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**DUAL TRACK AIRPORT
PLANNING PROCESS**

**ENVIRONMENTAL
REVIEW PROCEDURES**

Metropolitan Airports Commission

March 1993





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Overview

A Dual Track Airport Planning Process – designed to study the region’s long-term aviation needs – was established by the Minnesota Legislature’s “1989 Metropolitan Airport Planning Act.” The process is being conducted by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and the Metropolitan Council.

One track addresses ways to provide the needed capacity and facilities at Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport (MSP). The other track provides the needed capacity and facilities at a new (replacement) airport in the Dakota Search Area. A third “no build” option is also being examined, along with other feasible alternatives (e.g. Rochester Airport Study) as they are developed.

MAC is responsible for site selection, preparing a comprehensive plan for an airport on the selected site, developing the MSP Long Term Comprehensive Plan, and preparing the federal and state environmental documentation. The Airport Planning Act also requires the MAC and the Metropolitan Council to make a recommendation to the Legislature in 1996 on which approach should be taken for future airport development.

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PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR 1992 – 1996

1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Site Selection				
	New Airport Comprehensive Plan			
Federal/State Environmental Impact Statements				
Community/Economic Studies				
		MSP Long-Term Comp. Plan Update		
Decision Document				
Public/Agency Coordination				



PLANNING WORK AND ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) is considering environmental impacts as an integral part of the Dual Track Airport Planning Process. The overall Dual Track process includes three major components:

- 1) Development of plans for a new airport;
- 2) Development of plans for MSP; and
- 3) Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and other environmental documents identifying the social, economic

and environmental impacts of each airport alternative, the “no build” alternative, and other feasible alternatives.

An environmental review process has been initiated along with the Site Selection Study for a new airport in the Dakota Search Area and the MSP Long-Term Comprehensive Plan. The process, which was approved by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB), is being co-sponsored by the Federal

Aviation Administration (FAA) and MAC.

The environmental documentation associated with the Site Selection Study provides a record of analysis and of community and agency participation in the process. While the environmental documentation is separate from technical reports on the Site Selection study, the work and timing of tasks on the two processes are necessarily intertwined.



FEDERAL AND STATE PROCESSES

The federal and state environmental documents will include extensive analysis of the impacts and feasibility of:

- New airport site alternatives
- New airport development alternatives
- Existing airport development alternatives
- The “no-build” alternative
- Other alternatives

In addition, the Federal Aviation Administration requires that the following environmental areas be examined:

- 1) Noise
- 2) Compatible land use
- 3) Social impacts
- 4) Induced socio-economic impacts
- 5) Air quality
- 6) Water quality
- 7) Public parks, wildlife refuges, recreation land
- 8) Historic, architectural, archeological and cultural resources
- 9) Biotic communities (including flora and fauna)
- 10) Endangered and threatened species of flora and fauna
- 11) Wetlands
- 12) Floodplains
- 13) Coastal zone management program
- 14) Coastal barriers
- 15) Wild and scenic rivers
- 16) Farmland
- 17) Energy supply and natural resources
- 18) Light emissions
- 19) Solid waste impact
- 20) Construction impacts



STATE AND FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

In March 1992, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) approved an Alternative Environmental Review Process for Dual Track Airport Planning activities.

This process is identical to preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in terms of addressing issues and potential environmental impacts. The procedures are similar to EIS procedures with one major exception, which is the treatment of alternatives.

An Alternative Environmental Document (AED) will substitute for an EIS in site selection for a new airport, the new airport comprehensive plan and the MSP Long Term Comprehensive Plan. The AEDs will be similar to an EIS; however, other reasonable project alternatives and the no-build alternative will not be addressed at this stage. These alternatives will be covered in the final EIS.

The MAC will prepare an AED for each step in the process, culminating in a combined state and federal EIS. Under the EQB process, preparation of these documents involves four steps:

- 1) A scoping process to decide what

impacts and alternatives will be covered in the AED/EIS and the extent of effort and depth of analysis devoted to each topic;

- 2) Preparation of a draft AED/EIS based on the work outlined in the scoping process;

- 3) Public review of the draft AED/EIS and preparation of a final AED/EIS which responds to comments and makes necessary revisions; and

- 4) Determining "adequacy" of the AED/EIS. MAC will determine the adequacy of the AEDs, and the Environmental Quality Board will determine the adequacy of the state EIS. The EQB will review and comment on the Scoping Decision Documents and the AEDs before the Commission adopts a Scoping Decision Document or determines adequacy of an AED.

As indicated, the initial step is scoping, which involves preparation of three documents:

- 1) A **Scoping Document** which uses the standard Environmental Assessment Worksheet to disclose information about the project and its environmental setting so that potentially significant environmental impacts can be identified;

- 2) A **Draft Scoping Decision**

Document which is distributed with the Scoping Document and gives the public a preliminary view of the intended scope of the AED/EIS; and

- 3) A final **Scoping Decision Document** which is prepared after the scoping comment period and is adopted by MAC as the official "blueprint" for the AED/EIS.

FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

A Federal EIS will be required prior to any federal actions implementing the recommendations of the Dual Track Airport Planning Process. Such actions typically include approval of airport plans or expenditures of federal funds. Accordingly, the Dual Track Process is designed to meet both federal and state requirements.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for preparation and processing of the Federal EIS. In order to eliminate duplication with state and local procedures, the Federal EIS will draw extensively from the state AEDs. The Federal requirement for early and open scoping will be met through the state scoping process.



AGENCY AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

All potentially affected local, state and federal agencies were contacted during the first phase of the EIS scoping. At a minimum, the agencies and institutions will receive scoping documents as well as draft and final AEDs and EIS.

At the state level, the legislature established a State Advisory Council to provide a forum for education and discussion on metropolitan airport planning. The Council reviews and advises the legislature on the planning activities of the MAC and Metropolitan Council and will have the opportunity to review all environmental documents, as well as the MAC and Metropolitan Council's final recommendation to the Minnesota Legislature.

The MAC has established a Site Selection Study Technical Advisory Committee to review the accuracy and appropriateness of the technical studies and documents. Representatives of local, state and federal agencies most concerned with the process were invited to participate. This committee

meets regularly throughout the planning/environmental process.

Also invited to participate in the process are representatives of the aviation industry and affected local governmental units. This coordination process will help ensure that the issues and concerns of affected agencies, governmental units and groups will be identified early in the process and adequately addressed in the AEDs and EIS.

In addition, the MAC has established a Site Selection Study Task Force to advise the Commission on policy issues that surface during the new airport studies. The Task Force membership includes local, state and federal agencies, airport tenants and users, and representatives of elected officials, the business community and public interest groups.

A public involvement program provides early and continuing opportunities for the public to be informed and to review and comment on the technical and environmental studies prior to decisions on scoping and the selection of preferred alternatives. This

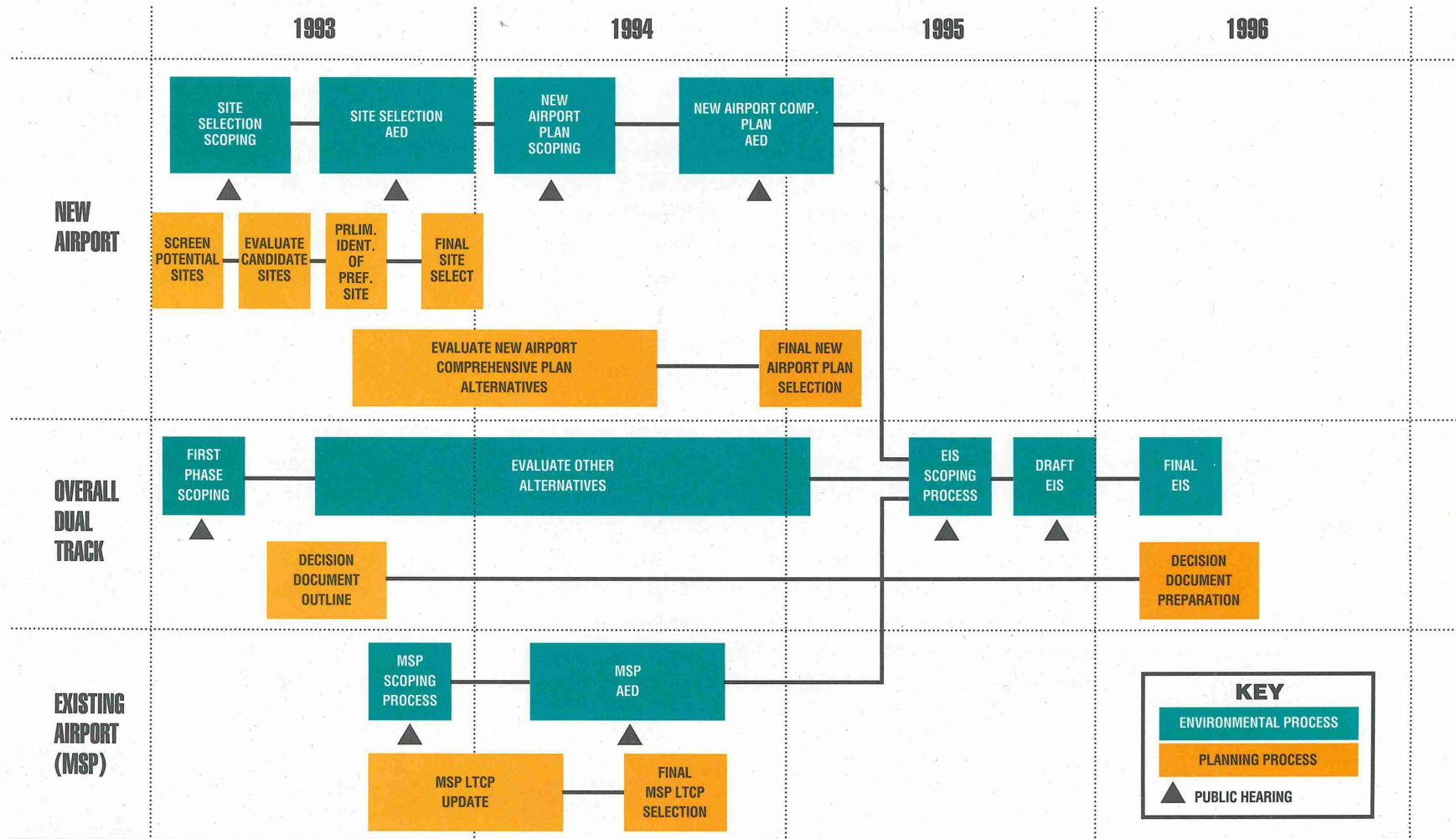
program includes public information meetings, public hearings, news conferences and news releases, informational brochures and newsletters.

Public meetings are being held to inform the public and receive comments at each major step in the process. The reports and documents are available for public/agency review and comment during a 30-day scoping period in accordance with EQB rules on notification and availability. There will also be a 60-day review period for the draft AEDs and the draft EIS.

Meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee and Task Force, as well as Commission meetings, are open to the public. Interested persons can receive copies of published reports and documents upon request.



ENVIRONMENTAL/PLANNING FLOW CHART





GLOSSARY

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

This is a document required by federal (if federal funds or properties are involved) and state law for proposed projects that could have significant impacts on the social, economic and natural environment. The EIS must address the environmental impacts of all reasonable alternatives, including the “no build” alternative, and commit to measures that would mitigate unavoidable adverse impacts.

Alternative Environmental Document (AED).

The AED provides detailed analysis of potential environmental impacts and issues in order to select the “best” of the alternatives under consideration. It is similar to an EIS, but the “no build” alternative and other alternatives and their impacts are not considered. For example, the New Airport Site Selection AED will only address the site alternatives and impacts included in the adopted Scoping Decision Document for the New Airport Site Selection Study.

Scoping Document (SD).

A report that presents the purpose of the project, identifies feasible alternatives, and describes the affected social, economic and natural environment and potential impacts of the alternatives.

Draft Scoping Decision Document (Draft SDD).

The Draft SDD presents the alternatives, issues and impacts that the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) is proposing to study. It's available for public and agency comment on the adequacy of the proposed alternatives, issues and impacts.

Scoping Decision Document (SDD).

The SDD presents the alternatives, issues and impacts that the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) has decided to study in the EIS or AED. The SDD is adopted by the RGU after receiving comments from the public and affected agencies on the Draft SDD.

Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW).

The EAW is the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board's standard form for describing a proposed project and its impacts. It is used to initiate the scoping process for preparation of an AED/EIS.

Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU).

The governmental agency that is responsible for the preparation and review of environmental documents.



APPENDIX

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Paul Rehkamp

For further information on the Metropolitan Airports Commission, please call Jenn Unruh at 726-8189.



Metropolitan Airports Commission

6040 28th Avenue South

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55450