Cuyahoga County Airport
FAQ:

What is the role of the County Airport?

Cuyahoga County Airport is a key part of Northeast Ohio's air transportation network and a major employment center. The airport's property is located in Richmond Heights and Highland Heights in Cuyahoga County, and Willoughby Hills in Lake County, and employs thousands of local workers. As part of an update of the airport's master plan, the airport's economic benefits to the region were analyzed. In 2005, a survey was taken of businesses near the airport and in the Greater Cleveland area. The survey results showed that Cuyahoga County Airport is a vital piece of our region's economy:

- Three thousand employees (with more than 1,000 of these employees working on the airport campus);
- Annual payroll of $150 million (including benefits);
- Average salary: $50,000.

The airport's indirect economic effects were estimated to be:

- 1,500 additional local retail and service jobs;
- $35 million in total additional payroll in local retail and service firms;
- $175 million in annual expenditures at local retail and service establishments.

Because of the proximity of Cleveland Hopkins, operating scheduled service out of the County Airport is not feasible. The airport instead focuses on general and corporate aviation. The airport is home to a commercial office park with six office buildings, an administrative/safety service complex, a fixed-base operator (a commercial enterprise that provides support services to aircraft operators), hangar facilities, a flight school, restaurant, an FAA-contracted air traffic control tower, and an 18-hole golf course.

Businesses with direct access to the airfield range from corporate hangars to the headquarters for a national fractional aircraft ownership company. In 2003, the airport recorded an average of approximately 190 aircraft operations per day, and continues to operate as a reliever to Hopkins.

How are environmental issues and concerns considered in an airport master plan update?

An overview of environmental issues and concerns is part of the airport master plan update process. The purpose of the overview is to look at the existing environmental conditions at the airport and in the surrounding communities. The goal is to identify environmentally sensitive areas that may require special management, conservation and/or preservation during the planning, design, and construction of any proposed airport improvement projects that result from the update of the airport's master plan.

Potential environmental impacts (to either the natural or the socioeconomic environment) may include issues relating to air or water quality, endangered species, aircraft noise, historic and cultural resources, and socioeconomic effects, among others. As the master plan update progresses, environmental impacts and associated mitigation will be important considerations when developing improvements to the airport. Before any new development occurs as a result of the master plan, an additional, detailed environmental study, called an environmental assessment, is required under federal law.

What is involved in an environmental assessment?

An environmental assessment is an additional, comprehensive environmental analysis that typically takes between 12 to 18 months to complete. At the conclusion of this environmental study process, which also involves extensive public outreach and public involvement, a determination will be made as to whether or not the airport improvements proposed in the airport master plan update may proceed, and be partially funded through FAA grants.

How are airfield alternatives evaluated?

The master plan update study includes an analysis of runway configurations at Cuyahoga County Airport using various data. Upon completion of this phase, which includes work completed for determining facility requirements, there were more than thirty alternatives proposed to the airport. These options were developed following meetings and discussions with the airport's Technical and Community Advisory committees, seven specialized areas of interest focus groups, representatives of the Federal Aviation Administration, the Cuyahoga County Department of Development, and airport management staff.

During the selection of an alternative phase, there were many issues that were examined, including:

- Airport safety improvements
- Current and potential aircraft operations
- Siting navigational equipment
- Land acquisition
- Noise impacts
- Potential road relocations and traffic impacts
- Initial environmental reviews
- Financial considerations

Selection of a preferred alternative is essential to determine additional airside and landside facility requirements. The preferred alternative identified through the master plan study effort will include an addition of 900 feet to the runway length and runway safety areas that meet FAA-required design standards.

How is aircraft noise exposure evaluated?

The FAA has developed a single method for assessing and illustrating aircraft noise exposure at airports throughout the country. The FAA requires that this method be used in all noise analyses conducted in planning studies at U.S. airports. It is the Integrated Noise Model (INM), a computer program that calculates and produces a graphical depiction of the degree of aircraft noise experienced by people located at various locations near an airport.

A careful assessment of the aircraft activity that occurs on an average day laid the groundwork for developing noise exposure contours for the base year of 2003 at Cuyahoga County Airport. These contours represent more than a thousand lines of input for the volume of daytime and nighttime operations of 26 aircraft types on 42 flight tracks averaged for the year.

The model produced noise contours using the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) for levels from DNL 50 dB to DNL 85 dB. Residential and other noise sensitive uses are considered incompatible in areas of DNL 65 dB and higher.

How does the FAA evaluate and value property for acquisition (whether for purchase of property or easements)?

For construction or expanding an airport, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) encourages an airport owner to use its own land. However, when additional land is needed for project purposes, the purchase of private land may become necessary. The FAA explains how and why local government acquires real property for public airports in a brochure called *Land Acquisition for Public Airports*. The following is a link to this document which provides general information to persons who own or rent real property that is to be acquired for airport development or noise compatibility projects that receive Federal financial assistance:

http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/environmental/relocation_assistance/media/land_acquisition_public_airports.doc

The brochure describes basic rights of a property owner or renter upon the acquisition of property for a public airport, and also describes the relocation assistance and payment eligibility for displaced persons.