCOG Staff in Attendance**

Natalie Bettger  
Ernest Huffman  
Lisa Key  
Chedel Townsend

#### **Meeting Summary Outline**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Orientation to Agenda
3. Approval of February 2, 2019 ATAC Meeting Summary
4. Texas Aviation Grant Funding
5. Texas Economic Impact Study
6. UAS Werx and Mineral Wells Airport
7. UAS Safety and Integration Task Force Update
8. NCT Aviation Careers Survey Report
9. Touch and Goes

**1. Welcome and Introductions, Sharlette Wright, Chair**

Sharlette welcomed all attendees and everyone introduced themselves.

**2. Orientation to Agenda, Natalie Bettger, NCTCOG**

Natalie provided an orientation to the agenda and noted that Dave Fulton and Greg Miller of TxDOT would be presenting Texas Aviation Grant Funding Economic Impact Study, originally scheduled for the previous meeting in February.

**3. Approval of February 7, 2019, ATAC Meeting Summary, Sharlette Wright, Chair**

The Committee was asked to approve a summary of the previous ATAC meeting. There were no comments and the summary was approved as submitted. Judy Demoney (M); Ken Pyatt (S). The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Texas Aviation Grant Funding, Dave Fulton, Director, TxDOT Aviation Division, presented**

Texas Aviation Grant Funding. Mr. Fulton reviewed state and federal historical funding dating back to 1987. He noted that funding began to grow in 1997 and the FAA State Block Grant Program, through which TxDOT “implements a federal improvement program for general aviation airports” began in 2001. He stated that the ability to fund projects has been difficult as funding has been stagnate for some time. Texas airports did not receive any Federal Discretionary Grant funding in 2013 or 2014.

In 2018, Texas received \$16.7 Million in Discretionary Funding, the largest total ever received. TxDOT Aviation received three categories of funding; State Apportionment, (or Formula funding), Non-primary Entitlement (NPE) (dedicated to individual airports), and Discretionary. Formula funding is fixed and based on relative population and geographical area among the 50 US States. The airport recipients of that funding were Georgetown in Austin, Fort Worth Spinks, Fort Worth Meacham International and Galveston. Discretionary Funding for 2019 is projected between \$9-10 Million but the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not yet released the list of approved projects for Discretionary Funding. However, the FAA has appropriated \$1 Billion in supplemental Airport Improvement Program Funding. The first round of funding was for \$205 Million to be distributed nationwide, primarily to rural airports. Brownsville Airport is the only Texas airport that received any portion of that appropriation. Of the \$795 Million remaining, there have \$10.9 Billion requested for AIP projects.

Future funding for the FAA FY 2019-2023 Reauthorization (pending appropriation) is \$3.35 Billion (unchanged over the past 19 years) and creates new supplemental funding from \$1.02 Billion in FY 2019 up to \$1.11 Billion in FY 2023. Airports are eligible to receive Discretionary funding and no less than 50% will be distributed to airports eligible for non-primary funds and non-hub and small-hub airports, across the nation. NPE reform with this reauthorization “requires expiring NPE funding in Block Grant states to be made available as state apportionment.” This funding was previously returned to FAA Discretionary funds. Other reform measures allow pavement rehabilitation and construction specifications to meet state highway specifications in lieu of FAA specifications, in Block Grant states. TxDOT anticipates a savings of approximately 20% for an airport pavement project. Texas is 1 of 10 Block Grant States.

Anticipated state funding for FY 2020-2021 consists of \$15 Million in capital improvements, \$4 Million for routine airport maintenance and \$4 Million from the General Revenue Fund. Mr. Fulton mentioned aviation-related Senate Bills (SB) introduced in the current legislative session

including (SB) 1964 and SB 2050. SB 1964 relates “to the use of certain aviation and air transportation-related tax proceeds for aviation facilities development” and SB 2050 relates to the “creation of the aviation development account.”

In 2018, the Texas Transportation Institute developed, for TxDOT Aviation, a funding graph illustrating Annual Federal AIP Grant and Annual State AIP Grant amounts from 2000-2016. The funding amounts are contrasted against purchasing power over that time period, showing funding dollars adjusted for inflation and construction costs. The graph shows that funding available for construction had decreased by 51%. If the current legislative session is not successful in passing aviation-related funding, TxDOT encouraged ATAC members to contact their Senators and Representatives.

**5. Texas Economic Impact Study**, Greg Miller, Director of Planning and Programming, TxDOT Aviation Division, presented the results of the Texas Aviation Economic Impact Study to demonstrate the value of TxDOT’s annual \$70 Million investment in airports and illustrate the economic impact on employment, payroll, and output. The study measured improvements since 2011 based on all airports in the airport system, including commercial airports. As of 2017, GA employment growth and output growth have increased by 54% and 47% respectively.

To gather data for the study, TxDOT Aviation worked with TTI to administer surveys to GA airports. Data was collected from/for tenants, employment, payroll, operating expenses, and capital expenditures using the industry standard IMPLAN model. The direct impacts of capital improvements, on-airport impacts, and visitor impacts plus the multiplier impacts (indirect impacts) combined make up the total economic impact. General Aviation also offers many community benefits such as improved wildfire protection and suppression, air ambulance flights, and better security through law enforcement flights, to name a few.

Mr. Miller noted that TxDOT’s research division is currently working on a web-based tool for an economic impact model, that can be utilized to develop scenarios to help identify the most cost-effective businesses to consider in determining economic impact and community impact. Source files from the study can be provided upon request.

Mr. Fulton noted that he did not anticipate an increase in FAA funding and stressed the importance of educating members of the Legislature on why funding is needed and what funding sources are available. There is approx. \$100-150 million of GA taxes going into the General Fund. There is a strong need to explain the business benefits of GA airports. He suggested that GA airport representatives develop a plan for next fall’s legislation.

The following questions were provided as a handout and the responses are summarized after each question.

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1. If Texas State Senate Bill 2050 passes, how does TxDOT Aviation intend to utilize these funds? (Example: help cover the short fall of federal funds, help with the sponsors 10% match, increased match for the RAMP grant etc.) **SB 2050 does not contain any funds. It would create a dedicated State fund for GA airport development.**

2. Has TxDOT Aviation recovered from the recent high employee turnover and addressed the inefficiencies and delays during the RFQ/bidding process all the way to contract award? **Yes. Employees tend to stay with TxDOT for a long career and many have retired. However, many new good employees have now been hired.**

3. At the TxDOT conference, I saw in a presentation that TxDOT expects to receive \$16.7 Million in AIP discretionary funds this year. I have several questions related to that figure. Normally, FAA will say that they don't or won't know exactly how much will be available in Discretionary funds until late in the year, around August usually. How confident are they in this number? **The \$16.7 Million was from 2018 and we do not have the final amounts for 2019.**

4. What was the total (anticipated) amount of Discretionary funding available to GA airports in the five-state FAA Southwest Region this year? **We do not have any funding information yet for the five-state region or for Texas.**

5. How did Texas fare in relation to Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and New Mexico. **We will share that information as soon as it is released to us for you to make those comparisons.**

6. What projects are proposed to be funded at Texas GA airports with these Discretionary funds? **We do not have the final list for 2019.**

7. In the event that additional Discretionary funds become available in the FAA Southwest Region, are there any additional projects at Texas GA airports that might receive funding? **Yes, that is possible. In 2018, some projects not funded in the metroplex were funded elsewhere in the State.**

8. With the National Priority System (NPS) equation and project evaluation changes seen in Draft Order 5090.5, *Formulation of the NPIAS-ACIP*, does that affect TxDOT's project selection process and if so, how? **This change enforces what was done in the asset study and will evaluate airport projects by their asset category. Where a smaller airport might have a higher priority for a project it may have a lower priority during project evaluation due to their asset category. Runways are still going to be important. This is FAA's effort to help people understand we can't fund everything. The priority issue is going to be a big one and play largely into discretionary decisions. Sometimes an airport's priority is not necessarily in line with the formula. We try to manage and negotiate that with the airports. We understand where your priorities are coming from and know where the FAA formula priority is and sometimes there's a way to solve at least part of each. Prior discussions with the FAA, when they use a national priority system, indicate they quantify which airports should be included. The FAA then completes a second round of more subjective decision making. If your airport project does not receive high enough priority to be included in the first round, TxDOT will assist with crafting a message to the FAA, if there is a valid argument, for higher priority. Other factors that might not show up in a numerical rating are taken into consideration.**

**Our system plan hasn't been updated since 2010 but we maintain a dynamic system plan. If you have an airport development worksheet, that is your plan. Please work**

**with your planner to keep that information up to date. Make sure your master plan information is reflected in the development worksheet. The TxDOT unconstrained five-year plan is approximately \$245 Million. We recommend that you try to plan projects as far in advance as possible and try not to change that project. When changes are made, it is more difficult for TxDOT to fund that project.**

ATAC members wanted to know if TxDOT had considered a constrained plan based on available funds to show legislators items that might fall off as there is no funding for every project. **Yes, we have considered a constrained plan but the solution to our problem is to increase funding by at least \$100 Million. TxDOT appreciates the opportunity for the dialogue and urges members to be aggressive at educating their representatives in the Texas Legislature.**

**6. UAS Werx and Mineral Wells Airport**, Russell Julian, UAS WERX presented Mineral Wells UAS Innovation Zone. UAS WERX promotes training the nation's first generation of UAS operators based on collaboration, workforce development, and entrepreneurship. UAS has multiple partnerships including Lone Star UAS Center of Excellence in Corpus Christi, Texas. As Mineral Wells' location is situated in Class B airspace, and is only 35 miles outside of the region, its location is an ideal proving ground to migrate UAS technology into regional airspace.

Testing will include military participation from Fort Walters, an active National Guard training facility located in Mineral Wells, and commercial UAS operations within the innovation zone. "Mineral Wells UAS Innovation Zone will offer over 15 separate improved flight test locations allowing for multipoint flight operations." The innovation zone will be classified segregated airspace. All UAS aircraft will be registered and an alert area will be established; the first of its kind in the nation. This initiative will create Texas' first manned/unmanned concurrent operation GA airport.

The Mineral Wells UAS Academy will conduct all commercial training and a separate facility will be set up at Fort Walters for military training. Counter UAS training and technology will be included as part of the training. NCTCOG encouraged airport and corporate/industry partnerships to become involved.

**7. UAS Safety and Integration Task Force Update**, Ernest Huffman, NCTCOG presented an update on the UAS Safety and Integration Task Force. On May 1, 2019, NCTCOG issued a Request for Proposals for qualified firms to submit a proposal to facilitate the Know Before You Fly Training Workshops. Marketing is creating a public outreach strategy to educate the general public and learn where they may obtain more training and information. Proposals for the RFP are due May 10 with a consultant being selected by May 27. The Notice to Proceed will be issued July 1. Staff encouraged ATAC members to help identify municipal locations that are safe for recreational flying, consider participating in the Aviation Education Speakers Bureau, and to join the UAS Task Force.

Legislative initiatives include commenting on pending UAS legislation and Notice for Rule Changes from the federal government, as well as general information sessions for legislature/policy makers. Training efforts involve collaborating with ISD superintendents and Career Technology Administrators at local school districts, survey to stakeholders for employee demand and creating/endorsing baseline training curriculum.

The Urban Air Mobility Integration Study is one of several efforts underway to promote integration activities in addition to collaborating with municipalities to designate viable municipal test sites. The next meeting of the UAS Task Force is May 28, 2019, and Ernest strongly encouraged members to participate.

**8. NCT Aviation Careers Survey Report**, Chedel Townsend, NCTCOG intern, shared a list of the aviation-related programs in the region. Data was provided by North Central Texas Interlink. There are new programs at Collin College and also Denton, Frisco, and Richardson ISDs. The Fort Worth ISD no longer offers University dual credits but continues to offer credits with Tarrant County College. Multiple regional ISDs, colleges, and universities are actively seeking to expand or enhance their aviation programs. Granbury ISD has had a robust aviation program for three years and it was suggested that the Granbury program be added to the regional inventory.

**9. Touch and Goes**, NCTCOG Staff and Committee

There were no Touch and Goes presented but there was some discussion about issues with fire codes and compliance for new developments, particularly if the development is not a Fixed Based Operator transient hangar and over 15,000 square feet, foam retardant may be required. Installation of a foam system can be a redevelopment barrier due to the high cost. Comments suggested that the requirement for a foam system varies widely from city to city.

Other comments were related to legislative funding initiatives that Committee members could facilitate to educate and encourage Representatives to support increased regional aviation funding. Ernest agreed to help organize and facilitate these efforts.

The next meeting of the Air Transportation Advisory Committee is scheduled for August 1, 2019.

As there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.