Defining & Completing the Planning Process

How Planning Sets the Stage for Project Development

Presented to: AirTAP: Airport Project Development Process - From Idea to Award
By: Gina Mitchell, AICP
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Agenda

• Identify connections between planning & environmental processes
  – Identify when / why the process falls apart during an environmental review
  – Discuss key planning items critical to the NEPA process
• Outline what “planning complete” means
• Identify when it is ripe to start the NEPA process
• Group discussion
Connecting Planning & Environmental Processes

- When / Why the process falls apart during an environmental review
  - Incomplete / stale planning
  - Poorly justified projects
  - Sponsor / consultant challenges
    - Staff changes
    - Not understanding environmental requirements are non-negotiable
    - Local politics
    - Viewing NEPA as a separate process
    - “It’s the sponsor’s document”
  - Sponsor expectations
  - Project drift
    - Concept changes / inconsistencies
    - Inability to fully define what the project is or isn’t
  - Time passage
  - Changing project variables (e.g. economics, industry dynamics, FAA guidance)
  - Changes in FAA staffing &/or project oversight
Connecting Planning & Environmental Processes

- Order 5050.4B (Section 503) addresses airport planning information critical to the NEPA process

1. Inventory of existing conditions & facilities
2. ALP showing proposed development
3. Planned project linkages versus independent utility
4. Aircraft operation & enplanement forecasts
5. Design aircraft & fleet mix to accommodate forecasts
6. Airport’s existing capacity to accommodate forecasts
7. Facility requirements needed to accommodate forecasts
8. Timing & phasing of projected necessary airport development
9. Runway utilization & flight tracks
10. Airspace analysis

**These items are necessary to determine when planning is complete!**
What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- ADO role
  - Evaluate grant application for eligibility
  - Participate in technical work group meetings
  - Review & comment on draft & final plans

What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- RFQ for Planning Services (consultant selection)
  - Determine duration – 5 years is the maximum
    - Single project (planning) vs. reasonably, foreseeable projects
  - Specifically include aerial imagery & AGIS in the RFQ’s list of projects
  - Provide a copy of the RFQ to FAA, including name(s) of selected consultant(s)

- Master Plan Scope of Work
  - Start with an outline
    - Identify problems to solve & opportunities to pursue
    - Include tasks to ensure conformance with ALP & Exhibit A SOPs
  - Obtain FAA approval required prior to executing contract
    - Scope of work – coordinate with FAA early
    - Fees – develop & submit to FAA after FAA approves scope of work
What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- Public input obtained on needs & vision for the airport
  - Engage FAA, MnDOT, the public & key resource agencies throughout the planning process
  - FAA will engage tribal governments as appropriate
  - Keys to success – share info & build understanding
    - Near-term & long-term aeronautical need
    - Sponsor’s awareness of environmental resources on or near the airport
    - Alternatives to meet aeronautical need & avoid resource impacts

What Does Planning Complete Mean? (continued)

- Provide meaningful notice for how the public can be informed & stay informed
  - Consider inviting most objecting public to be part of committee(s) – receiving input & building understanding sooner is better than later!
  - Meeting notices
    - Consider personal invites to adjacent landowners most affected
    - Don’t bury “meeting invites” or public hearings only in the public notice section of the paper
    - Consider buying an advertisement to notice meetings
    - Consider having the newspaper work with the sponsor to write an article to notice meetings
What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- **Existing Conditions Inventory**
  - Airfield
  - Landside facilities
  - Operation counts
  - User needs
    - Airport users
    - Area businesses
  - Part 77 & TERPs obstructions

- **Environmental Considerations**
  - Built & natural environment
  - Existing & planned adjacent land uses & local & airport zoning

- **Wildlife Review**
  - Wildlife Hazard Site Visit (WHSV) – an approximate 1-3 day on-site evaluation conducted during a period of time concurrent with significant seasonal wildlife movements
  - Wildlife Hazard Assessment (WHA) – an approximate 1 year-long evaluation may be required if the WHSV determines more significant problems are present or if a "triggering" event occurred at a general aviation airport (i.e., strike, etc.)
  - Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (WHMP) is the product resulting from a WHSV or WHA that identifies efforts to minimize or eliminate problem(s)
  - FAA’s role
    - WHSV or WHA must be accepted by FAA prior to developing a WHMP
    - WHMP is approved by FAA
What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- **Forecasts** – Valid forecast(s) & resulting demand of aircraft operations & enplanements
  - FAA approval required based on consideration of
    - FAA accepted methodologies
    - Consistent with the Terminal Area Forecast (TAF)
  - Update based aircraft status on BasedAircraft.com to feed info reported on the Airport Master Record (5010)
- **Critical Design Aircraft** – FAA reviews & validates aircraft & fleet mix to accommodate forecasts & meet demand

Reaching agreement on the critical design aircraft designation is VERY important – it drives all geometric requirements & impacts how the vision identified in the planning process can be implemented

- Runway design group
- Taxiway design group
- Airport reference code
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• Evaluate the airport’s existing capacity to accommodate forecasts
  - Are existing conditions adequate to address future needs?
  - Identify deficiencies

• Facility Requirements – FAA concurrence obtained based on existing & forecasted needs
  - Near-Term – submit justification identifying & documenting actual need for the specific project
    - Why is the project needed within the next 5 years?
    - Why can’t existing infrastructure accommodate demand?
  - Long-Term – identify anticipated 20-year needs
What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- New or modified land use in Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) requires FAA concurrence
  - An airfield project (e.g. runway extension, runway shift)
  - A change in the critical design aircraft that increases the RPZ dimensions
  - A new or revised instrument approach procedure that increases the RPZ dimensions
  - A local development proposal in the RPZ (either new or reconfigured)

What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- No triggering event – consider in planning process whether an existing RPZ with an encroachment could be brought into compliance
- Triggering event
  - Conforming RPZ proposed – ALP vision demonstrates a reasonable ability to provide a clear RPZ
  - Proposed RPZ impact – RPZ Alternative Analysis required
    - Near-Term (i.e. within 5 years) – ADO, Regional & Headquarters' concurrence required
    - Long-Term (i.e. within 6-20 years) – ADO review required & analysis documented in Master Plan; concurrence required prior to or with environmental document preparation
What Does Planning Complete Mean?

**Approach Minimums**
- Evaluate adequacy & appropriateness of published approaches
- Determine future needs & their impact on existing NAVAIDS
- Consider Part 77 & TERPs impacts

**Runway utilization & flight tracks uses**
- Noise modeling
- Assist with determining IFR demand
- Identify potential conflicts with other nearby airports
- Identify left or right hand traffic patterns

**Obstruction Evaluation / Airport Airspace Analysis (OE/AAA)**
- Process case through online system
- Shadow study of air traffic control tower is proposed
- Coordination with other FAA lines of business
  - Air Traffic
  - Tech Ops
  - Flight Procedures
  - Flight Standards

What impact does your project have on the National Airspace System (NAS)?

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What Does Planning Complete Mean?

**Complete alternative analysis examining & documenting the least environmentally damaging alternative**
- FAA & MnDOT planning staff work together with the sponsor to determine the range of alternatives that exist
- Include the following in analysis
  - Alternatives meeting aeronautical need
    - Consider long-term needs when identifying alternatives to meet near-term need
  - Alternatives representing good tradeoffs between meeting aeronautical need & avoiding / minimizing environmental impacts
    - Consider practicable, possible, or prudent alternatives to avoid specially-protected resources
    - Consider conceptual mitigation to reduce unavoidable environmental effects if no practicable, possible, or prudent alternative exists
  - Alternatives unlikely to be selected when a protected resource will be impacted
  - No-build alternative
What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- Completed alternative analysis examining & documenting the least environmentally damaging alternative (continued)
  - What are the tradeoffs between the alternatives?
  - Document each alternative’s ability to
    - Meet demand & conform to standards
    - Avoid or minimize impacts to built & natural environment
    - Be economically viable
    - Be acceptable to the public
    - Receive political approval

What Does Planning Complete Mean?

- Facility Implementation & Financial Plans – identify
  - Timing & phasing of projected, necessary airport development
    - Planned projects & related triggering events
    - Projects that should be sequenced together
  - Develop a reasonable funding plan, including how the sponsor will provide their local share
  - Update CIP

- Conditional ALP Approval
  - Shows proposed development
  - Airspace analysis completed
When is it Ripe to Start NEPA?

• **FAA determines**
  - Planning process is complete & strong foundation exists for the project(s)
    • Purpose & need
    • Justification
  - Project is AIP eligible – grant can be issued after scope of work is accepted
    • Must occur prior to contract being executed
  - Scope of work for NEPA document is acceptable prior to executing contract between sponsor & consultant

Questions
Contacts for Further Information

– Gina Mitchell, AICP, Community Planner
  • Office: Minneapolis
  • Phone: (612) 253-4641
  • Email: Gina.Mitchell@faa.gov

– Scott Brownlee, Community Planner
  • Office: Bismarck
  • Phone: (701) 323-7383
  • Email: Scott.Brownlee@faa.gov