
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This chapter provides the background and summary of the processes and findings of The Master Plan Update for the Richmond International Airport (RIC).

In accordance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Advisory Circular (AC) 150-5070-6B, *Airport Master Plans*, the information, findings, and recommendations contained in this report, as developed by Kutchins & Groh, LLC, in association with Chiang Patel & Yerby, Inc.; Jacobsen Daniels Associates, LLC; and Simat Helliesen & Eichner, Inc. (Planning Team), represent an update of the *1999 Richmond International Airport Master Plan*. The purpose of this updated Master Plan is to provide guidance for the continued improvement of the airport to the year 2026 and beyond.

The previous master plan for RIC was completed in 1996. Since then, major changes to the airport and the aviation industry have occurred. To address these changes, the Capital Region Airport Commission has decided it is in its best interest to develop a new master plan and Airport Layout Plan (ALP) for the airport. The previous master plan and airport layout plan resulted in a recommendation to place an 8,000-foot long parallel runway 16R-34L 7,700 feet south of the existing runway 16-34, and outside of the airport boundary. This runway configuration provided the necessary capacity for the forecasted increase in aircraft operations during Instrument Flight Rules as well as Visual Flight Rules operations.

This update, based on information provided to the Planning Team by the airport, acknowledges that the location designated for this future runway (as shown on the 1999 ALP) is also being considered for future development by other regional planning authorities. The airport asked the Planning Team to validate the need for the parallel runway, its current location, and to identify other runway configurations that would meet the future needs of the airport without impacting regional planned development areas to the south of the current airport boundary. As a result of this master plan update effort, it has been determined that the proposed location of this parallel runway alignment no longer addresses the needs of the Capital Region Airport Commission. The anticipated demand for an additional runway can be accommodated largely within the existing airport boundary, which allows for the continued planning and development of other non-aviation facilities to the south. This update is consistent with regional planning authorities' development initiatives which are focused on stimulating the Richmond economic environment.

1.1 AIRPORT SETTING

The RIC is owned and operated by the Capitol Region Airport Commission. This governmental body consists of a 14 member board of directors appointed by four Richmond

area jurisdictions. The Commission elects a Chairman on an annual basis from among its membership. Since its opening as a commercial facility in 1927, the RIC has provided the commercial, general aviation and military facilities for the Richmond Area.

The RIC is located approximately ten miles east of the Central Business District of the City of Richmond. Its main entrance is off of U.S. Highway 60, termed Williamsburg Road. Physically, RIC occupies 2,580 acres, has three active runways, has an extensive taxiway and airfield system, and serves the aviation needs of the surrounding communities. Insofar as scheduled service is concerned, it is considered an Origination and Destination (O & D) airport, meaning that for the most part passengers are either starting or ending their journeys in Richmond.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

RIC was dedicated on October 15, 1927. The airport was named after the Virginia aviator Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd. The first regularly scheduled passenger service began in 1932 by Eastern Airlines. During World War II, the airport was used as an Army Air Corps base, which enlarged the airfield and expanded the facility.

In 1975, the Capital Region Airport Commission was created, and by 1985, the airport was renamed the Richmond International Airport. Although the airfield configuration has remained the same for many years, the terminal and concourse facilities have been completely rebuilt to accommodate the current fleet of aircraft in use today. The RIC provides for the travel needs of the residents of the Richmond Metropolitan Area. Currently, the airport is served by 8 airlines with direct service to 21 cities.

1.3 INDUSTRY, STATE, AND LOCAL

The Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is comprised of 16 counties and 4 cities, including the City of Richmond, and is geographically spread over a 5,717 square mile area. The Richmond MSA is located approximately 100 miles south of Washington, DC and 90 miles northwest of Norfolk, VA.

The Richmond MSA has a strong and vibrant economy, which is projected to remain strong for the foreseeable future. It is home to 13 Fortune 1000 companies, 7 of which rank in the Fortune 500. There are approximately 1.2 million residents that live in the Richmond MSA.

1.4 MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of the Master Plan is to serve as a general guide to the orderly, timely, and logical development of RIC so that it can continue to serve the aviation needs and support the economic development of the Richmond region for the next 20 years.

Major objectives of the Master Plan include:

- Establish a flexible facility development plan that will accommodate reasonably expected changes in the aviation market over the next 20 years and beyond.
- Ensure that planned expansion is consistent with the safe, secure, efficient, and financially sound operation and development of RIC.
- Ensure that RIC is developed in an environmentally sensitive and responsible manner.
- Maximize opportunities for RIC to serve as a catalyst for the economic development of the region.
- Use the master planning process to build consensus with key stakeholders regarding major development recommendations and to develop the foundation for funding agreements and environmental approvals for key projects.
- Consider the potential effect of recent terrorist activities in the United States on future aviation activity.
- Prepare forecasts at 5-, 10-, and 20-year increments to establish a reasonable range of potential growth at RIC.
- Create a living document that focuses on establishing a reasonable set of planning activity levels (i.e., levels of enplanements and aircraft operations) suitable for guiding the development of the Master Plan, rather than on achieving consensus on specific traffic growth rates.
- Integrate environmental considerations throughout the planning process to help ensure that the final plan is workable and to help establish accurate cost and schedule estimates for improvement projects.
- Ensure that improvements are recommended in the context of environmental requirements, such as those for water quality, air quality, noise, and the protection of sensitive species' habitats. Promote land use patterns on RIC and in the surrounding community that encourage land use consistency and compatibility.
- Integrate financial considerations throughout the planning process to help ensure that the final plan is consistent with the RIC's financial capacity and business goals.
- Prepare a conceptual financial plan that identifies potential sources and uses of funds for the recommended development plan at 5-, 10-, and 20-year intervals.
- Identify opportunities for revenue generating aviation-compatible uses of land not required for aviation purposes.

1.5 COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The RIC Master Plan includes a Public/Stakeholders Involvement Program which encourages collaboration among local agencies, tenants, airport users, elected officials, business and civic leaders, and the general public. The program established two committees of stakeholders, the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), each of which provided input and comments to the Plan. Appendix J includes copies of the documentation utilized in this public involvement process.

The Citizens Advisory Committee included the area's major business and community

leaders. CAC members provided critical thinking about regional and local business matters and how the RIC could support their growth and development. The CAC weighed certain planning directives against community goals, values, and needs.

The Technical Advisory Committee provided critical input and insight on technical issues. The TAC evaluated the technical merits of elements of the planning process.

1.6 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The remainder of this Master Plan is organized as follows:

- Chapter II Inventory and Existing Conditions
- Chapter III Aviation Demand Forecasts
- Chapter IV Facility Requirements
- Chapter V Development Alternatives
- Chapter VI Preferred Development Plan
- Chapter VII Environmental Overview
- Chapter VIII Implementation and Financial Plan
- Chapter IX Airport Layout Plan

Appendices

- A. Pavement Inventory
 - i. Airfield Pavement
 - ii. Landside Pavement
- B. Airfield Electrical Survey
- C. Building Inventory
- D. Projections of Aviation Demand
- E. Airfield Alternatives Evaluation
- F. Environmental Coordination Documentation
- G. Noise and Land Use Analysis
- H. Cost Estimates
- I. Airport Layout Plan
- J. Public Involvement Documentation