[MS-0398.030.015.016]

County of San Diego

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AUG 14 1991
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August 13, 1991

TO: Supervisor John MacDonald, Chairman
Supervisor Brian P. Bilbray, Vice Chairman
Supervisor George F. Bailey
Supervisor Susan Golding
Supervisor Leon L. Williams

FROM: Norman W. Hickey
Chief Administrative Officer

IMPERIAL COUNTY REGIONAL AIRPORT STUDY

On Thursday, June 13, 1991, County staff attended a project meeting on the Imperial County Regional Airport study in El Centro. The purpose of the meeting was to review the draft report of the Market Assessment Element of the Imperial County Regional Airport Feasibility Study and to consider a preliminary oral presentation on potential site locations and ground access systems.

The Market Assessment report discusses the passenger airline market for ten airports in southern California and Yuma, Arizona in terms of 1989 actual passenger enplanements and projected enplanements in the year 2005. Assessment forecasts project an overall 67 percent increase over the 1989 figures from 35.3 million passengers to a projected 58.9 million in 2005.

The report develops projections of the number of passenger enplanements that would take place at the Imperial County Regional Airport under three scenarios: (1) Lindbergh Field continuing in full operation; (2) Lindbergh Field closed to commercial operations; and (3) Lindbergh Field providing limited airline service. The third scenario is broken down into two sub-elements: Lindbergh Field providing service to locations within California, and Lindbergh Field providing service to other airports within a 500-mile radius.

All of these scenarios indicate that some level of jet service at the Imperial County Regional Airport could be supported by the time the airport and ground access system could be constructed, solely on the basis of potential passengers. This does not include the economics of the proposed system.

Three potential ground access systems will be considered: high speed rail, very high speed rail, and ultra high speed rail (MAGLEV), which employs a magnetic field to suspend the cars above the guide rails and propel them to their destination. These systems operate at speed ranges of 80-125, 125-200, and 200+ mph respectively.

Potential airport sites under consideration are: one site east of Holtville; one site near the junction of State Highways 86 and 78, which is located within a Military Operations Area; and two sites west of El Centro near the Yuma Desert Recreation Area.

The remaining elements of the feasibility study will be submitted to the Imperial and San Diego County staffs within the next few weeks. The consultant has provided us with a project schedule that provides for the review of the Facility Requirements Element, the Airport Site Analysis Element and Environmental Evaluation Element in mid-August 1991; and the Financial/ Management Program and Plan of Action in mid-September 1991. The next progress report will be submitted to the Board members on or about September 1, 1991.

Please call Roger Walsh, Chief Deputy Director, at 694-2231 if you need additional information.

Respectfully,

NORMAN W. HICKEY
Chief Administrative Officer

cc: Lari Sheehan, DCAO (A6)
Bruce Boland, DCAO (A6)
Department of Public Works (O332)