

Airport Master Plan Vision and Policy Document

1.0 Introduction

The objective of this vision and policy document is to present the visions and policies that will guide master plan activities. Additionally, the document summarizes the processes used for vision and policy development and explains how the vision themes will be integrated into the master planning process.

DeKalb Peachtree Airport is currently developing a master plan to guide future development of the airport and to ensure that future development is compatible with the environmental needs and the vibrant economy of DeKalb County. The Master Plan is a two-phase effort: Phase I: Public participation, vision and policy, and planning approach; II: Technical studies and master plan adoption.

The Master Plan will:

Guide future development

Plan development that is environmentally and economically compatible

Board of Commissioners Conditions for a Master Plan

On August 24, 2004, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners (BOC) voted to accept Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding for an airport master plan for DeKalb Peachtree Airport. As part of their acceptance of the FAA grant, the Board of Commissioners outlined specific conditions that must be met as airport administration and staff/aviation consultants move forward with the master plan process.

One of these conditions focused on the development of a vision or policy statement. It reads:

“To guide the planning process, the Board of Commissioners will receive the recommendation of the Airport Advisory Board for a vision or policy statement defining the policy of the Board of Commissioners relative to the future direction of the Airport which shall be used to guide the planning process.”

Vision and Policy Development Process

The process of developing a vision and policy statement requires much thought and dialogue. First, historic data was collected to understand the airport’s current policy framework. Then, a series of stakeholder interviews was held with approximately 100 stakeholders, including concerned citizens, airport users, corporate tenants, County staff, the Airport Advisory Board, and the Board of Commissioners. These interviews gathered information from people about their ideas of the airport’s strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Interview discussions were summarized and recurring themes were noted. Vision themes were created to clearly define the airport’s long-range goals. Vision themes will be applied to the second phase of the master plan in three key areas: (1) to give direction to airport technical studies; (2) to supply a

topical framework for community discussion and consensus building; and, (3) to build the foundation for determining priorities and strategies to reach desired outcomes.

2.0 Historic Overview of Policy Initiatives

In February 1992, the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners (BOC) approved a mission statement that has guided management decisions since its adoption. It reads:

Mission Statement and Guiding Principles (1992)

“Our Mission...To Operate a Business Oriented Airport in a Safe, Efficient, and Fiscally Responsible manner and to Preserve the Quality of Life Recognizing a Partnership between Residential and General Aviation Interests.”

“Our Mission...To Operate a Business Oriented Airport in a Safe, Efficient, and Fiscally Responsible manner and to Preserve the Quality of Life Recognizing a Partnership between Residential and General Aviation Interests.”

The airport will serve aviation interests in a manner consistent with the adopted policies and goals of the Board of Commissioners of DeKalb County, including the goals and policies of the (1986) Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the County. The Board of Commissioners shall consult with appointed committees and neighborhood representatives in the development of airport policy. This will be achieved through reasonable and responsible airport management decisions made under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.

There shall be no expansion of current boundaries except when:

- (1) the property is required for safety and can be designated as a permanent green space, or*
- (2) the property is acquired for noise abatement purposes and will be restricted to compatible land use, which does not include expansion of runways and taxiways.*

Guiding principles outlined with this mission statement include:

- To be a world-class general aviation reliever airport while operating under the policy outlined in the approved mission statement.
- To be environmentally sensitive and responsive.
- To comply with federal and state public law governing the operations and obligations of DeKalb County to the flying public.
- To comply with the Board of Commissioners policy, which prohibits scheduled air carriers/airlines from operating at PDK.
- To be an economic generator for DeKalb County and the surrounding metropolitan region.

AAB Recommended Policy Statement (2002)

Ten years later, in 2002, the Airport Advisory Board drafted a new policy statement for consideration by the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners did not adopt this statement.

The statement emphasized “good neighbor” relations with communities and businesses and stressed the need for partnership with the Federal Aviation Administration. Additional emphasis was placed on environmental mitigation and financial self-sufficiency.

3.0 Vision and Policy Themes

Recent stakeholder interviews provided a forum for vision and policy discussions with the airport stakeholder community. The collective values of this diverse population were identified and considered in the formulation of vision and policy themes. Collaboration and consensus building were underlying values in the process.

During the stakeholder interview process associated with the current master plan, seven key vision and policy themes emerged. Each of these vision themes will serve as a goal area for the master plan. The vision and policy themes are:

Vision themes will be integrated into the following areas of the master plan activities:

- *Technical Planning Process*
- *Consensus Building Activities*
- *Decision Making*

1. Safe and efficient airport operations
2. Environmental sensitivity
3. Community relations
4. Financial self-sufficiency
5. General aviation
6. Customer Friendly
7. Effective institutional framework

Each theme is discussed in more detail below.

1. Safe and efficient airport operations

The airport has an overriding responsibility to protect lives and property from the hazards inherent to the movement of people, vehicles and aircraft, as well as threats of fire, crime and terrorism. This vision theme implies that the PDK of the future will be safe, convenient, and easy to use.

Currently, PDK is a general aviation reliever airport for Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. It is the busiest general aviation airport in Georgia, and it serves as a major aviation facility for corporate travel in the southeastern United States.

Maintenance of airport safety, security and efficiency is essential for the continued preeminent position of PDK in regional and national general aviation. The challenge facing airport planners is to maximize safety and efficiency in an era of tighter security needs and to balance airport self-sufficiency and safe operations with environmental sensitivity.

2. Environmental sensitivity

PDK Airport is located in a densely populated noise-sensitive area. There are approximately 1,600 residential units located within the 65 DNL noise contour. The airport, therefore, has an important responsibility to minimize aircraft noise impacts. To date, these concerns have been addressed through flight procedural changes as can be approved and adopted by the FAA and the mitigation of aircraft noise impacts by promoting compatible land use practices and residential sound attenuation measures.

A Noise and Operations Monitoring System (NOMS) has been installed to monitor aircraft noise and help PDK understand its impact on the surrounding community. The Good Neighbor Program has also been developed to further reduce noise levels in the vicinity of the Airport. Components of the program include noise abatement flight procedures, noise monitoring program, voluntary night curfew, preferential runway usage, high noise event threshold, pilot-user flight publications/handouts, and residential land acquisition/relocation.

The BOC and Airport staff understand that aircraft noise is not the only environmental issue involved in the ownership and operation of the airport. The master plan process will consider all environmental issues associated with operating the PDK Airport.

The challenge for the future is to be a good steward of the environment while balancing the need for airport financial self-sufficiency, operational efficiency, and safety.

3. Community relations

Community relations are a critical component of the vision for PDK's future. PDK will continue to strive to be a good neighbor and maintain a strong sense of community during the master plan and beyond. PDK will take a leadership role and promote cooperation and understanding throughout DeKalb County and the immediate, surrounding communities.

PDK continues its commitment to partnering with communities in the airport environs, the Atlanta Region, the State, and beyond. This commitment to community relations underlies the master plan process and the strong focus on public involvement.

One challenge for community relations in the future is to forge an even stronger level of partnership and collaboration. Another challenge is to create an environment where stakeholders can work within a paradigm of

The challenge for the future is to be a good steward of the environment while balancing the need for airport self-sufficiency and safe operations.

trust and consensus building to address difficult issues and topics associated with future development of the airport.

4. Financial self-sufficiency

PDK Airport will continue its practice of maintaining a financial posture of self-sufficiency and strength. PDK will make sound business decisions that serve the County's best interests. PDK will keep an open mind about creative and innovative financing and management techniques that are well suited to the future fiscal environment of the region.

Economic growth and development is another valuable asset associated with PDK Airport. With a thriving airport, the County can maintain its excellent position to attract corporate growth.

The challenge for the future is to enable PDK to maintain financial self-sufficiency through continued airport development while being cognizant of the sensitive environment in which the airport is located.

5. General aviation

It is the Board of Commissioners' and PDK Airport Staff's intent for the PDK of the future to remain a general aviation airport.

It is the Board of Commissioners' and PDK Airport Staff's intent for the PDK of the future to remain a general aviation airport.

Currently, PDK fills an important niche as a reliever airport for Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. PDK attracts general aviation air traffic from HJAIA so that HJAIA can serve the larger commercial air carrier aircraft. In addition, PDK serves an important role in the metropolitan Atlanta economy by servicing corporate aviation needs and by being conveniently located within the metro area.

The challenge for the future is to keep pace with the needs of a corporate fleet and to maintain technology and facilities to service the general aviation community.

6. Customer-friendly

To compete in today's marketplace, it is imperative to focus on operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Customer service is a growing facet of airport management.

Presently, PDK has a number of facility-related challenges, such as a need for additional hangar space and renovation of the administration building. Maintenance of facilities is also important to customer satisfaction. In addition, there is an opportunity to coordinate more closely with land use planning in the county to provide nearby amenities for airport users.

The challenge of the future is to constantly improve services and products for all customers, including vendors, tenants, corporate users, employees, and the general public.

7. Effective institutional framework

A strong institutional framework is important for coordination and communication among county departments and airport decision-makers. The role and responsibilities for these bodies, including the Airport Advisory Board, will be clearly articulated during the master plan development process.

4.0 Summary and Next Steps

With the completion of the vision and policy document and subsequent review and adoption by the Airport Advisory Board and DeKalb County Board of Commissioners, the foundation is laid for master plan technical studies.

The vision themes clearly define the airport's long-range goals. The vision and policy document will be used in conjunction with the public involvement plan as a means to provide structure to the master plan development process.