

CITY OF PALMER ACTION MEMORANDUM No. 09-032

SUBJECT: Approve the 2009 Palmer Municipal Airport Master Plan Update

AGENDA OF: May 19, 2009

Council action:
<div style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; padding: 2px 10px; color: red;">Approved</div>

Approved for presentation by B. B. Allen, City Manager *B. B. Allen*

Route To:	Department/Individual:	Initials/Date:	Remarks:
X	Originator – Airport Manager	<i>BB</i> 5/6/09	
X	City Clerk	<i>JR</i> 5/11/09	
X	City Attorney	<i>[Signature]</i> 5/11/09	
	Director of Administration		
	Director of Community Development		
	Director of Community Services		
	Director of Public Safety		
	Director of Public Works		

Attachment(s): Palmer Municipal Airport Master Plan
Summary Airport Operational Assessment

Certification of Funds:

X	No fiscal impact.	
	Funds are budgeted from this account number:	
	Funds are not budgeted. Budget modification is required. Affected account number:	

Director of Administration Signature: *Kelli Vleck*

Summary statement: The City Manager received approval to retain Dowl Engineers to prepare an Airport Master Plan on September 11, 2007. This Master Plan represents over 16 months of consultant and staff work along with over 12 opportunities for public comment with 4 specific updates/workshops to the Public or Airport Advisory Commission. The Airport Advisory Commission has reviewed both sections of this plan and has submitted comments which have been incorporated into this final draft. The Master Plan is a required document for future FAA grant funding for the airport. It is expected to be followed by a contract to incorporate Master Plan recommended safety and operational improvements into an updated Airport Layout Plan. The Master Plan document reviews Palmer’s inventory of improvements in order to determine future needs. The Plan looks formally at the economic impact of the airport and forecasts

aviation activity. The Plan estimates the improvements needed to meet the forecast, analyzes alternative development concepts and provides guidance for future environmental work and capital costs. The Plan contains specific appendixes for Public Involvement, Instrument Approaches, Cost Estimate and Environmental information references.

The Summary Operational Assessment discusses airport business operations and the administration of the airport. It looks forward towards a new lease form and a revised City of Palmer Municipal Airport Ordinance. Both of these documents will require more analysis and public discussion before the detailed wording is settled. The consultants have prepared good starting drafts of both documents, but the final workings need to be carefully prepared, analyzed and then submitted for action.

The last formal document you received from City Staff with regard to this Master Plan contained some recommendations that were not approved by the City Manager. The plan before you is approved and recommended for Council adoption. The topics that were not recommended last summer are specifically addressed below so that the Council can be aware of how these were reconciled.

July 8, 2008 the City Manager wrote: "The following are excerpts of recommendations that I have discussed with the contractor about the plan and my objection or disagreement with portions of it."

1.1 **City Manager Comment: *Airport Operating Philosophy*** - The operating philosophical approach of the airport should first and foremost be to "operate the airport giving the highest priority to the best interest of the City. Activities of the airport that generate revenue to the City are desirable, however, not at the risk of diminishing quality of life for the residents of the City. It is the objective of this administration to find a compromise in developing economic activity at the airport without sacrificing the peaceful domiciles of our residents.

Comment: This Airport Master Plan carries specific language regarding the desirability of operating the Airport in a balanced manner, and as an integrated function of the City of Palmer. The City Council has charged the City Manager to balance demands made upon the Citizens of Palmer from all departments. The airport is a team player in this Master Plan.

3. **City Manager Comment: *Effective Organization for the Airport*** - I disagree that the Airport Manager should have the final say in establishing the priority and timeliness of services provided to the airport by other city departments. The City Manager will maintain control of the management and delivery of City services at all times.

Comment – This Master Plan and the comments of the Airport Advisory Commission affirm the management concept for the airport as one of being integrated into all City of Palmer operating departments.

3.1 **City Manager Comment: *Balancing management of departments within the city*** - It is the goal of the administration to achieve twin objectives in the operation of the airport, i.e. self-sufficiency and economic development. However, it is imperative that the Palmer City Council approve the operating and planning policy for the airport prior to making dramatic and sweeping organizational changes. Once direction has been advanced by the Council, an organization structure will be

developed by the administration to implement and support that policy.

Comment: Direction has been received and incorporated into this Master Plan that incremental improvements over time – with full Manager and Council concurrence will be the method to establish operating improvements, such as lease modifications or Airport Ordinance modifications. The Airport Advisory Commission affirmed their support of incremental, logical changes to existing operations rather than wholesale operating changes.

3.2.1 City Manager Comment: *Airport Advisory Commission* - I do not agree that the Airport Advisory Commission needs to be reconstituted at this time. In future years when the airport becomes a more active and complex operation, the City should consider this recommendation. In fact, it may be in the City's best interest to form an operating alliance with other small airports in the region, but the timing is not appropriate at this juncture.

Comment: This Master Plan does not recommend an authority or semi-autonomous operating scheme for Palmer Municipal Airport. Once training, cost and duplicative functions were reviewed the benefits of operating as an integrated department of the city of Palmer became evident.

3.3.1 City Manager Comment: *Enhances Airport Manager Authority* - The Airport Managers authority does not need to be changed at this time.

Comment – Regular meetings with the City manager is the practical solution for the concerns that originally justified this initial request. There is no recommendation to change the authority of the City of Palmer Airport Manager in this Master Plan.

4. City Manager Comment: *Upgrade Airport Maintenance and Operations* - - Steps have been taken to improve maintenance and operations at the airport by utilizing experienced equipment operators recently retired from City service. These employees will be dedicated to airport maintenance and operations only, and will be supervised by the Public Works Director of the City.

Comment: - Numerous operational improvements have led to increased support from Airport tenants over the last 16 months. Continued maintenance improvements, within the present operational scheme of the Airport, are the recommended approach in this Master Plan.

5. City Manager Comment: *Airport Land Use Zoning* - The zoning issues currently implemented are satisfactory and not recommended for change until a cause to do so is evident.

Comment – The Airport Advisory Commission and City staff believe that the mechanisms used by the Planning and Zoning Commission are the best tools to implement land use changes at the Airport. This will be accompanied with improved communication of the need to match land use zoning with the FAA approved Airport layout Plan.

6.2 City Manager Comment: *Building Permits – Increase Airport Manager approvals* – The Airport Manager will be included in the plan review to assure

compliance with FAA regulations.

7. City Manager Comment: Airport Rates – The rates and fees are currently under review and adjustments in the fee structure will be recommended to the Council based on the ability of Palmer Airport to maintain competitive fees.

Comment – New rates are proposed for the airport based upon an upcoming appraisal of land value.

8.1.3 City Manager Comment: Insurance and Indemnity - The total insurance package is under review and a recommendation will be made to the City Council in the near future.

Comment: Insurance requirements for future leases are changing the balance of competitiveness and risk to the City of Palmer. This Master Plan lays out the issues but a full resolution of insurance provisions will not be completed until later this summer after considerable further analysis and discussion.

In July 2008 the City Manager concluded his MEMORANDUM with the words – “Mayor and Members, the balance of recommendations found in the Palmer Municipal Airport Master Plan document which I have not addressed in this letter are either currently under advisement or have been found to be acceptable to the administration.”

Comment – This Master Plan is now acceptable and is recommend for passage.

Administration recommendation: Authorize action memorandum no. 09-032.