

ORIGINAL

PUBLIC HEARING
IN THE MATTER OF THE
PROPOSED REPLACEMENT AIRPORT
AT ST. GEORGE, UTAH

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Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2005
Time: 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Place: Dixie Center
1835 South Convention Center Drive
St. George, Utah
Reported by Jennifer Sullivan, RPR

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3 MARK A. PERRYMAN: My name is Mark
4 Perryman. I'm with the firm of Landrum & Brown. We
5 were the consultants selected to assist the FAA in
6 preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.
7 What I'm going to do at this time is just give a
8 very brief overview, highlighting a couple of the
9 facets of the Environmental Impact Statement. If
10 you heard me at the introductory boards, you're
11 going to hear a lot of the same material.

12 Basically, the project, the Proposed
13 Replacement Airport for St. George, has been thought
14 about roughly for the last 15 years, since the late
15 '80's, early '90's. There was a site selection
16 study that concluded in 1998 that recommended the
17 site that we are assessing. And an environmental
18 assessment, which is a notch below the Environmental
19 Impact Statement level, was prepared and issued, and
20 the FAA issued a finding of no significant impact
21 or, jargon, you're going to see a lot of that
22 tonight, FONSI, was issued in 2001.

23 Subsequent to that, there was a challenge
24 by the Grand Canyon Trust. The FAA was asked by the
25 Court to go back and take a more comprehensive look

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1 at some of the noise analysis especially relative to
2 Zion National Park. In doing so, the FAA decided to
3 prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and
4 include all additional analysis that the court
5 requested. That's what we're here about tonight.

6 Where we are in the process, our little
7 snake diagram, as we call it. The EA is up here to
8 the upper left. We've gone through a series of
9 scoping processes. The draft document has been
10 prepared. It was released last month, roughly 30
11 days ago. Today we're at our public hearing. The
12 comment period is a 60-day window that will conclude
13 on November 8th. All comments need to be into the
14 FAA by November 8th.

15 From here, we will take a look at those
16 comments. The document will be changed as
17 necessary, additional review and analysis, if
18 necessary, and then the FAA will issue a final
19 Environmental Impact Statement, followed by a record
20 of decision as to what the agency's final decision
21 is. At this point, the FAA has not made a decision.
22 This is merely a disclosure document as to what it
23 is considering in its decision-making process. Then
24 once the FAA makes a decision, the City of
25 St. George can then go forward with design and

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1 construction.

2 A little bit about why -- you already have
3 an airport here in St. George, why do you need
4 another one. This is truly a replacement airport to
5 accommodate the future demand here in St. George and
6 the region around St. George. Currently the airport
7 can only accommodate smaller turboprop aircraft,
8 32-seat or less. There is a great demand. All
9 planes coming in today, for instance, have been sold
10 out. People are wanting to come to St. George;
11 you're wanting to go to other locations. There is
12 definitely a need for additional capacity, a larger
13 aircraft to be able to fly into and out of
14 St. George.

15 The project of building a replacement
16 airport will accommodate that need. That's what it
17 basically comes down to. It doesn't mean that the
18 existing airport is unsafe. It just means that it
19 is restricted to smaller aircraft. That is the
20 bottom line. And larger aircraft are necessary to
21 accommodate the demand.

22 This slide shows the existing airport
23 site. Relative to the proposed airport site, we're
24 about halfway in between, a little bit south of the
25 existing. A little closer view of the proposed site

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1 development. It's a little bit hard to read here.
2 If you want to get up close and personal, there are
3 boards out in the other room where you can look at
4 all the various facilities. It will be a
5 fully-instrumented, fully-developed airport. It
6 will have all the facilities that you have today at
7 the existing airport.

8 Again, coming back to the why, the
9 aircraft on the right is what flies in and out of
10 St. George today. The aircraft on the left here,
11 the regional jet, the 50- and 70-seat regional jet
12 is what is proposed to be flying into the proposed
13 replacement airport in the future.

14 The key to this, and I shouldn't have gone
15 so quick, is relative to noise effects, the new
16 aircraft, the jet, is just as quiet as the
17 turboprop. So there is really little difference.
18 As you can see these little strips of noise contours
19 on either side of the aircraft, there's really
20 little difference relative to noise impacts when you
21 change from one aircraft to the other.

22 You'll hear a lot about noise in this
23 project because of the proximity to a lot of natural
24 resources, most notably Zion National Park, and
25 others, Little Black Mountain to the south, and a

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1 whole host of other parks and recreational
2 facilities. We didn't just look at noise. We
3 looked at all the various aspects. This gives you
4 an idea of some of those that we took a look at in
5 the Environmental Impact Statement process, from
6 land use to solid and hazardous waste issues,
7 construction, how is it going to be constructed.
8 Those are all documented in that three-volume
9 document that sits out on the table in the other
10 room.

11 But to focus a little bit on the noise and
12 just give you an overview of what Scott has on his
13 presentation, if you want to go through it with him,
14 the noise analysis that was conducted as part of the
15 EIS used the latest model available to us, uses the
16 latest methodology. In fact, we worked very closely
17 with the National Park Service at developing
18 protocols and methodologies to meet their needs and
19 demands as we moved forward. I can stand here today
20 and say it's probably the most exhaustive noise
21 analysis, bar none, in the country, especially for
22 an airport this size. There was more noise analysis
23 put into this EIS than there was for the runways
24 at O'Hare in Chicago, for instance. This is very
25 comprehensive.

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1 We started with taking a look at the local
2 area and worked our way out, so the close-in
3 proximity effects of noise. And we looked at the
4 standard that we use for that is day/night average
5 sound level, the DNL. We looked to see how many
6 homes or people were impacted within the 65, which
7 is the federal level of significance. There are no
8 homes within the 65 of the existing airport, and
9 there would be no homes in the 65 of the future
10 airport. So there was no change in total impacts
11 from that perspective.

12 Just to give you an example, these -- turn
13 down these lights a little. The spanning network
14 that we have here is the flight tracks into and out
15 of the existing airport. And they would be very
16 similar for the proposed replacement airport. This
17 is a little zoomed in. That was a wide-angle view.
18 This is a little bit more zoomed in. The existing
19 airport over to the left and the replacement airport
20 over to the right. And showing the relative change
21 in flight tracks and overflight areas.

22 The resulting noise contours, as I
23 described earlier, this is the existing airport and
24 the effects of noise. The yellow band all the way
25 around is 60 DNL, is actually 5 DB less than -- or

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1 greater than what we were required to look at versus
2 the 60 DNL for the proposed replacement airport.
3 Again, those footprints are relatively compact and
4 stay within the confines of the airport.

5 We then took a broader look at the noise
6 effects, started taking a look at what we call the
7 4F303C areas. These are parks and recreation areas,
8 is fundamentally what they are or sites of natural
9 or historic significance. We used the same
10 methodology for these types of properties as we did
11 for Zion National Park.

12 I'll go into that a little bit more. This
13 was the total area of investigation, the initial
14 area of investigation, as we call it. Is that a
15 little better? Just to give you some relative size,
16 this constitutes 9200 square miles that we took a
17 look at in this assessment. It's about 80 by 88
18 miles, 88 miles across and 80 miles north to south.
19 So very broad area that we took a look at and
20 accounted for all the noise effects. Zion is up in
21 the -- toward the upper right-hand corner there.

22 We did some very specific analysis
23 relative to the noise at Zion. We took a look at
24 what's called their natural ambient. The whole
25 purpose here was to make sure that we covered the

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1 cumulative activity, not just the activity from
2 St. George as it is today and as it might be in the
3 future, but we also looked at all the airports in
4 the area, all the high-altitude overflights, all of
5 the air tour operators that transition this area
6 going from Grand Canyon to Zion to Bryce throughout
7 the entire region. All of that was accounted for in
8 our noise analysis in this Environmental Impact
9 Statement. So it's very, very comprehensive.

10 Just to give you some indication, these
11 are the high-altitude flights only that overfly that
12 initial area of investigation that we talked about.
13 And this is a snapshot from one day of high-altitude
14 flights in the area. A little harder to read, but
15 these are the air tour operators that transition.
16 Typically, most of them are coming out of Vegas up
17 through the Grand Canyon, up to Zion or to Bryce.
18 Very few air tour operators actually originate out
19 of St. George.

20 Basically, the bottom line is what's next?
21 We keep hearing that. This has been a very long
22 process, we know. The comment period, as I
23 indicated, will close on November 8th. We intend to
24 have a final document prepared over the winter, rest
25 of this year through winter of '06, and the FAA

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1 anticipates a decision in the spring of next year,
2 spring of '06.

3 That's it for my overview and
4 introduction. If you have more detailed questions,
5 we have a whole host of consultants and FAA
6 personnel out at the boards. Feel free to discuss
7 anything with them, any questions you might have.

8 At this point, because of the process, we
9 will open this up for a formal public hearing.
10 Mr. Thomas will be the hearing officer this evening.
11 His whole purpose here is to help regulate, make
12 sure everyone has the opportunity that wants to
13 speak that can speak.

14 Your comments, whether written or whether
15 given orally, are treated equally. I want to
16 underscore that so that everyone understands that if
17 you don't want to speak you can go out to the table.
18 There's a self-addressed comment form that all you
19 have to do is fold it, either drop it in the box on
20 your way out or take it home and you can write your
21 comment out and mail it in. With that, I'll turn it
22 over.

23 JEFFREY N. THOMAS: Thank you, Mark. Good
24 afternoon. My name is Jeff Thomas. I'd like to
25 welcome you all in the audience to the public

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1 hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement
2 for the Proposed Replacement Airport at St. George.
3 I am the hearing officer for today's hearing,
4 responsible for maintaining order for these
5 proceedings. Looks like a pretty orderly crowd.

6 In compliance with the National
7 Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FAA is
8 providing the public with an opportunity to comment
9 on the analysis of potential environmental impacts,
10 the adequacy of the proposed action and/or the
11 merits of alternatives as presented in the Draft
12 Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed
13 replacement airport. The FAA's response to comments
14 will be included in the Final Environmental Impact
15 Statement. All of the comments, along with prepared
16 responses, will be included in the official public
17 record of the final document.

18 No questions will be answered in the
19 public hearing setting. A public information
20 meeting is going on outside the door in the next
21 room concurrently with this hearing, and your
22 questions can be answered in that area.

23 In addition to making oral comments at the
24 hearing tonight, written comments will also be
25 accepted through Tuesday, November 8th, 2005, when

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1 the official comment period will be closed. Comment
2 forms are located in the meeting room next door. If
3 you wish to complete the form at home, mail or fax
4 it in, the form is pre-printed, and the mailing
5 address is on the form. Comments can also be
6 e-mailed to the e-mail address on the form.

7 The process for making oral comments at
8 this hearing will be as follows: We'll listen to
9 each and every person who wishes to provide oral
10 comments, and the hearing will remain open until
11 everyone who has registered to speak has had the
12 opportunity to do so. If you have not already done
13 so, you may register to speak at the table near the
14 entrance to the outer room. Registration enables
15 the record of your comments to be correctly
16 attributed to you.

17 In keeping with the hearing protocol, each
18 speaker will be allocated up to three minutes.
19 Those wishing to speak will only be allowed to sign
20 up once to provide oral comments. If you have
21 additional comments that exceed your allotted time,
22 please mail, fax or e-mail them as indicated on the
23 comment forms.

24 The order of the people that will speak
25 will be the order in which they signed up on the

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1 sign-up sheet with special consideration given to
2 elected public officials who will be given priority.

3 To be respectful of everyone's time, I
4 will be enforcing the three-minute limit to ensure
5 that everyone who wishes to speak gets the
6 opportunity to speak and has an equal opportunity.
7 When your name is called, please come forward and
8 make your comments. Begin by confirming your name
9 for the record. We will now officially open the
10 public hearing.

11 The first speaker, Mike McClure.

12 MIKE McCLURE: Thank you. Mike McClure,
13 representing The Paladin Group. The following
14 comments are to correct inaccurate statements
15 contained in the Draft EIS in Chapter Four, page 4,
16 under the title "Cedar City Regional Airport (CDC)."

17 Comment 1. Paragraph 1; lines 5 and 6.
18 The correction should indicate that the new
19 \$6,000,000 passenger terminal complex at CDC has
20 been completed.

21 Comment 2. Paragraph 2; lines 2 and 3.
22 The correction should indicate that the driving time
23 between St. George Boulevard and Main Street in
24 Cedar City on Interstate Highway 15 is 42 minutes at
25 the legal speed limit.

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1 Note: The drive time to many major
2 airports in the United States from surrounding areas
3 is in excess of 42 minutes.

4 Comment 3. Paragraph 2; line 5. The
5 correction should indicate that CDC provides 3 daily
6 flights, not one, to Salt Lake City.

7 Comment 4. Paragraph 2; line 8. The
8 comment related to "market preference" does not
9 consider that at the halfway point between the two
10 cities the drive time actually favors CDC, as street
11 traffic in St. George is considerably heavier.

12 Comment 5. Paragraph 3; line 3. The
13 correction should indicate that should SGU continue
14 to operate from its current location, it would have
15 to do so with the present aircraft whereas CDC could
16 operate today servicing regional jets and other
17 large aircraft. The correction should indicate that
18 SGU would not be able to provide its current level
19 of commercial service if the FAA were to withdraw
20 the current safety exemption allowance.

21 Final Comment: Spending \$100,000,000 to
22 \$200,000,000 for a new airport in St. George, when
23 the Cedar City Regional Airport currently has a far
24 superior capability to service the flying public, is
25 a ridiculous waste of taxpayer dollars. This is

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1 especially true when considering the money needed
2 for hurricane relief, the continuing war against
3 terror, and natural catastrophes such as the
4 earthquake in Pakistan. Is convenience to two or
5 three thousand people in St. George really worth
6 that amount of money?

7 JEFFREY N. THOMAS: Thank you.

8 Roxie Sherwin.

9 ROXIE SHERWIN: Hi. I'm Roxie Sherwin
10 with the St. George Area Convention and Visitors
11 Bureau. They told me I had five minutes since we're
12 a government entity; is that correct, or should I
13 read really fast?

14 JEFFREY N. THOMAS: Read really fast.

15 ROXIE SHERWIN: The St. George Area
16 Convention and Visitors Bureau is a function of
17 Washington County government and funded through the
18 collection of transient room tax. Our mission is to
19 promote Washington County as a premier convention
20 and tourist destination; stimulate tourism's
21 economic impact; and unify partners to maximize the
22 visitor's experience.

23 The CVB works with other organizations
24 across the state such as Utah Office of Tourism,
25 Utah Travel Industry Coalition, Southern Utah

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1 National Parks, Zion Natural History Association,
2 Utah Travel Regions, Washington County Museums,
3 local chambers and lodging groups to jointly promote
4 tourism in Southern Utah as well as the entire
5 state.

6 The St. George Area Convention and
7 Visitors Bureau does support the need for the new
8 proposed replacement airport, however has concerns
9 for the potential impact of noise and other
10 distractions that may adversely affect some of the
11 most spectacular scenery and historic sites in the
12 world.

13 Utah is part of a global economy inviting
14 domestic and international business and travel
15 markets to Southern Utah. Since 9/11, we have seen
16 continued growth of the tourism markets into our
17 area. Zion National Park is reporting the highest
18 visitation in the past ten years. 2004 was the
19 busiest year on record with nearly 2.7 million
20 visitors finding safety, variety, hospitality, value
21 and unsurpassed beauty.

22 Sports, adventure, arts and events are all
23 seeing unprecedented interest and growth. The
24 St. George area is listed in "100 Best Art Towns in
25 America" and in the top 10 for retirement



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1 communities, active communities and best unknown
2 golf getaways in the United States.

3 The Canyon Softball Complex has been NSA's
4 facility of the year for the last seven years,
5 hosting 40 softball events annually. St. George
6 Marathon is the 15th largest marathon and was named
7 one of the 10 most scenic.

8 Regarding the dinosaur prints, quoting
9 Gerald Gerlinski from the Polish Geological
10 Institute, "The St. George collection is going to be
11 the most important in the world for research on
12 early Jurassic footprints." Dr. James Kirtland,
13 Utah State Paleontologist, says, "This is the most
14 significant dinosaur track site in western North
15 America."

16 The convention industry is a growing
17 economic engine in the area. Our location is
18 central for western meetings and growing more
19 popular for national meetings and events. In 2004,
20 the Dixie Center, convention hotels and other
21 meeting venues brought in over 150,000 meeting
22 delegates that stayed for an average of 2.5 days.
23 The convention center has seen continued growth in
24 bookings since opening in '98 and is considering
25 doubling our meeting space to coincide with the

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1 opening of the proposed airport.

2 One common concern with many groups is the
3 lack of a major airport in the area. There are only
4 240 seats daily into St. George through the current
5 flight capacity, not enough to handle the needs of
6 groups over 500. This past month, the influx of
7 over 20,000 Senior Games and 12,000 marathon
8 visitors put a heavy load on the airport. Many
9 events and conventions are limited by available
10 venues, hotels and air transportation. With the
11 growth that is occurring, more hotels and venues
12 will be built, thus increasing the need for more air
13 transportation into the city.

14 The convention and tourism industry is
15 changing rapidly with the advent of new technology.
16 The need to continually update venues and elevate
17 marketing goals to accommodate and plan for the
18 future, while preserving our National Parks and
19 Historic Sites is crucial. The great weather, golf,
20 attractions and especially the spectacular beauty of
21 Zion National Park make this area an inviting
22 tourist and business destination worldwide.

23 Consideration for all these factors needs
24 to be carefully reviewed to find the best possible
25 solutions for all. Thank you.

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1 JEFFREY N. THOMAS: Voin Campbell.

2 VOIN CAMPBELL: I appreciate your time and
3 opportunity to comment. My name is Voin Campbell.
4 I also am a member of the Action Committee of the
5 Chamber of Commerce and the chairman of the
6 Environmental Subcommittee. I will make just some
7 brief comments today and will follow-up later with
8 written comment.

9 The Action Committee of the Chamber of
10 Commerce strongly endorses and supports the City's
11 proposed replacement airport. We have looked at the
12 data that has been made available up to this point
13 and are satisfied that the City is quite capable of
14 meeting all of the standards of safety and also can
15 develop routes that will not be disruptive to the
16 parks and other areas of particular interest.

17 This replacement airport is absolutely
18 fundamental to the continued economic growth and the
19 future of the area generally. We believe that
20 St. George is now a staging point for many tourists
21 who travel through these parts and enjoy them. And
22 as a replacement airport comes in, it will be an
23 even greater friend of these parks in providing
24 staging points for travel to and from these areas of
25 interest.

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1 We appreciate your efforts to meet the
2 requirements that are necessary for us to get on
3 with the construction of this airport. I thank you
4 for your time.

5 JEFFREY N. THOMAS: Thank you.

6 Eric DeVita.

7 ERIC DeVITA: Good afternoon. Appreciate
8 you taking the time to listen to the folks out here.
9 I missed the first little bit, but sure sounds like
10 most of the folks are going to be in here arguing
11 the value of an airport, a large metropolitan type
12 airport, folks who run businesses who are looking
13 for that growth of 600,000 people in the next 20 to
14 30 years. Same folks that want that large project
15 of pumping the water in here from the lake. Let's
16 watch real estate prices grow another 20 percent
17 every year for the next five to 10 years.

18 I got to tell you, as a guy who lives here
19 and a guy who moved here a couple of years ago to a
20 small community, I look at it from the other side
21 and say I'm not sure that I want the place to be
22 600,000 people. I'm not sure that I want a regional
23 airport here. What I love having is 30 miles away a
24 regional airport in Mesquite. The second largest
25 runway I think in Utah is where? From what I've

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1 read, I think it's up in Cedar City. I think that's
2 45 miles away. So I would argue that what you have
3 today available for regional transportation very
4 close to St. George is very acceptable and is going
5 to be even better. I'm not sure that we need that
6 here.

7 You guys are the environmental folks, but
8 I got to tell you that even in the last couple of
9 years, if you look around here, you've seen,
10 particularly with the construction going on,
11 visibility has dropped dramatically just in the last
12 couple of years. Traffic has gotten tremendous.

13 My property taxes. Always tell everybody
14 going to be self-sufficient, it will be paid for
15 with something else. Everyone knows as well as I do
16 that any time you build a new public infrastructure
17 like this, whatever the cost is going to be, you
18 probably need to add another quarter or 50 percent
19 on top of that. So I worry about what happens when
20 the property taxes have gone up about 40 percent for
21 water this year and 20 percent for schools. That's
22 in one year, let alone with the new assessment that
23 you're going to get.

24 I'm just worried about the cost of it, the
25 traffic that it's going to bring, and the change

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1 it's going to make to St. George. I would argue
2 that having a nice airport in somebody else's back
3 yard 30 miles away would benefit us greatly with
4 less impact. Thanks.

5 JEFFREY N. THOMAS: Thank you.

6 At this point, we have no one else who has
7 signed up. Are there any others in the audience who
8 wish to make oral comments? We'll close the hearing
9 now and restart it on the top of the hour.

10 (First segment of hearing
11 adjourned at 3:33 p.m.)

12 (4:00 p.m. segment begins.)

13 MARK A. PERRYMAN: My name is Mark
14 Perryman. I'm with the firm of Landrum & Brown. We
15 were the consultants selected to assist the FAA in
16 preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.
17 What I'm going to do at this time is just give a
18 very brief overview, highlighting a couple of the
19 facets of the Environmental Impact Statement. If
20 you heard me at the introductory boards, you're
21 going to hear a lot of the same material.

22 Basically, the project, the Proposed
23 Replacement Airport for St. George, has been thought
24 about roughly for the last 15 years, since the late
25 '80's, early '90's. There was a site selection