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UPDATING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GUIDANCE FOR AIRPORT MASTER PLANS

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UPDATING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GUIDANCE
FOR AIRPORT MASTER PLANS

by

Mark Cameron Modjeski

B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2006

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Public Administration Degree

Department of Political Science
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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FOR AIRPORT MASTER PLANS

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

MARK CAMERON MODJESKI, for the Master of Public Administration degree in POLITICAL SCIENCE, presented on November 5, 2012, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: UPDATING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GUIDANCE FOR AIRPORT MASTER PLANS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. David A. NewMyer

Public involvement is a key component of an airport master plan. This research identifies recommended additions to the public involvement guidance contained in Advisory Circular 150/5070-6b, *Airport Master Plans*. The methodology used to identify public involvement guidance additions was a literature review. The literature review included public involvement guidance from other transportation planning guidance documents and public involvement practices used by airports during recent or ongoing airport master plans. Recommended additions to the public involvement guidance provided in Advisory Circular 150/5070-6b, *Airport Master Plans* included those identified in transportation planning guidance and used in recent or ongoing airport master plans.

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INTRODUCTION

An airport master plan describes the short-, medium-, and long-term development plans to meet future aviation demand at an airport (Federal Aviation Administration, 2007). One of the key components of an airport master plan is a public involvement program (FAA, 2007). According to the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (2012), public involvement is the process of facilitating the involvement of those affected by or interested in a decision.

Advisory Circulars (ACs) are written communications in which the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issues explanatory and guidance material that is informational in nature (FAA, 2002). Advisory Circular 150/5070-6b, *Airport Master Plans*, provides a general framework for an airport master plan public involvement program. That framework includes the following components: timing, tools and techniques, identifying the stakeholders, identifying the issues, and documentation guidelines (FAA, 2007). Public involvement tools and techniques described in AC 150/5070-6b are: committees, public information meetings, small group meetings, and a public awareness campaign (FAA, 2007).

The purposes of this research are to:

1. Determine if there are any components to could be added to the guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b.
2. Determine if there are timing recommendations that could be added to the guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b
3. Determine if there are specific public involvement tools and techniques that could be added to the guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b.

To identify potential updates to the existing public involvement guidance for airport master plans, a literature review was conducted. The purposes of the literature review were to identify public involvement practices in the transportation planning industry and identify public involvement practices used in recent or ongoing airport master plans.

Recommended updates to the public involvement guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b will include those public involvement practices used in both recent airport master plans and in the transportation industry.

SECTION 1

BACKGROUND

This section documents the general process of airport master planning. A brief summary of public involvement is also provided. Finally, the AC system, the FAA's method of providing planning guidance, is summarized.

Airport Master Plans

An airport master plan describes the short-, medium-, and long-term development plans to meet future aviation demand at an airport (FAA, 2007). According to AC 150/5070-6b, airport master plans are prepared to support the modernization or expansion of existing airports or the creation of a new airport (FAA, 2007). The goal of a master plan is to provide the framework needed to guide future airport development that meet aviation demand, while considering potential environmental and socioeconomic impacts (FAA, 2007). The main components of a master plan generally include the following (FAA, 2007):

- Pre-planning – initial needs determination, request for proposals, consultant selection, study design, consultant contract, application for study funding
- Public involvement – public involvement program and issues documentations
- Environmental considerations – environmental requirements for each project in the recommended development program
- Existing conditions – inventory of data needed for analysis within the master plan
- Aviation forecasts – forecasted aeronautical demand for short-, medium-, and long-term time frames

- Facility requirements – ability of the existing airport facilities to support the forecast demand
- Alternatives development and evaluation – options to meet facility requirements
- Airport layout plans – set of drawings that provides a graphic representation of the long-term development plan the airport
- Facilities implementation plan – summary of recommended improvements and associated costs
- Financial feasibility analysis – description of how the sponsor will finance the recommended projects and a demonstration of the financial feasibility of the program

Master plans are intended to be flexible (FAA, 2007). Therefore, master plans for individual airports will vary in what elements they include and in the products they produce (FAA, 2007). Common master plan products include (FAA, 2007):

- Technical reports – containing the results of the analyses conducted during the development of the master plan
- Summary report – summarizing pertinent facts, conclusions, and recommendations
- Airport layout plan – containing a graphical representation of proposed airport development in the master plan
- Web page – accessible by the public, containing specific information regarding the airport and the master plan
- Public information kit – including materials that were used to convey information to the public, such as maps, presentations, and meeting minutes

Public Involvement

According to the IAP2 (2012), public involvement is the process of facilitating the involvement of those affected by or interested in a decision. U.S. government requirements for public involvement began with the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946, which mandated that federal agencies inform the public of an organization's procedures and rules (Transportation Research Board, 2011). In the 1960's, two acts specifically impacting public involvement for transportation were passed (TRB, 2011). The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 required public hearings to address effects of proposed highway projects (TRB, 2011). The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) mandated that agencies assess potential environmental impacts for federal projects, required that study documents be made available for public review and comment, and required public hearings (TRB, 2011).

Public involvement is not public relations or public information (O'Connor, 2012). Public information implies one-way communication to the public, while public relations emphasizes the promotion of a particular policy or solution (O'Connor, 2012). The IAP2 has identified the following core values of public involvement:

- Those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- The public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Sustainable decisions are promoted by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision is sought out and facilitated.
- Public input is sought by design.

- The public is provided with the information that they need to use to participate in a meaningful way.
- The public is told how their input affected the decision.

Within this document, the terms public participation, popular participation, and stakeholder involvement are interchangeable with the term public involvement. For the purpose of this document, “public” is defined as anyone who has an interest in the airport whether it is as a user, tenant, employee, the FAA, other governmental agencies, elected and appointed officials, residents of the community, or passengers.

Commitment to public involvement during airport master plans is essential. During a master plan at Plymouth Municipal Airport, the planning team used a variety of public involvement techniques traditionally associated with airport master plans – they held three public meetings and formed a Technical Advisory Group with participants from Plymouth, Carver, and airport users (Consensus Building Institute, 2009). However, public involvement in the process was low until key improvements (runway extensions) were identified – at which point the public raised strong objections to the planned improvements (Consensus, 2009). The strong opposition led to the Airport Commission rescinding their vote approving of the master plan, and restarting the process (Consensus, 2009).

Objectives of public involvement vary between stakeholders (Rawson, 2012). Planners may see the public involvement program as a way, while a local resident may see it as an opportunity to stop or delay an unwanted project (Rawson, 2012). Therefore, it is important that all participants in the public involvement program agree on the objectives at the program’s onset (Rawson, 2012).

Advisory Circular System

Advisory Circulars (AC) are written communications in which a FAA official issues explanatory and guidance material that is informational in nature and bears no semblance to regulatory-like language (FAA, 2002). Specifically, ACs typically contain explanations of regulations, guidance material, best practices, or information useful to the aviation community (FAA, 2002). Importantly, ACs do not create or change a regulatory requirement (FAA, 2002).

According to data retrieved from the FAA's website in September, 2012, there are 782 active ACs (FAA, 2012). The oldest active AC is the *Guide to Drug Hazards in Aviation Medicine*, published in 1963 (FAA, 2012). The newest is the *Federal Surplus Personal Property Program for Public Airport Purposes*, published August 31st, 2012 (FAA, 2012). The FAA uses the AC system, which became effective in 1962; to deliver advisory material to FAA customers, industry, the aviation community, and the public (FAA, 2002).

SECTION 2

MASTER PLAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GUIDANCE

The first task in a master plan, following pre-planning, is the creation of a public involvement program (FAA, 2007). Public involvement guidance for airport master plans is provided in AC 150/5070-6b. Additional airport planning public involvement guidance is provided in AC 150/5050-4, *Citizen Participation in Airport planning*. The guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b is largely based on AC 150/5050-4. However, AC 150/5070-6b is more up-to-date, and is specifically tailored to airport master plans. AC 150/5070-6b was last updated in 2007. AC 150/5050-4 was last updated in 1975.

According to AC 150/5050-4, the purpose of public involvement in airport planning is to improve airport planning, minimize controversy, and generate public support for airport projects (FAA, 1975). AC 150/5070-6b states that the public involvement program encourages information-sharing and collaboration among the airport sponsor, users and tenants, resource agencies, elected and appointed public officials, residents, travelers, and the general public – all stakeholders who have an interest in the outcome of the master plan (FAA, 2007). Therefore, a public involvement program provides stakeholders with an early opportunity to comment, adequate notice of opportunities for their involvement; and regular means for discussion throughout the study (FAA, 2007).

As described in this section, AC 150/5070-6b provides a general framework for an airport master plan public involvement program. That framework includes the following components: timing, tools and techniques, identifying the stakeholders, identifying the issues, and documentation guidelines. The following tools and techniques were identified in AC 150/5070-

6b: committees, public information meetings, small group meetings, and a public awareness campaign.

The purpose of this research is to determine if there are any components to could be added to the guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b – i.e., components in addition to timing, tools and techniques, identifying stakeholders, identifying key issues, and documentation guidelines. A secondary purpose is to determine if there are specific public involvement tools and techniques and timing recommendations that could be added to the existing guidance.

Timing

Both AC 150/5050-4 (1975) and AC 150/5070-6b (2007) state that public involvement has its greatest impact during the early stages of the planning process, before irreversible decisions have been made and when the maximum number of alternatives are available (FAA). The reason for this is that planners can better deal with issues of public concern, thereby improving the chances of reaching consensus on controversial matters (FAA, 2007). If stakeholders become aware that the important decisions were made before they were invited to participate, they may distrust the planners (FAA, 2007). In addition, when public involvement opportunities are not provided until late in the planning process, there may not be enough time to make significant changes (FAA, 2007).

Tools and Techniques

AC 150/5070-6b documents a variety of public involvement forums, including: committees, public information meetings, small group meetings, and public awareness campaigns (FAA, 2007). The application of each depends on specific project characteristics,

expected public interest, and budget considerations (FAA, 2007). A brief description of each is provided below.

Committees

Committees facilitating a public involvement program often include a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and a Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) (FAA, 2007). The TAC members have a high level of technical competency associated with some aspect airport planning or operations, and are responsible for providing input and insight on technical issues (FAA, 2007). The CAC members are representative of all stakeholders, and serve as an information exchange group for stakeholders (FAA, 2007). The CAC is ultimately responsible for reviewing the planning team's plans and proposals, interacting with the planning team members during the review, making consensus recommendations to the planning team, and giving its recommendations on the finished plan to the airport sponsor (FAA, 2007).

Simply put, the TAC's purpose is to evaluate the technical aspects of the planning effort, while the CAC's is to ensure recommendations align with community goals, values, and needs (FAA, 2007). Importantly, the committees have no decision making power of their own (FAA, 2007).

According to AC 150/5070-6b, the public involvement program should also include a management/policy/oversight committee (FAA, 2007). The purpose of this committee is to advise the planning team on policy decisions; committee members often include senior staff that responsible for decision making at the airport (FAA, 2007).

Public Information Meetings

Formal public hearings, where stakeholders are given the opportunity to make public statements about the study, may inhibit open discussion of issues and alternatives (FAA, 2007). Therefore, an “open house” format is the preferred type of public hearing for an airport master plan (FAA, 2007). Open house public meetings usually have interactive information stations, allowing stakeholders to visit with planners on an informal one-on-one basis (FAA, 2007). Other ways of providing information to the public at an open house include slideshows, exhibits, and videos (FAA, 2007). The timing and number of the public information meetings will vary depending on the complexity of the study and the stakeholders involved (FAA, 2007).

Small Group Meetings and Briefings

Small group meetings are the preferred forum for identifying local concerns and conducting detailed discussions of master plan alternatives (FAA, 2007). During an airport master plan, these meetings are usually scheduled with community boards, elected officials, civic organizations, and other interested organizations (FAA, 2007).

Public Awareness Campaign

The purposes of a public awareness campaign are to initiate stakeholder involvement, maintain stakeholder interest, and keep the general public informed of the progress of the study (FAA, 2007). The two parts of the public awareness campaign described in AC 150/5070-6b are informational / educational materials and web pages (FAA, 2007).

Informational materials include fact sheets, flyers, press releases, newspaper ads, and general information packets (FAA, 2007). They are used to educate a broad audience about all

aspects of the study (FAA, 2007). Web pages, linked to the airport's website or on a specific project site, containing interactive or self-guided presentations and electronic copies of study documents are also used as part of a public awareness campaign (FAA, 2007). The public should be provided a way to request project related informational materials (FAA, 2007).

Identify the Stakeholders

The types of stakeholders included in a public involvement program for an airport master plan will vary, and may include the following general groups (FAA, 2007):

- Users and tenants
- Groups and individuals from within the sponsor's organization
- FAA personnel from the appropriate regional and field offices
- Resource agencies and other governmental units with regulatory or review authority

Every effort should be made to identify stakeholders early in the public involvement process; additional stakeholders may be added throughout the study as necessary (FAA, 2007).

Identify the Key Issues

AC 150/5070-6b stresses the importance of identifying key issues early in the planning process (FAA, 2007). The prescribed method of identifying key issues is through discussion with stakeholders using the tools and techniques provided in AC 150/5070-6b, and described in the preceding sections. The key issues shape the scope of the study, provide direction to the planners, and are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the planning recommendations (FAA, 2007).

Documentation Guidelines

AC 150/5070-6b provides guidance on the documentation of key issues and documentation of the overall public involvement program. According to AC 150/5070-6b, accurate documentation of the key issues allows stakeholders to track how the planning team addresses them throughout the study (FAA, 2007). AC 150/5070-6b recommends grouping the key issues by functional categories, including facilities, business, operational, properties, and environmental issues (FAA, 2007). Documentation of the public involvement program should include copies of committee rosters, meeting minutes, advertisements, newsletters, and other elements that comprise the official record of the public involvement program (FAA, 2007).

SECTION 3

CURRENT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PRACTICES

The general framework of the public involvement program outlined in AC 150/5070-6b is consistent with other transportation planning guidance documents. For example, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) online guide to public involvement techniques (2012), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) *Public Involvement Handbook* (2011), and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) *Guide to Public Involvement* (n.d.) all identify early and ongoing public involvement (timing), stakeholder identification, and issue identification, as key components of a successful public involvement program. Each of those public involvement guidance documents also recommends the use of committees, small group meetings, and public information campaigns.

The existing public involvement guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b contains common components of transportation planning public involvement programs. Therefore, the focus of this section will be identifying public involvement program “components” and “tools and techniques” used in transportation planning and in current or recent airport master plans which are not included in AC 150/5070-6b. Additionally, a review of the timing of public meetings during recent airport master plans is provided.

Timing

As identified earlier in this document, many transportation planning resources, including AC 150/5070-6b, prescribe an “early and often” approach to public involvement. The timing of public involvement meetings during an airport master plan varies depending on the complexity of

the project and the community environment (FAA, 2007). The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of the timing of public involvement meetings conducted during recent or ongoing airport master plans.

Tampa International Airport

During the ongoing master plan at Tampa International Airport (TPA) community input meetings are planned to occur at the following project milestones (Tampa International Airport, 2012): after the facility requirements are complete; prior to the refinement of preferred alternatives; and immediately following the refinement of preferred alternatives.

Sacramento International Airport

During the ongoing master plan at Sacramento International Airport (SMF), public information meetings are scheduled to be held during the preliminary evaluation of alternatives and following the development of the recommended development plan (County of Sacramento, 2012). Meetings with other stakeholders, including the Citizen's Advisory Group (CAG), the Community Leaders Group (CLG), the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Planning Professionals Group (PPG) are scheduled to occur after completion of each of the following elements of the master plan, forecasts, alternatives, implementation plan, and recommended development plan (County of Sacramento, 2012).

Portland International Airport

During the Portland International Airport (PDX) Master Plan Update (part of the Airport Futures project) the Port of Portland (Port) and the City of Portland (City) conducted an extensive stakeholder outreach program that included meeting with various stakeholder groups

and the public prior to project initiation to solicit input on the public involvement program and work scope (City of Portland, 2010). Further, representatives of the public participated in the consultant selection process (City of Portland, 2010). Public involvement was also sought to at the decision-making at the following milestones (City of Portland, 2010):

- Scope of work development and project initiation
- PAG kickoff, issues identification, and goal setting
- Development of aviation demand forecasts
- Development of City land use plan and PDX facility requirements
- Review of PDX follow-on studies
- Analysis of Airport alternatives and the City land use plan
- Adoption of PDX Master Plan Update and City land use plan

Surrounding these milestones, the City and Port held over 50 meetings with committees, government officials, and the general public (City of Portland, 2010).

Dupage Airport

During the Dupage Airport (DPA) master plan, three meetings with a Project Steering Committee (PSC) - comprised of senior members of the Consultant Team, Authority staff, members of the Authority Board, FAA, Illinois Department of Transportation - Division of Aviation, and select stakeholders/airport users – occurred over the course of the project (Jacobs Consultancy, 2008). Meetings occurred after finalizing the inventory, completing facility requirements and alternatives, and completion of the recommended development plan (Jacobs Consultancy, 2008). Further, one public workshop was held at the conclusion of the study

(Jacobs Consultancy, 2008). The workshop was an open house format, with information stations staffed by consultant and airport staff (Jacobs Consultancy, 2008).

Web 2.0

The term “Web 2.0” distinguishes between websites where users participate in developing applications and / or providing information and Web 1.0, where users passively view information (Vienna Transport Strategies, 2009). Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking sites, wikis, and blogs (Vienna Transport Strategies, 2009). One example of Web 2.0 use in transportation planning is using social media to attract younger, more technically savvy audiences (FDOT, 2011). Potential uses for social media in public involvement include gathering comments and information; monitoring and managing feedback; and updating stakeholders on information relative to transportation projects (FDOT, 2011).

The Port of Bellingham is currently working on an airport master plan for Bellingham International Airport (BLI). In addition to the project website, the Port also updates its Facebook page with meeting notices and project information (Port of Bellingham, 2012). The Town of Islip also posted meeting notices for the airport master plan at Long Island MacArthur Airport (ISP) on its Facebook page (Town of Islip, 2012).

Select an Organizing Feature for a Meeting

Specific techniques for organizing meetings help participants think about and discuss issues (FHWA, 2012). Benefits of selecting an organizational feature for a meeting include making the meeting more creative, stimulating, and engaging (FHWA, 2012). Organizing features include brainstorming, visioning, charrettes, and small group techniques (FHWA, 2012).

A charrette, for example, is a meeting to resolve a problem or issue within a specified time limit (FHWA, 2012). Components of a charrette include (FHWA, 2012):

- A definition of issues to be resolved
- An analysis of the problem and alternative approaches to solutions
- A presentation of final proposal(s)
- A final resolution of the approach to be taken

Charrettes, when used early in the planning process, allow stakeholders to provide valuable perspectives on the key issues surrounding the project (FHWA, 2012). Later in the process, charrettes can be used to resolve disputed issues (FHWA, 2012). Charrettes are also used to break stalemates by opposing stakeholder groups (FHWA, 2012).

During the airport master plan at Aspen / Pitkin County Airport (ASE), project staff organized a charrette to allow the public to participate in the design alternatives for future facilities (Aspen, n.d.). The objective of the charrette was to help the public gain a deeper understanding of the airport's current and projected needs, as well as its facilities and operations (Aspen, n.d.). The charrette began with a tour of the airport, an overview of planning constraints, and group breakout sessions (Aspen, n.d.).

Tours and Site Visits

According to FDOT, site visits and tours are trips taken by community residents and officials to a proposed project area, allowing the participants to see the physical environment of a plan or project (FDOT, 2011). Tours / site visits help participants understand how plans translate into reality (FHWA, 2012). They also give participants a common frame of reference and help people understand each other's perspective (FHWA, 2012).

Many airports include tours as part of their public involvement programs. According to the project website, during the Aspen/Pitkin County Airport (ASE) master plan, community members were invited see terminal and airfield facilities (Aspen, 2012). As noted earlier, a tour also accompanied the ASE planning charrette. Dallas / Fort Worth Airport (DFW) offers standard and customized tours to the public (Dallas / Fort Worth International Airport, 2012) Eagle County Airport (EGE) set up a tour as part of the master plan Planning Advisory Committee kickoff meeting (Jviation, 2011).

Facilitation

The FHWA defines facilitation as guidance of a group in a problem-solving process (FHWA, 2012). The facilitator is a neutral party whose purpose is to provide procedural help in moving toward a conclusion (FHWA, 2012). The facilitator has five basic responsibilities (FHWA, 2012):

1. Focus on a specific task or a limited issue;
2. Add structure, not control, to the discussion;
3. Keep the discussion on topic;
4. Equalize participation; and
5. Probe for consensus or agreement on issues.

A facilitator might ask hypothetical questions to stimulate discussion (FHWA, 2012). Facilitators also ensure that the group is fully aware of the issues prior to discussion of steps to be taken and that the group is educated on technical issues (FHWA, 2012). Benefits of facilitation include reduced time debating issues, more focused discussions, and more effective consensus building (FHWA, 2012).

Examples of using facilitators for master plan public involvement programs include Lake Hood (Z41) and Anchorage (ANC) General Aviation Airport master plan (2004), T.F. Green Airport (PVD) (2001), and Plymouth Airport (PYM) (2010).

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of determining if the purpose of a process was achieved (FDOT, 2011). Benefits of evaluating public involvement programs include:

- Identifying public involvement activities that achieve and their tangible results (TRB, 2011)
- Determining whether or not the goals of the program were met (TRB, 2011)
- Determining whether or not resources have been effectively and efficiently allocated (TRB, 2011)
- Determining which activities were ineffective (FDOT, 2011)
- Identifying new public involvement activities (FDOT, 2011).

Evaluation of a public involvement program involves comparing program outputs to established performance measures (FDOT, 2011). Examples of performances measures for a public involvement program include the consensus of the output, the promotion of a democratic process, and whether or not it yielded decisions of technical merit (TRB, 2011).

Evaluation methods may include surveys and quantitative statistical analysis (TRB, 2011). Surveys typically contain targeted questions regarding tools that were used during a public involvement program, and can be conducted in person, over the phone, or via mail / email (TRB, 2011). Statistics, for example, can be used to compare the number of persons attending a public workshop to number notified of the meeting (FDOT, 2011)

During the PDX Master Plan, a public involvement subcommittee, the project facilitator, and key members of a project advisory group evaluated the public involvement process on a semiannual basis (City of Portland, 2008). The purposes of the semiannual reviews were to evaluate methods of attaining broader outreach and to conduct an overall review of the process (City of Portland, 2008).

SECTION 4

CASE STUDY: AIRPORT FUTURES

This section provides an overview of the Airport Futures public involvement program. Airport Futures was a collaborative effort between the City of Portland (City), Port of Portland (Port), and the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan community to create an integrated long-range development plan for Portland International Airport (PDX) (City of Portland, 2008). The products of Airport Futures were an updated airport master plan and a land use plan (City of Portland, 2008).

Airport Futures included a comprehensive public involvement program, incorporating many of the practices described in the preceding section. City and Port project staff met with a number of public involvement specialists to help define the public involvement process (City of Portland, 2008). The stated goal of the public involvement program was to provide an ongoing public involvement program that was open, honest, and transparent (City of Portland, 2008). Early involvement was emphasized – specifically with regard to providing policy-setting input to project staff (City of Portland, 2008).

In 2010, the Airport Futures project received an award from the Airports Council International – North America (ACI-NA) for Outreach, Education and Community Involvement (Airports Council International – North America, 2010). According to ACI-NA (2010):

“Airport Futures was a 3-year process that promoted the general public’s awareness of the Port’s efforts to practice responsible environmental stewardship and facilitated a community discussion about sustainable development. This discussion resulted in the identification of the community’s vision and values, the integration of sustainability

principles into the Airport's long-range development plan, and the commitment to develop PDX in a manner that contributes to the long-term economic, environmental, and social health of the region. Further, it establishes an ongoing public involvement process to ensure meaningful public dialogue related to Airport planning and development and increase public awareness about the Airport and affected communities.”

Goals of the Airport Futures Public Involvement Program

Goals of the Airport Futures public involvement program included the following (City of Portland, 2008):

- Identify opportunities for the public to provide timely input so that there is an opportunity to affect change
- Be accessible, inclusive, meaningful, timely, open, fair and honest
- Ensure a collaborative involvement process between the City, the Port, and stakeholders
- Meet the planning timelines of both the City and the Port
- Provide an ongoing record of citizen input, questions and responses, and a mechanism to make that information available to the public
- Conduct periodic meetings in Portland and Vancouver to update the public on committee activities and allow the public to inform policy-making
- Provide citizens with a way to stay involved and informed during the master plan update and legislative land use process
- Provide interactive meetings with small group breakouts, distinguishing between information and input opportunities during public meetings

Timing

Project staff hosted 13 public meetings (Airport Futures Planning Advisory Group, 2010). Public involvement informed decision-making at the following key milestones (City of Portland, 2008):

- Scope of work development and project initiation
- PAG kick-off, issue identification and goal setting
- Aviation demand forecasts
- Early land use proposal and forecasted facility requirements
- Follow-on studies
- Alternatives analysis and land use plan
- Adoption of master plan and land use plan

Tools and Techniques

The following section describes the public involvement tools and techniques utilized during the Airport Futures project. Tools and techniques include those included in AC 150/5070-6b, as well as others used in transportation planning.

Committees

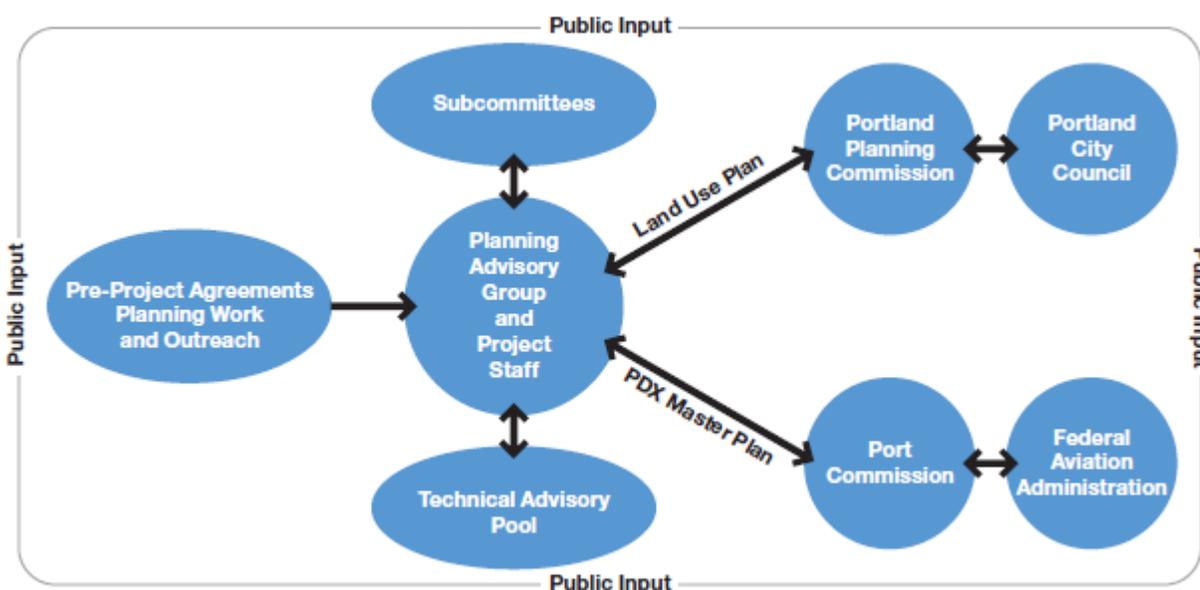
The Port and the City identified the Planning Advisory Group (PAG) as the centerpiece of the public involvement program (City of Portland, 2008). The PAG consisted of 30 members, and served as an advisory body to the City and Port (City of Portland, 2008). For specific subject areas requiring more detailed analysis or input, the PAG established subcommittees on an as-needed basis (City of Portland, 2008).

To further support the PAG, a Technical Advisory Pool (TAP), consisting of organizations and agencies with specialized expertise was created to advise the PAG, PAG subcommittees, City and Port project staff, and the community (City of Portland, 2008). Members of the TAP addressed questions on technical issues throughout the planning process (City of Portland, 2008). The TAP did not deliberate on policy issues (City of Portland, 2008).

Figure 1 depicts how the PAG, TAP, subcommittees, and the public provided input into the decision making process (City of Portland, 2008).

Figure 1

Airport Futures Public Engagement



Source: Airport Futures Planning Advisory Group, 2010

Public Information Meetings

Public meeting formats during Airport Futures varied. Project staff hosted workshops, open houses, presentations, and discussion groups (City of Portland, 2008). Additionally, all

PAG and subcommittee meetings were open to the public, and included opportunities for public comment (City of Portland, 2008). By the conclusion of the project, project staff hosted thirteen public meetings / open houses (Airport Futures Planning Advisory Group, 2010).

Public Awareness Campaign

The Airport Futures Public Awareness Campaign included the following components (City of Portland, 2008):

- Ongoing outreach to stakeholders – including regular communication with neighborhood coalitions and other stakeholder groups and published project status updates.
- Joint web site – which included an overview on the project, project updates, PAG and subcommittee meeting notes, technical project documents, frequently asked questions and answers, a public comment summary, and an online web survey.
- Electronic notification – electronic email notification of project meetings, updates, media releases, and newsletters.
- Meeting notices – notice of all PAG and subcommittee meetings was posted on the project web site, emailed to interested stakeholders, and posted in local newspapers.
- Media releases – media releases were circulated prior to all of the PAG meetings and public meeting.

Tours and Site Visits

The PAG received an airport tour during its first organized meeting (City of Portland, 2007a). The tour included access to the airport's airside and landside facilities (City of Portland, 2007a). Further, it included key sites in the airport's environs (City of Portland, 2007a).

Facilitation

An independent was facilitator present at all PAG and Coordinating Committee meetings (City of Portland, 2008). The facilitator acted as a process manager, whose main responsibilities were to: assist PAG and Coordination Committee members; ensure the process was fair, well-run and productive; provide minor conflict resolution; and provide general public involvement program advice (City of Portland, 2008). At the conclusion of the project, the facilitator was instrumental in building consensus as each of the PAG members voted "yes" for the final plan (Perlman, 2010).

Identify the Stakeholders

The following stakeholders were identified as participants in the planning process (Port of Portland, 2010):

- Public – through a comprehensive public involvement program that allowed opportunities for input
- PAG – a 30-member group that served as an advisory body to the City and the Port
- TAP – which consisted of resource experts to address technical questions

- PAG Subcommittees – examples include: Forecast, Land Use/Transportation, and Master Plan subcommittees
- Port and City staff
- Portland Planning Commission – a City commission charged with making land use policy recommendations
- Portland City Council
- Port Commission – appointed by the Oregon Governor and ratified by the Oregon legislature to oversee the Port
- FAA

Other stakeholder groups were also engaged throughout various phases of the project. Those stakeholder groups included: Portland and Vancouver neighborhoods and neighborhood coalitions, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, PDX Citizen Noise Advisory Committee, Airport Issues Roundtable, Coalition for a Livable Future, Columbia Corridor Association, Portland Air Cargo Association, Portland Audubon Society of Portland, 1000 Friends of Oregon, Multnomah County Drainage District, Columbia Riverkeepers, Environmental Justice Action Group, Portland Business Alliance, Westside Economic Alliance, Clackamas Business Alliance, East Metropolitan Economic Alliance, Portland Freight Advisory Committee, Oregon Freight Advisory Committee, Columbia River Economic Development Council, Identity Clark County and Vancouver Rotary (City of Portland, 2008).

Identify Key Issues

Key issues were identified during early stakeholder outreach (City of Portland, 2007b).

Outreach included public meetings, as well as web surveys (City of Portland, 2007b). Examples of project issues include (City of Portland, 2009):

- Meeting demand via high-speed rail
- Moving air cargo operations to another airport
- The need for a third parallel runway
- Climate change
- Environmental considerations (e.g., aircraft emissions)

Evaluation

As described earlier, a public involvement subcommittee, the project facilitator, and key members of the PAG evaluated the public involvement process on a semiannual basis (City of Portland, 2008). The purposes of the semiannual reviews were to evaluate methods of attaining broader outreach and to conduct an overall review of the process (City of Portland, 2008).

SECTION 5

CONCLUSIONS

The general guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b is consistent with guidance provided in other transportation planning documentation. Additionally, the goals and objectives of an airport master plan public involvement program as documented in AC 150/5070-6b are generally consistent with those outlined by the IAP2 in Section 1. As described earlier, the purposes of this research are to:

1. Determine if there are any components to could be added to the guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b.
2. Determine if there are timing recommendations that could be added to the guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b
3. Determine if there are specific public involvement tools and techniques that could be added to the guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b.

Evaluation of public involvement programs (within the context of the overall study) was identified in transportation planning public involvement guidance. An example of an airport evaluating its airport master plan public involvement program was provided in the Airport Futures case study. Due to the flexible nature of airport master plans, and the varying characteristics of airports and their surrounding communities, evaluation of the public involvement program is essential for determining what works for a particular airport.

During the literature review, the following tools and techniques of a public involvement program were found in other transportation planning resources: Web 2.0, selecting an organizing

feature for a meeting, tours and site visits, and facilitation. Examples of airports using those tools and techniques as a part of a recent or ongoing master plan were also identified.

The timing of public / stakeholder meetings during an airport master plan is largely dependent on the type and number of stakeholders, the specific project issues, and the various phases of the master plan itself, transportation planning public involvement guidance is not easily applied (outside of the “early and often” approach). However, examples of airports using project milestones as triggers for public involvement meetings were identified during the literature review. Further, allowing the public to engage during the scoping process is effective in building consensus during the onset of the effort.

SECTION 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions described in Section 5, the following paragraphs summarize recommended additions to AC 150/5070-6b. At the end of the section, Table 1 presents the existing public involvement guidance organization, proposed additions, airports that have recently or are currently using the proposed additions as part of a master plan public involvement program.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of determining if the purpose of a process was achieved (FDOT, 2011). Benefits of evaluating public involvement programs include:

- Identifying public involvement activities that achieve and their tangible results (TRB, 2011)
- Determining whether or not the goals of the program were met (TRB, 2011)
- Determining whether or not resources have been effectively and efficiently allocated (TRB, 2011)
- Determining which activities were ineffective (FDOT, 2011)
- Identifying new public involvement activities (FDOT, 2011).

Evaluation of a public involvement program involves comparing program outputs to established performance measures (FDOT, 2011). Examples of performances measures for a public involvement program include the consensus of the output, the promotion of a democratic process, and whether or not it yielded decisions of technical merit (TRB, 2011).

Evaluation methods may include surveys and quantitative statistical analysis (TRB, 2011). Surveys typically contain targeted questions regarding tools that were used during a public involvement program, and can be conducted in person, over the phone, or via mail / email (TRB, 2011). Statistics, for example, can be used to compare the number of persons attending a public workshop to number notified of the meeting (FDOT, 2011)

Recommendation: add “Evaluation” as a public involvement component to AC 150/5070-6b. Provide a summary of benefits, example performance measures, and evaluation methods as described in this document.

Timing

The airport master plan public involvement program is to begin immediately after the notice to proceed is issued to the project team (FAA, 2007). The main components of an airport master plan: pre-planning, public involvement environmental, existing conditions, aviation forecasts, facility requirements, alternatives development and evaluation, airport layout plans, facilities implementation plan, and financial feasibility analysis (FAA, 2007).

In a limited review of recent and ongoing airport master plans, examples of public / stakeholder meetings occurring after many of the aforementioned master plan components were identified. Additionally, meetings were scheduled around other key events. For example, at PDX, public / stakeholder input was sought during the consultant selection process.

Recommendation: update the “Timing” component of the public involvement guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b. Provide a brief description of benefits realized by conducting public / stakeholder meetings prior to, during, or following all key phases of the master plan.

Emphasize the importance of engaging the public early in the process, specifically during consultant selection and project scoping.

Tools and Techniques

The following tools and techniques have been used by airports in recent or ongoing master plans to disseminate information, receive feedback, and ensure productive meetings: Web 2.0, Selecting an Organizing Feature for a Meeting, Tours and Site Visits, and Facilitation.

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 allows users to participate in the information sharing process, as opposed to Web 1.0, where users passively view information (Vienna Transport Strategies, 2009). Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking sites, wikis, and blogs (Vienna Transport Strategies, 2009). Uses for social media in public involvement include gathering comments and information; monitoring and managing feedback; and updating stakeholders on project information (FDOT, 2011). As identified in Section 3, airports have used social networking sites to communicate meetings times and locations to stakeholders.

Recommendation: add “Web 2.0” as a public involvement tool / technique to AC 150/5070-6b. Provide a brief description of Web 2.0, examples of Web 2.0 formats, and potential uses as outlined above.

Select an Organizing Feature for a Meeting

Specific techniques for organizing meetings help participants think about and discuss issues (FHWA, 2012). Benefits of selecting an organizational feature for a meeting include making the meeting more creative, stimulating, and engaging (FHWA, 2012). Since the public

involvement guidance provided in AC 150/5070-6b is largely based on regular meetings, clearly stating the purpose and intent of the meetings through an organizing feature will encourage more effective meetings.

Recommendation: add “Organizing Meetings” as a public involvement tool / technique to AC 150/5070-6b. Provide a summary of the guidance provided by the FHWA, including the benefits and general descriptions of the different types of organizing features for a meeting described in this document (i.e., brainstorming, visioning, charrettes, and small group techniques).

Tours and Site Visits

Site visits and tours allow the participants to see the physical environment of a plan or project (FDOT, 2011), which in turn helps them understand how plans translate into reality (FHWA, 2012). Site visits give participants a common frame of reference and help people understand each other’s perspective (FHWA, 2012). As described earlier in this document, airports commonly offer tours to the general public and stakeholders during master plans.

Recommendation: add “Tours and Site Visits” as a public involvement tool / technique to AC 150/5070-6b. Provide a summary of the benefits described in this document.

Facilitation

Facilitation is guidance of a group in a problem-solving process (FHWA, 2012). The facilitator is a neutral party whose purpose is to provide procedural help in moving toward a conclusion (FHWA, 2012). Benefits of facilitation include reduced time debating issues, more focused discussions, and more effective consensus building (FHWA, 2012).

Recommendation: add “Facilitation” as a public involvement tool / technique to AC 150/5070-6b. Provide a summary of the guidance provided by the FHWA, including the benefits and purposes of meeting facilitation.

Summary

Table 1 presents a summary of public guidance recommended to be added to AC 150/5070-6b. Airports using these recommended additions in recent or ongoing master plans are also identified.

The existing guidance contained in AC 150/5070-6b is generalized, informational in nature, and applicable to a wide variety of airport master plan public involvement programs. More simply stated, users of the public involvement guidance in AC 150/5070-6b can determine which guidance is applicable to their specific study, and omit that which is not. The recommendations in this document are structured similarly. That is, they are intended to be general, informational, and applicable as appropriate to the specific study.

These recommendations are not intended for use in all airport master plan public involvement programs. They are found in existing transportation planning public involvement guidance. They are also being used, or have been used recently, during airport master plans.

Table 1

Proposed public involvement guidance additions to AC 150/5070-6b

Existing guidance	Proposed additions	Airport examples
Components		
Timing	Add milestones to timing	TPA, SMF, PDX, DPA
Identify the stakeholders	Evaluation	PDX
Identify key issues		
Documentation guidelines		
Tools and techniques		
Committees	Web 2.0	BLI, ISP
Public information meetings	Organizing feature for a meeting	ASE
Small group meetings	Tours and site visits	DFW, ASE, EGE, PDX
Public awareness campaign	Facilitation	PDX, PVD, Z41, ANC, PYM
Identify the stakeholders		
Identify key issues		
Documentation guidelines		

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