CALIFORNIA AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN

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Overview

The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Aeronautics (DOA) prepares the various 'Elements' that collectively make up the California Aviation System Plan (CASP). Because the State of California does not own or operate any of the 246 public use airports in the State, the DOA assumes an oversight role in helping integrate airports and heliports into multimodal transportation planning. The primary goal is for all Californian's to enjoy the economic, public safety, and recreation benefits of a fully integrated system of air facilities.

Background

The State's aeronautics program was established by the Legislature in 1947 and given statutory mandates to help "...protect the public interest in aeronautics and aeronautical progress..." (Public Utilities Code §21002). Since that time, the DOA has strived to integrate the benefits of aviation into the fabric of California communities.

Airports, with aviation-minded communities, are taking on a role of economic enterprise hubs, employment centers, mixed use commercial business centers, bulk cargo transfer centers, multimodal transportation hubs, and more. Airports continue to be vital economic engines supporting the business and air transportation needs of their region in a responsive, time-sensitive manner.

Today's global economy is increasingly dependent upon time-sensitive delivery of goods and services. All around the world, airports are expanding their role as a focal point for business and community activities while concurrently netting substantial economic returns. Yet many of California's public use airports are underutilized, largely because they are not perceived, planned or operated as community or regional commerce centers. Furthermore, many struggle from a lack of necessary transportation infrastructure needed to expand their use into a robust business hub.

In support of advancing aviation's regional benefits, the DOA helps local governments understand how to protect air facilities from incompatible land use development while encouraging aviation-compatible uses. It also works towards an integrated system of air facilities that are well connected to other transportation facilities. A goal of these efforts is to link California communities with easy access to global markets and destinations through air facilities.

Purpose of Aviation Integration

The DOA is working with community leaders to redefine California aviation as a valuable hub of economic and civic activity. At the heart of this is an integrated transportation system that quickly and easily moves goods and people from traditional downtown cores to aviation-compatible mixed developments at airports.

One reason airports work so well as business and community hubs is that uses can be scaled to match the vision of the community around them. Regardless if the airport is a large

commercial carrier hub or a small general aviation facility, it usually has the potential to match the needs of the community it's connected to. A well-connected and community-planned airport can:

- Promote economic growth
- Encourage job creation
- Increase transportation mobility choices
- Provide a high rate of return for limited infrastructure investments

Updating the CASP

The various CASP elements are adapting to meet the needs of contemporary multimodal transportation planning. The DOA is involved in:

- New research linking airport capacity with multimodal transportation.
- Studies that investigate how to co-utilize highway and aviation weather equipment to affect greater safety for both modes of travel.
- Research that investigates how to better integrate aviation assets within civil emergency response and recovery processes.
- Better incorporation of aviation needs in Regional Transportation Plans and community plans such as General Plans, Specific Plans and zoning codes.
- Regular review of environmental documents for impacts on airports.
- Training and oversight of airport land use compatibility planning.

At no time has this effort been more important than with the initial framing of the California Interregional Blueprint, a comprehensive plan to integrate California's transportation planning. All of these efforts will be rolled into future publications of the CASP, as well as other transportation planning programs, as appropriate.

So as we continue to improve and redefine multimodal transportation, expect to see an increased aviation presence. Just as other countries and States have begun to better integrate aviation into the core of their regional plans, so too is California beginning to re-capitalize on the benefits of modern aviation.

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