Developing and Maintaining Support for Your Airport Capacity Project

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AIRPORT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

ACRP REPORT 85

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AIRPORT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

Airports are vital national resources. They serve a key role in transportation of people and goods and in regional, national, and international commerce. They are where the nation's aviation system connects with other modes of transportation and where federal responsibility for managing and regulating air traffic operations intersects with the role of state and local governments that own and operate most airports. Research is necessary to solve common operating problems, to adapt appropriate new technologies from other industries, and to introduce innovations into the airport industry. The Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) serves as one of the principal means by which the airport industry can develop innovative near-term solutions to meet demands placed on it.

The need for ACRP was identified in *TRB Special Report 272: Airport Research Needs: Cooperative Solutions* in 2003, based on a study sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The ACRP carries out applied research on problems that are shared by airport operating agencies and are not being adequately addressed by existing federal research programs. It is modeled after the successful National Cooperative Highway Research Program and Transit Cooperative Research Program. The ACRP undertakes research and other technical activities in a variety of airport subject areas, including design, construction, maintenance, operations, safety, security, policy, planning, human resources, and administration. The ACRP provides a forum where airport operators can cooperatively address common operational problems.

The ACRP was authorized in December 2003 as part of the Vision 100-Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act. The primary participants in the ACRP are (1) an independent governing board, the ACRP Oversight Committee (AOC), appointed by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation with representation from airport operating agencies, other stakeholders, and relevant industry organizations such as the Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA), the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), Airlines for America (A4A), and the Airport Consultants Council (ACC) as vital links to the airport community; (2) the TRB as program manager and secretariat for the governing board; and (3) the FAA as program sponsor. In October 2005, the FAA executed a contract with the National Academies formally initiating the program.

The ACRP benefits from the cooperation and participation of airport professionals, air carriers, shippers, state and local government officials, equipment and service suppliers, other airport users, and research organizations. Each of these participants has different interests and responsibilities, and each is an integral part of this cooperative research effort.

Research problem statements for the ACRP are solicited periodically but may be submitted to the TRB by anyone at any time. It is the responsibility of the AOC to formulate the research program by identifying the highest priority projects and defining funding levels and expected products.

Once selected, each ACRP project is assigned to an expert panel, appointed by the TRB. Panels include experienced practitioners and research specialists; heavy emphasis is placed on including airport professionals, the intended users of the research products. The panels prepare project statements (requests for proposals), select contractors, and provide technical guidance and counsel throughout the life of the project. The process for developing research problem statements and selecting research agencies has been used by TRB in managing cooperative research programs since 1962. As in other TRB activities, ACRP project panels serve voluntarily without compensation.

Primary emphasis is placed on disseminating ACRP results to the intended end-users of the research: airport operating agencies, service providers, and suppliers. The ACRP produces a series of research reports for use by airport operators, local agencies, the FAA, and other interested parties, and industry associations may arrange for workshops, training aids, field visits, and other activities to ensure that results are implemented by airport-industry practitioners.

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FOREWORD

By Joseph D. Navarrete
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ACRP Report 85: Developing and Maintaining Support for Your Airport Capacity Project provides succinct and thoughtful guidance to help airport sponsors respond to the many challenges they face when undertaking a significant capacity improvement project. The guidance recognizes that building support must occur early in the process and that, just as importantly, *maintaining* support is also key to successful implementation, since large capital projects can take many years to accomplish. The guidebook is designed for quick reference with each chapter featuring a "Key Takeaways" section.

Successful delivery of new airport capacity projects (including new runways and runway extensions, airspace improvements, terminal expansion, and ground access improvements) can take many years. Such projects are most likely to succeed with steady support from airport sponsors, political constituencies, airport users, interest groups, regulatory agencies, and nearby communities. Many airports need guidance to help them identify, mobilize, maintain, and broaden support, and to deal constructively with project opposition.

This research, led by Futterman Consulting and Mead & Hunt, Inc. under ACRP Project 03-21, began with the identification of numerous large-scale capacity projects representative of various airport types (e.g., major hub airports, general aviation airports) and project types, ranging from new airports to new runways and terminals. The research team then conducted many in-depth interviews with those directly involved with these projects, including airport staff, airport board members, representatives from FAA local offices and headquarters, airline directors, community groups, and others. The research team then developed their guidance based on these interviews and their professional experience.

The guidebook is divided into five chapters, with Chapter 1 describing the guidebook's organization. Chapter 2 outlines a typical project lifecycle and describes project process activities (i.e., the technical elements of planning, design, review, permitting, construction, and commissioning) and organizational activities (i.e., activities that support and complement the technical process). Chapter 3 focuses on key organizational activities, including identifying the need for a project; building project support; developing the message; developing a stakeholder outreach plan; organizing airport staff and outside resources; addressing the project process (i.e., the Airport Layout Plan, environmental review, design, construction, and commissioning/operation); and considering a range of project alternatives. Chapter 4 offers suggestions for identifying, understanding, and working with stakeholders, including those who support the project, those who oppose the project, and project bystanders. A summary of the guidebook's key guidance is presented in Chapter 5.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Key Takeaways

- This guidebook is intended to help sponsors at airports of all sizes understand how to work effectively to build and maintain support for capacity projects.
- Sponsors should determine individually how to tailor the recommendations in this guidebook to their specific situation. No two projects are the same.
- Sponsors can learn a great deal about how to build and maintain support for their projects from the experiences of their peers on past projects.
- The approach to building and maintaining project support should evolve over time.

As society and the world economy have evolved, individuals have become increasingly dependent on air travel. Growing aviation demand has significantly outstripped the capability of existing airport infrastructure, resulting in an increasing need for airport operators (hereinafter referred to as sponsors) to expand capacity at existing airports. Capacity projects can include:

- New runways to handle increased aircraft operations;
- New and expanded terminal buildings to accommodate more passengers moving through the system;
- Other supporting infrastructure to support increased activity; and
- New airports.

In the past half-century, sponsors across the country, with the support of certain stakeholders, have worked diligently to implement major airport capacity projects. These efforts have not been easy because capacity expansion projects are lengthy and complicated, and require extensive coordination and navigation through technical, regulatory, financial, political, and legal systems. They take many years from the initial concept stages to the construction and implementation phases. Nearly every capacity project faces hurdles at some point in the process, and some challenges result in project delay, increased project cost, and sometimes, project failure.

This guidebook takes a three-step approach to addressing the issues associated with airport capacity projects. First, participants need to see and understand the whole process and the connectivity among the different project management, public involvement, design, and permitting processes. Second, the organizational and administrative structures need to be in place for each of those elements. Third, actions need to be planned and carried out in an organized manner.

This guidebook is organized to:

- Consider the overall lifecycle of a capacity project;
- Identify roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders;
- Describe a variety of organizational structures;
- Provide lessons learned on other projects;
- Offer guidance on agency coordination and navigating the permitting process; and
- Recommend tools for building and maintaining project support.

This guidebook is intended to help sponsors understand how to work effectively based on the collective experience of other sponsors and project stakeholders, and includes examples of project successes, challenges and failures, as well as valuable lessons learned.

A central feature of this guidebook is how to build support for airport capacity projects. Developing project support is an ongoing process throughout the entire capacity project, and maintaining that support requires continued and dedicated

efforts which are addressed specifically in this guidebook. Support for capacity projects can come from a diverse group of parties or stakeholders and can be provided in many forms. A stakeholder is a party that will be affected by a proposed project. For the purpose of action steps in this guidebook, potential stakeholders are identified and considered collectively as supporters, opponents, or bystanders.

The manner in which sponsors have achieved project support has varied from airport to airport. While it is difficult to make generalizations about airport project support, the process is generally dynamic and reflects the conditions at the time and location of the project. It follows that the approach to developing and maintaining project support will often evolve over time, accounting for:

- External factors such as political, financial, and environmental considerations;
- The ever-changing demands of the aviation industry; and
- The length of time needed to undertake capacity projects.

Recognizing that each project is unique, sponsors should tailor the recommendations in this guidebook to their specific situation. This guidebook is not a checklist that can be followed the same way on every project because airports, project details, timing, and location all differ. Airports vary by size and role; capacity projects vary from minor improvements to building a new terminal, runway, or even an entirely new airport. The approach to working with various stakeholders (e.g., airlines, local businesses) differs, and coordination within specific Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regional offices may differ as well. These illustrations highlight just a few of the factors that need to be taken into account prior to beginning any capacity-related project. It will be incumbent upon each sponsor to identify the unique characteristics of the local situation.

Despite the differences among airport projects, this guidebook uncovers trends, draws conclusions, and makes observations based on decades of experience of the project team and the industry professionals interviewed in the preparation of this guidebook. Airports of all sizes and activity levels, including general aviation (GA) airports, can apply the information in this guidebook to their capacity-related projects. While the scale of the projects will be different, the process is much the same, and building support during each phase of the project is vitally important.

The recommendations in this guidebook are based on numerous interviews with industry leaders, including:

- Sponsors' organizations, including airport chief executive officers (CEOs) and directors, deputy directors, project managers, and airport consultants;
- FAA officials, including those from Headquarters, regional offices, and district offices, as well as representatives from the Airports Division and Air Traffic Organization; and
- Other important project stakeholders, including community leaders, elected officials, airlines, and federal, state, and local agencies.

While it was not always possible to obtain input from all relevant perspectives for each project studied, the guidance reflects the collective experience and recollections of people who have been involved in a myriad of ways with airport capacity projects. In addition, the professional experience of the research team and the project panel are reflected in the recommendations.

In total, the insights and lessons learned clearly point toward certain themes, concepts, and guidance that resulted in many successful projects. This collective wisdom is presented in a guidebook format intended for use by airports, airlines, and all stakeholders in an airport capacity project.

CHAPTER 2

Typical Project Lifecycle and Activities

Key Takeaways

- The project lifecycle includes both organizational activities and project process activities.
- The project process includes the technical elements of planning, design, review, permitting, and construction.
- Spending time on solid planning work that is tailored to the individual airport up-front will lay the foundation for project acceptance and ultimate success.

Understanding a project lifecycle is fundamental to project planning and success. This guidebook addresses two facets of the lifecycle and the connection between the two. One is the project process that includes the technical elements of planning, design, review, permitting, construction, and commissioning. The other is a collection of organizational activities that support and complement the technical project process. Some organizational steps stretch across the project as a whole, while others will be applicable during specific points in the lifecycle.

Awareness of both activities—organizational and project process—and how they relate to one another—is important for a successful project. The typical project lifecycle showing both activities is illustrated in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 1, some organizational steps precede the bulk of the project process. The project process is more successful when some organizational activities, including establishing the project need, building project support, and developing a project message are performed in the early planning stages of an airport capacity project. Other organizational activities run in parallel with the project process from beginning to end. Organizational activities are discussed in Chapter 3, and then the action steps to maintain project support are addressed in Chapter 4.

2.1 Organizational Activities

Lessons learned on past projects have shown that key organizational activities are essential to creating a solid foundation for building and maintaining project support. Organizational activities include the internal day-to-day functioning of the project team conducting the project processes.

Five primary organizational activities are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this guidebook:

1. Identifying the need for a project (Section 3.1)
2. Building specific project support (Section 3.2)
3. Developing the message (Section 3.3)
4. Organizing for success (Section 3.5)
5. Developing a project process (Section 3.6)

These five primary organizational activities are sequential. Additionally, two fundamental activities will continue throughout the implementation of all project activities—project management and maintaining public support. Project management is discussed in Section 3.5, and Chapter 4 provides a series of tools to maintain public support during the project lifecycle.

2.2 Project Process Activities

The project processes represent the technical work elements necessary to move projects from concept/planning through commissioning/operating, and generally include the following five phases:

1. Airport planning
2. Environmental planning and permitting
3. Design
4. Construction
5. Commissioning

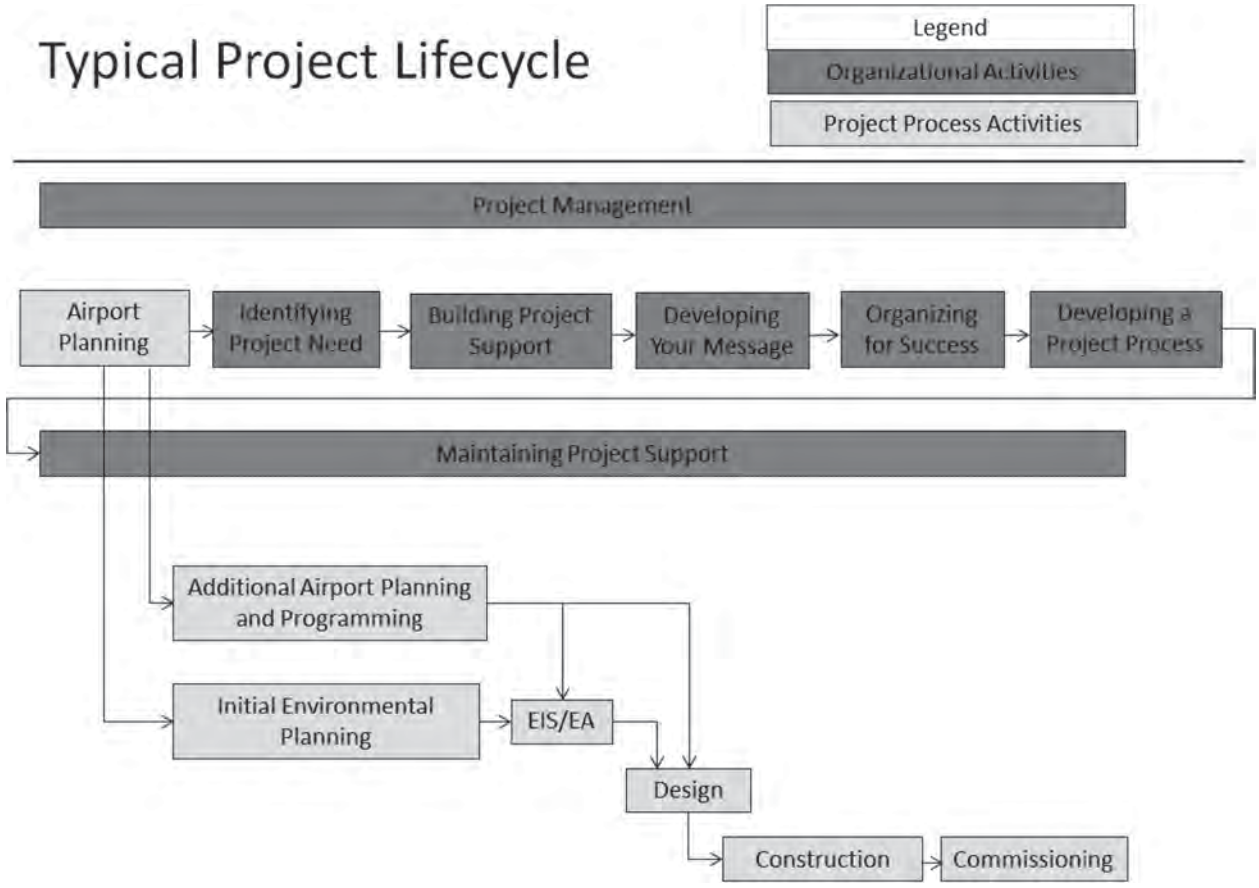

Figure 1. Typical project lifecycle.

As shown in Figure 1, these project processes run parallel to the organizational activities. Some of the airport planning process take place before and during the "Organizational Activities Critical for Success" steps described in Chapter 3, and the balance of the project process activities run in parallel to those described for maintaining project support.

These project processes provide the technical foundation to support the organizational activities. The manner in which these phases occur plays a key role in project success, including building and maintaining support. Each sponsor undertakes these efforts in slightly different ways, and may use different names for each step in the process.

The technical work of the project process should be tailored for each specific project in a way that is complementary and supportive of the needs of the other phases. For example, the airport planning process is the process in which major capacity projects are typically conceived and details defined with regard to the scope of the project. Planning needs to facilitate the environmental review and permitting process. From there, the project process needs to move efficiently into the design phase. Overall, the organization of the phases should be built on the basis of cooperative effort and information-sharing, rather than organizational methods that result in building each phase individually and independently from the others. Project staff should keep their eyes on the overall project completion, rather than on completion of individual elements of the project process.

CHAPTER 3

Organizational Activities Critical for Success

Key Takeaways

- Sponsors should not shortcut the initial planning effort. The investment will likely result in significant dividends in the project process. Time and money spent up-front pales when compared to future construction costs or project delays.
- Key airport users, including the airlines, need to be engaged at the early planning phase of the project. The investment in building relationships and getting input as part of up-front work will directly support project success.
- Sponsors should understand their own staff's strengths and limitations, empower their best talent, and then add experienced resources to complement them.
- Perhaps the most important aspect of organizing for success is to have a leader in the organization vested with project success. This person is both tasked with daily project oversight and accountable to the top leadership for the ultimate success of the project.
- Project leaders should identify ways to integrate and coordinate separate elements of the project process into a larger project view. Coordination with the FAA in the planning and environmental review processes is essential.
- Sponsors should strive for beneficial outcomes for multiple constituents through political support, community support, and strong aviation need. To this end, sponsors should devote adequate resources to addressing project opposition as a key to project success.
- From an organizational standpoint, the highest success comes when the initial message is developed before the technical steps in the project process begin. These messages include the creation of a communications plan and a stakeholder outreach plan.
- Recruiting key business leaders as vocal project proponents can be very effective in influencing the broader business community and gaining community support.
- The planning process should consider a broad range of alternatives through a collaborative process. The recommended alternative should be one that balances project needs with mitigating impacts on the community.
- Before announcing the cost for a project, sponsors should determine what will be included in the costs (construction, soft costs, borrowing costs, etc.) and then be consistent in how these costs are discussed.
- The project process does not end with construction. A good process will include time and money for project activation, commissioning, and occupancy.

As noted in Section 2.1, clearly defining and establishing the necessary organizational activities for a project is critical to the project's overall success. Five fundamental activities are discussed in this chapter, along with a brief summary of the need for solid project management. This information is intended to emphasize that project process success begins well before the construction of the project and requires careful thought and extensive communication and coordination.

3.1 Identifying the Need for a Project

Building a strong, clear case for a project provides an important foundation for future project success and is a key part of building project support. The "project need" must be identified as the first step in the project process, and sometimes even before the formal planning begins. Defining the project need is synonymous with its justification—identifying the problems the project is designed to resolve.

The project need must be understandable to stakeholders. The messages should resonate with the public and project stakeholders in order to gain support. The project need will help guide the technical work on the project, while also providing the necessary messages for building political, community, and stakeholder support. Later, during the planning phase of the project process, the project need and justification will be quantified/qualified; the timing of the need identified; and the justification for the need explained. Defining and articulating the need for a project in the first organizational phase should not be confused with defining the need for a project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and analogous state environmental laws later in the project process. In some cases, there is also a legal need for a project that can be materially different from the planning and environmental needs discussed in this section.

A key finding of this ACRP research was a strong connection between this first organizational step and project success. Conversely, the investigation showed that problems in the project process phases were most often linked to one of two things; either the project need was not supported with technical data or well-justified, or the values of the need were not embraced by the stakeholders. These observations suggest that sponsors should expend the effort necessary for thorough initial planning and documentation of the project need. The subsequent planning work should then systematically address technical, environmental, and financial issues associated with project implementation.

This project revealed the benefit of appropriate up-front work by sponsors and the connection to a higher likelihood of project success. In addition, interviews also highlighted that the alternative—a reactive, catch-up mode—often resulted in diminished project support. These somewhat basic efforts often involve taking the time to build relationships with certain stakeholders while simultaneously performing an honest assessment of the project, its needs, the development pathway, and the potential problems that could be encountered along the way. While this assessment process has many names, some refer to it as a potential problem analysis. The potential problem analysis process is an in-depth exercise that, for airport capacity projects, includes participants experienced with the specific airport and with delivering the types of airport development being considered.

Sponsors should know and understand the issues, and when the issues are difficult, they should integrate individuals experienced with similar projects into the project team. It is also important that key airport users, particularly the airlines, are engaged at this early planning phase of the project, in order to provide their input—and ideally their concurrence—regarding the project need.

As noted earlier, projects that did not proceed as desired were often connected to an organizational flaw where the sponsor did not build a solid foundation and tried to move too quickly to get a project built. Specifically, project challenges and failures were often linked in interviews with attempts to proceed with the project without first:

1. Investing the necessary effort into the initial stages of the project process lifecycle;
2. Clearly identifying the need for the project;
3. Explaining how an alternative does/does not satisfy the need for the project; or
4. Understanding the approval/processing requirements.

Project interviews also demonstrated a close connection between project success and early identification of the project need with respect to the environmental review process. Identifying the need for the project should primarily be done prior to the initiation of the environmental process. Put another way, the environmental review process should not be substituted for a proper planning process because leaving key planning work undone prior to the environmental review process will ultimately slow down the project progress. The interviews revealed specific instances where, following an absence of proper early planning, the environmental review process identified a fatal flaw with the sponsor's preferred alternative. Another example was provided where the absence of early planning resulted in the FAA's approval of an alternative that was different from the sponsor's identified preference.

While some tasks may seem unnecessary to a specific project, sponsors should look at the overall project lifecycle and consider how shortcuts will affect both other phases of the project and the project messages. When done thoroughly, the project planning work should provide sufficient detail and clarity to gain project support from stakeholders and the decision makers who ultimately approve the airport capacity project (e.g., the city, county, state, authority board, and FAA).

3.2 Building Specific Project Support

By definition, a stakeholder is a person, group, or organization that affects—or can be affected by—a proposed airport capacity project. A specific airport capacity project does not exist without stakeholder support. This section discusses who

should champion the effort to build initial project support, and also identifies various stakeholders from whom to seek support. Chapter 4 provides further guidance on creating and maintaining project support from the various stakeholders throughout the life of the project.

Top airport leadership (CEO/director/manager) almost always plays a key leadership role as a project champion, building support for specific capacity projects. There are other people who should also have a key role on the leadership team including the CEO of the organization overseeing the airport and the local public official. For city and county airports, this will be the county executive or mayor. For state authorities, this will be the governor. For authorities, boards, or commissions, this will include the associated oversight agency. Successful major projects almost always had visible support from the highest local elected officials in the region.

The information obtained from the interviews was used to develop the guidance for building support which is reflected in this guidebook. Two interview responses that correspond directly to the overall theme of building project support are:

- Sponsors should invest the time needed to understand the project issues before beginning major public outreach efforts. Sponsors should also listen to what others have to say, even if they do not want to hear it.
- Sponsors must strive for win-win-win: political support, community support, and strong aviation needs. Community leaders want success for the region, and sponsors need to capitalize on that need for success.

Project teams need to be prepared to coordinate with the various stakeholders involved in a project. This section discusses the process of identifying stakeholders, and Chapter 4 explores active ways to gain stakeholder support. For organizational purposes, stakeholders are placed into the following three categories in this guidebook:

- Supporters,
- Opponents, and
- Bystanders.

Through communication and coordination with each of these groups, the sponsor will likely be able to identify where stakeholders fit. In the more successful projects, the issues of *all* stakeholders were understood—and then a way was found to work effectively with each group to address or resolve their concerns. Sponsors were rarely able to move forward successfully and ignore the issues raised by stakeholders.

Another related lesson learned was that sponsors should devote adequate resources to address project opposition as a key to project success. Working with interest groups opposed to the project requires attention and care. When organizing for project success, sponsors should recognize the level of effort that will likely be needed to address project concerns and objections. However, steps taken to consider and address stakeholder concerns, if reasonable, can make a meaningful difference in achieving project success.

The following groups are almost always identified as stakeholder groups for airport capacity projects:

- Governing Body,
- FAA,
- Airlines,
- Business Community,
- Elected Officials,
- Environmental Review Agencies,
- Local Communities, and
- The General Public.

As noted earlier, every airport capacity project is unique. Since a stakeholder is a party that may be affected by a proposed project, stakeholder groups vary from project to project. The range of stakeholders is very location-specific and project-specific, and requires an understanding of the project and its scope. Other possible stakeholders can include:

- Other federal Agencies: US Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), National Park Service (NPS), Department of Interior (DOI), Army Corps of Engineers (COE), National Marine Fisheries (NMFS), Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- State and local agencies including environmental, economic, and transportation related organizations;
- Native American tribes;
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which often have an environmental focus such as the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Center for Biological Diversity; and
- Media.

An advisory committee or steering committee is often used to bring stakeholders to the table and provide a means for communication and active engagement during the project process. An advisory committee can include representatives from the sponsor, contractors, designers, project managers, airlines and other key stakeholders. As part of organizing project support, the group should be created, membership should be determined, and representatives should be invited to participate very early in the project lifecycle. In interviews, sponsors often said that they wished coordination and communications had started earlier than they actually did so as to strengthen their relationship and build trust and understanding of stakeholders'

issue. Once established, the committee should meet regularly to discuss and resolve issues and keep the project moving forward in a coordinated, consensus-building manner.

Suggested methods to engage specific stakeholder groups are discussed in Chapter 4.

3.3 Developing the Message

The project messages refer to how sponsors talk about the need for—or the effects of—the proposed project. The success of most projects, whether handled by a dedicated project team or a single individual, depends on this important communication. The interviews indicated that communication and relationships can bring success to a project. While these primary messages have been discussed previously, other messages will evolve during the project lifecycle in response to important issues of local concern. Projects that get the message out proactively and as soon as issues are identified are often more successful than projects where the message lags behind. The highest success usually comes when the initial message is developed before the technical steps in the beginning of the project process.

An important part of building support for airport capacity projects involves clearly defining the message to address the specific interests and concerns of the various stakeholders. Results from the interviews show a clear connection between successful projects and the use of formal communications plans. These plans identify the project message and describe a plan to integrate it into the organizational activities.

One of the first steps in the sponsor's communication plan should be stakeholder identification and the issues of importance to each stakeholder. Messages should be framed around those issues and should not be directed at supporters or opponents. Public affairs professionals suggest that messages be direct, clear, credible, and jargon-free. Most often, the issues of importance to the various stakeholders relate to the need for the project, or the consequences of the alternatives (e.g., cost, benefits, effects). The issues of importance for airlines, for example, may include both the cost of the project and the operational impacts during construction.

An organized communications plan can avoid pitfalls with conflicting messages that airports have experienced between the sponsor and another stakeholder. One example provided from the interviews was from a sponsor who had stated in its messaging that a project would not result in additional aviation activity, yet the airlines issued a statement declaring that the project would allow them to schedule additional flights and serve new cities. Another example was provided by a sponsor who indicated that no safety consequences would result from a particular alternative, but the statement was contradicted by the FAA Air Traffic Organization.

The mechanics of communications associated with capacity projects vary considerably, and include workshops and charrettes, face-to-face meetings, focus meetings, web sites, social media, document reviews, frequently-asked-questions, flyers and brochures, and hearings. No single mechanism has a guarantee of satisfying the interaction needs of every stakeholder; rather, communication outreach plans should be tailored to the project, the stakeholders, and their needs.

The following suggestions were gathered from interviews and reflect lessons learned about developing the project message during previous airport capacity projects:

- Prepare a communications plan that includes steps for developing stakeholder messages.
- Identify a clear message to describe the project. Routinely include this message in communications with the media. One major airport arranged for their director and key staff to carry laminated cards with the key message points whenever they visited stakeholders or the media.
- Identify messages early in the project, and then revise them as the project evolves.
- Be honest with the messages. Make sure they have a solid basis in technical fact and correspond with the technical analysis, making sure that technical material is available for public scrutiny.
- Focus messages not only on the benefits of the airport development project, but on the consequences of not pursuing the project.

3.4 Stakeholder Outreach Plan

Another organizational tool identified during the project research and interviews was a stakeholder outreach plan. A stakeholder outreach plan, like a communications plan, provides a framework for an organized system of stakeholder involvement through the project lifecycle. Several sponsors of successful airport capacity projects reported having prepared formal stakeholder outreach plans, which identified:

- Stakeholders;
- Stakeholder roles and responsibilities;
- Stakeholder priorities; and
- Communication methods and frequencies.

Still others reported the use of informal or unwritten plans. A number of sponsors also reported a need to reassess these four issues at periodic stages of the project to ensure they were up-to-date.

3.5 Organizing for Success

Project success is often closely tied to the manner in which the sponsor organizes its own staff and outside resources to deliver the project. One organizational model will not fit all

projects, and it follows that airports with extensive in-house resources will need a different organization than ones with fewer in-house resources that instead work extensively with outside consultants.

3.5.1 Project Leadership

Perhaps the most important aspect of organizing for success is to have a leader in the organization vested with project success. This person is tasked with both daily project oversight and accountability to the top leadership for the ultimate success of the project. The bigger the project, the higher the level of leadership that will be needed in this role. The project leader must have the authority to make decisions and to negotiate independently. It is important that the project leader is empowered to speak for the airport director and should be recognized by all stakeholders. The project leader should also be someone who can bring a large and diverse group to consensus and action.

3.5.2 Project Management

A skilled project manager who works cooperatively with the project leader is also critical to success. During the interviews process, a number of projects were identified where strong leadership was exhibited in all phases by the project manager. In these major capacity projects, airport leaders put in place a strong project team led by an experienced project manager who was skilled in airport development. The project managers were empowered to undertake the requisite technical work, but also employed organizational activities that enabled building and maintaining project support.

3.5.3 Project Team

The interviews conducted for this project helped identify a successful organizational model for multibillion-dollar projects. This was the creation of a project team, with dedicated staff whose responsibilities and resources were separate from those needed for daily operations and maintenance of the airport. Several major airports went as far as naming new deputy directors for their multibillion-dollar capital programs. These positions were separate from all other airport engineering and maintenance activities. Several of the multibillion-dollar programs included private program and construction management firms working as an extension of airport staff to help keep the project on track. Separate offices were used to house integrated project teams, and the individual members of those teams worked together without regard for whether the staff was employed by the sponsor or consultant team.

While larger airport programs can benefit from a separate, dedicated team, this approach is typically not suitable for small or medium-sized airports and their programs because staff and financial resources are usually much more limited.

Early and strategic thought about the leadership needed for a successful project appears to improve the chance of success, and sponsors should understand their resources and limitations and, from the outset, take steps to compensate for any gaps in the existing organization.

People are one of the key resources for project success. As part of organizing for success, sponsors should seek and retain people with the talent and skills required for the project and have them available when they are needed. This skillset includes a proven track record of project success and knowing how to work with stakeholders. Sponsors should determine whether or not they have the knowledge and experience to deliver the project within their current organization. If not, sponsors should decide how best to obtain these resources.

On major projects, locally available resources may not have sufficient experience or knowledge. One way to determine where to obtain the skills and staff with appropriate experience is by contacting other airports or airport organizations. If additional consulting services are retained, sponsors should recognize their own corporate culture in the resulting organizational structure and should strive to make it consistent and compatible with the existing corporate hierarchy. A trusting relationship between sponsor and consultants is important to success. Third-party, team-building exercises may help to achieve a higher level of mutual trust.

Three comments made by sponsors that relate specifically to this topic include:

- Sponsors should surround themselves with top talent—find the smartest people to do the project.
- It is important for sponsors to understand their own staff's strengths and limitations, empower their best talent, and then hire consultants as needed to supplement support staff.
- When dealing with outside agencies, sponsors should make sure that someone senior in the project organization is monitoring regular progress, commitments, and decisions.

3.6 Developing a Project Process

As noted in Section 2.2, the specific elements in the project process provide the framework for its overall development and implementation. A project can achieve greater success when the project process is considered as part of the early organizational activities. This is done by reviewing the project process steps and identifying ways to integrate and coordinate these elements. It is also important to realize that the project process is ever evolving. Flexibility must be included in the organization of the project process to account for changes that occur along the way.

Within the overall project process, the planning and environmental elements are not only sequential but also interconnected, as discussed in Section 3.6.2. Also, because the selection of alternatives during the environmental review process is extremely significant to the project process, it is addressed separately in Section 3.7.1.

3.6.1 Design of the Project Process

The project process will provide the foundation for building and maintaining support for the project as it represents the phases of the project where technical information will be generated. Once a capacity project has been identified, the sponsor must determine what processes the project requires. For airport capacity projects, at a minimum, the five processes noted in Section 2.2 will be required:

- Preparation of an Airport Layout Plan (ALP) with a sponsor's desired plan and associated plan documentation (most often a master plan or comprehensive development plan);
- Environmental review under NEPA and counterpart state environmental review laws, as well as any required permitting;
- Design;
- Construction; and
- Commissioning/Operation.

In addition, sponsors should coordinate with the FAA to ensure that all of the FAA's processes are identified and their deadlines determined. These may include review of the preliminary draft ALP; the Safety Management System (SMS) review; and a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA). Also, unique permitting and coordination efforts (e.g., state-level environmental reviews) should be identified early in the organizational process. Sponsors should consider preparing a strategic plan noting the various processes that would be required to take its capacity project from the concept stage through to operation. Identifying all of the steps and phases that will be required will ensure that as an organizational structure is developed, it can function to accomplish each of the phases.

Soon after the ALP or master plan is initiated, sponsors should consider developing an environmental processing strategy to identify the parameters of the environmental review and permitting process. Early consideration of the environmental review process will ensure that the organization will have the staff and resources ready when the project planning is complete. This environmental processing strategy should be shared with the FAA as soon as available, so the sponsor and FAA can begin to put in place staff agreements such as an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), and resources to start the environmental review process. A well thought-out project process plan will include all of the process' tasks and milestones, including timelines for obtaining key environmental and building permits.

The development of the project process should consider the number of individual project elements and the magnitude of the overall development. Major development projects should be managed as one overall program that results in the successful completion of the project as a whole. For example, one interview revealed that a recent major new terminal project was initially off track with separate management of dozens of smaller projects, until the sponsor engaged a program manager to look at and manage the entire program, including the identification of connecting pieces of infrastructure and critical paths.

An alternative organizational model was also identified during project interviews for complex capital programs. In some cases, when a major component is critical to capacity but has little interconnectivity with other projects, it can be broken off as a separate project. Sponsors should carefully consider, however, about separating projects from an environmental review perspective; such approaches can be developed in the environmental strategy. If portions of a project are separated, the potential impacts of all projects, including smaller but potentially critical time-sensitive ones, need to be considered in a cumulative manner.

This approach worked extremely well for the streamlined development of the new runway at a major airport. In this instance, a multibillion-dollar program included a complex terminal expansion and extensive tunnel network challenges for a new underground automated people mover system located a good distance away from the runway. The runway project was successfully implemented as a standalone project and opened years ahead of the other program elements.

The project process does not end with construction. A comprehensive project process includes time and money for project activation, commissioning, and occupancy. Airport staff members who will eventually operate the new facilities should be brought in as owners, and accept final construction before taking ownership. The process should include an official hand-off of the project. For big programs, a series of phased, soft openings of program elements may be desirable. This approach allows for testing and debugging of various components and systems. Finally, in advance of openings, sponsors should conduct public briefings that restate the need for the project and explain what the public can expect from the project once it is open.

3.6.2 Integrated Planning and Environmental Process

The planning and environmental steps in the project process are sequential and interconnected. A solid planning base is needed in order for the environmental review to be done

efficiently. As noted in Section 3.1, the planning process must thoroughly document the need for the project. The planning process should consider a broad range of alternatives, all designed to address the identified need. Conversely, when a proper planning foundation is not established prior to the initiation of the NEPA process, significant delays in the project process can occur. Such delays are often incorrectly attributed to NEPA.

For airport capacity projects, the environmental review process will require an Environmental Assessment (EA) at a minimum. Usually, an EIS is required. This is important to the project process discussion because the sponsor does not lead the EIS process. As a matter of established procedure, the FAA selects the third-party independent consultant and manages that consultant during an EIS, often with little input from the sponsor.

During the project research, a supporting example was identified where a lack of adequate planning work and waning political support stopped the project during the EIS. As a result, the sponsor started over with the planning process. A second EIS was initiated only after more complete planning and the development of broader political and community support had been attained. During the project interviews, numerous other examples were given where an EIS had been initiated but never completed because the project could not be justified or because the alternatives could not be supported. Consequently, it is critical that the planning process provide the information necessary for NEPA to progress efficiently.

Another of the lessons learned was that a delay in the NEPA process occurred in several cases because sponsors had not considered alternatives that were important to the FAA. In these instances, the NEPA third-party consultant performed additional planning evaluations to show there was a need or examined other alternatives that were within the sponsor's control. Delays of more than a year were experienced in these events.

While the planning and environmental processes are generally sequential, there are some key activities that tie them together, and these need to done in an integrated manner. For example, change in an FAA Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) needs to be addressed in both processes, sometimes multiple times, to keep them in alignment with the project planning projections. This often involves additional planning efforts after the environmental process is well underway.

Finally, sponsors should establish relationships with the regulatory agencies that oversee environmental resources. Understanding the issues of importance to these agencies and addressing them in the project plans can significantly reduce the time needed for the environmental review process. Being realistic about the resources available and possibly reaching agreements with these agencies about how the proposed project will be processed is important. Many airports have found it helpful to reach formal agreements and to fund agency staff to facilitate the expeditious review of important projects. Once permits and approvals are identified, as noted previously, sponsors should ensure that someone senior in the project organization is monitoring regular progress, commitments, and decisions of those agencies, including the FAA.

3.7 Range of Alternatives

The issue of alternatives warrants separate discussion. Two valuable lessons were identified from the interviews and project team experience.

3.7.1 Alternative Compromise

The sponsor's recommended alternative very often reflects a compromise between an optimal capacity solution and one that balances project needs with mitigating community impacts. A compromise alternative often emerges after identifying the optimal capacity solutions. These optimal alternatives should be carried forward with ample analysis and attention before a sponsor considers selecting an alternative with fewer benefits. Many major projects have used this approach successfully, including the following:

- A new runway at a major hub airport was successfully implemented after the option to add two new runways was taken off the table by city and airport leaders.
- A new runway was built at a major hub only after a process systematically ruled out two options with greater community impact—a new parallel runway pointed at noise-sensitive communities and a replacement airport.
- A new runway at a major airport was allowed to proceed only after a comprehensive regional planning process ruled out a replacement airport and new runways at nearby airports as options, and an exhaustive review of flight procedure changes was conducted.
- A new major terminal at a major hub airport moved forward without much opposition once the new runway that was part of the preferred program was dropped.

3.7.2 Agency and Sponsor Approval

The alternative that is ultimately selected will be one that agencies can approve in the NEPA and permitting process, and is acceptable to the sponsor. Therefore, sponsors should not limit their consideration of alternatives during the planning process, but rather should seek to include various alternatives that may likely become alternatives considered in the FAA's NEPA process. Alternatives that are not addressed by the sponsor during its own planning process may ultimately be addressed by the FAA, often without the involvement of the sponsor. Experience has shown that a development

option selected by the FAA may not be the sponsor's preferred alternative.

In summary, sponsors should work collaboratively with the FAA, stakeholders, and the public to identify, evaluate, and document the feasibility of project alternatives during the planning process, prior to the NEPA review. Sponsors should include a broad range of alternatives in the planning process and include some with greater benefits and impacts than the alternative they might ultimately be willing to accept.

3.8 Conclusion

Recognizing that resources are often limited, sponsors need to be strategic about how they deploy their efforts during the project lifecycle. In the interviews, there was resounding support for sponsors to dedicate adequate resources to the organizational activities that are critical to success. These initial efforts can result in dividends in the project process by saving both time and money and contributing directly to project success. Sponsors have saved significant time and money by:

- Building relationships with stakeholders before the sponsor needs their support in the project process;
- Performing a comprehensive evaluation of the need for the project;
- Considering and evaluating a broad range of alternatives that address that need; and
- Understanding the project impacts and potential mitigation strategies.

Time and money spent up-front in these organizational activities is often one of the best investments that can be made in an airport capacity project, and it is easily justified because it significantly reduces the chance of major cost increases and delays later. This message was supported by the ACRP project interviews. When asked about lessons learned, sponsors repeatedly focused directly on the importance of up-front work. Many sponsors wished they had done more to understand their project and its effects before getting into the EIS or design phases. Among the comments received were the following:

- Do things right from the beginning.
- Do not take shortcuts.
- Address environmental impacts early.

Robust analysis and documentation during the planning process will better inform decision makers, provide a solid foundation for the FAA's environmental process, and allow sponsors to fully investigate conditions of interest for all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 4

Building and Maintaining Support with Stakeholders

Key Takeaways

- Maintaining project support requires an ongoing investment in time and energy by the project team to overcome challenges including the long time span associated with a capacity project and the stakeholder turnover during a project.
- Sponsors should understand and respect the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. Some have formal regulatory roles, some assist with framing the public perception, and others are end users of the project.
- Each stakeholder has a unique perspective and specific interests. Some are project supporters, some are actively opposed, and others are bystanders, but all should be included.
- Effective stakeholder involvement creates an open dialogue and sets the stage for making mutually beneficial compromises when necessary for project success.
- Sharing information shows respect and builds trust. The most challenging messages are those relating to project cost and schedule. These should be clearly communicated at all stages of the project.
- Meet early with key high-level FAA officials to gain support for the project. Define and formalize sponsor/FAA roles and communication protocol early, and ensure all FAA lines of business are engaged early in the planning and environmental processes. Consider elevating major issues within FAA management if needed to resolve them.
- While bringing project opponents into the stakeholder group may cause short-term difficulties, it can also help the overall process to go more smoothly. Engaging all stakeholders in the planning process, whether supportive or not, is recommended as a route to overall project success.
- An up-front investment of time and effort to address airline concerns and gain their support can more than pay for itself over the project lifecycle. A clear lesson learned from industry experience is that moving forward without airline support should be a last resort. Nonetheless, when capacity projects are justified, the sponsor has the responsibility to decide what is best for the community served by the airport.
- The media provides a vehicle for building support and broadcasting project messages.
- Social media provides a sponsor with free access to a wide variety of stakeholders for the exchange of information.

Building and maintaining project support is vital to any airport capacity project. Chapter 3 looked at organizational activities to be completed before the project begins and during the early planning stages. This chapter discusses the keys to successfully building and maintaining support, analyzes stakeholder involvement, and explores tools for working with specific project stakeholders as the project is carried out.

Once project support is initially offered by stakeholders, the sponsor needs to maintain that support. These efforts will require ongoing investments of time and energy by the

project team. Maintaining project support over the complete project lifecycle presents several challenges. Consider that the time span between the sponsor's decisions to pursue a capacity improvement project and the time construction is actually finished can be a decade or longer. Additionally, the project process can get bogged down in the physical planning or environmental review process. Excitement or interest often wanes in times of little or no visible project activity. In other cases, the individuals filling the stakeholder roles may change over time. Consequently, it is both important and challenging to maintain the interest and support of stakeholders as projects move through the entire lifecycle. Challenges to project implementation can occur at every step, even after environmental approval. Activities must be planned to maintain stakeholder support throughout the project lifecycle.

4.1 Ingredients of Success

A primary reason major capacity projects succeed is because the sponsor and stakeholders work together to achieve the desired project needs, as well as the needs of the other stakeholders. As noted in Section 3.2, stakeholders generally include, but are not limited to the following:

- Governing body,
- FAA,
- Airlines,
- Business community,
- Elected officials,
- Environmental review agencies,
- Local communities, and
- General public.

The following subsections include strategies for working with these important stakeholders. In addition, several overarching stakeholder coordination themes are presented herein.

4.1.1 Understanding Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholders have an interest in at least some facet of the project. Some stakeholders have formal regulatory roles such as those defined by FAA requirements, NEPA, other special purpose environmental regulations (e.g., the Clean Water Act or Clean Air Act), or state and local permitting requirements. Other stakeholders assist with framing public perception about the project, while still others are end users of the project.

Sponsors of successful projects and their associated agencies indicated that success was partially attributable to an understanding of the parties' roles and responsibilities, as well as to the respect given to each stakeholder and the job they had to do during the process. These parties helped each other achieve the objectives related to each of their responsibilities. The key to building a relationship with a stakeholder is being able to understand and respect the issues that are important to that stakeholder.

For those parties with regulatory responsibilities over the project, sponsors should identify the related regulatory requirements and obligations. Successful projects identify strategies for helping the regulatory agencies fulfill their mission within the context of the project need. For instance, for projects involving wetland fills, a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit is required, which is issued by the COE in conjunction with other agencies. Each district office of the COE approaches wetland fill permitting differently, reflecting local needs in addition to the regulatory requirements. Therefore, those sponsors who have identified what is important—and embraced ways of addressing what is important—have helped the permitting proceed efficiently. In general, sponsors that did not address the needs of permitting agencies often experienced a longer permitting process.

4.1.2 Identify Stakeholders

As discussed in Chapter 3, sponsors should identify all project stakeholders very early in the project lifecycle and establish a stakeholder outreach plan to identify when and how to bring stakeholders into the process.

As part of developing the stakeholder outreach plan, it is important to meet with stakeholders and understand project issues and priorities from different perspectives. Each stakeholder comes to the table with a unique perspective and specific interests with respect to the airport's project proposal.

Sponsors should assess their relationship with each individual stakeholder or stakeholder group. If relationships are well established prior to initiating a project, the issues and priorities of the stakeholders are more likely to be known and reflected in the project plans. There may also be opportunities to improve and strengthen some stakeholder relationships in the early organizational phase of the project with proactive outreach and an invitation to participate in the process. This project found a direct connection between project success and positive working relationships with stakeholders. Trust was a common theme. Positive relationships were identified even with stakeholders who opposed the specific project. Bringing project opponents into the stakeholder group may cause short-term difficulties, but it can also help the overall process to go more smoothly.

As introduced in Chapter 3, stakeholders can be grouped as the following:

- Supporters,
- Opponents, and
- Bystanders.

The project research and interviews provided general insight into how to work with each of these groups as described herein. Later in the chapter, ideas are presented for working with specific stakeholder groups including the business community, airlines and the FAA.

4.1.2.1 Project Supporters

Maintaining community support calls for a series of parallel actions initiated by the sponsor and the project team. The earlier discussion of a communications plan introduced the idea that stakeholders need to be given a clear understanding of the project need and benefits. Supporters should be provided with politically and economically compelling reasons to support a project, so they are prepared to enter the conversation when it comes up as the subject of mass media, a political discussion, or other opportunity.

The project message is a tool to encourage project support and therefore needs continued reinforcement through distribution of tailored information to individual stakeholder groups. Those reasons need to be specific to supporters' business objectives rather than being focused on the airport. One sponsor reported that its runway extension project was successful, in part, because of concentrated efforts early in the planning process to secure and maintain support from the major businesses in the industries that would benefit from the project.

Traditional supporters of airport capacity projects include the business community, airport users and tenants, tourism and convention-related businesses, and immediately adjacent airport-related businesses. Complex or large development projects can also offer benefits to less traditional supporters such as labor unions, heavy construction and related industries, public employee organizations, and recipients of direct or indirect project benefits. These supporters can help publicize the economic and jobs associated with major project development.

Because supportive stakeholder groups may not recognize the value of their vocal and visible support, sponsors should provide them with concrete, practical opportunities to express their support. Sponsors can encourage participation by providing both meaningful reasons for support and practical methods by which that support can be expressed. Those tools can be tailored to each group. For example, letter-writing campaigns may be most effective for neighborhood organizations, while construction industries may be able to mobilize lobbying resources.

Coalition-building is also important to this effort, because it provides a collective voice that can speak to the positive impact of the project on the greater community. Airports should encourage civic leadership to build a broad-based group of organizations and individuals who form a vocal and energetic block of support.

4.1.2.2 Project Opposition

Airport capacity projects may often have opponents. This is understandable, especially since there are many different stakeholders who would likely be directly impacted by the project. Some opponents will make themselves known from the beginning and others will arise as more information about the project becomes available. Opposition can come from a number of sources, including local citizens, the airlines, resource agencies, and political groups. Open lines of communication allow sponsors to identify project opponents and understand specific concerns. Forthright and open engagement on the issues with all stakeholders will serve the project well, whether or not sponsors can convert opponents to supporters.

Many sponsors that were interviewed emphasized that all members of the community need to be treated with respect, regardless of their opinion or position on the airport capacity project. This most often can be achieved by ensuring that messages are consistent, fact-based, and not personalized. Staff should maintain a professional, confident, and tactful demeanor. While the airport CEO may not be able to work personally with all interested parties, he or she should establish guidelines and set the tone for members of the team.

Notwithstanding dramatic differences between projects and communities, analysis of major airport capacity projects revealed several approaches and lessons learned from successful projects:

- **Identify and Understand the Community.** The sponsor needs to appreciate the political, social, economic, and even religious drivers for community reaction to the existing airport early in the planning for an expanded airport. The sponsor needs to understand the difference between community opinions related to the existing airport and the community reaction to a planned development project.
- **Address Public Perception.** Public opinion is based on the community's perception about impacts, benefits, and consequences of a project. The perceptions may or may not be supported by engineering, financial, or environmental data. When faced with project opposition, the sponsor needs to understand and address the public perception and respond to it. The better the sponsor understands public perception, the more effective the messaging or adjustments to the project can be in response.
- **Assess the Breadth and Depth of Potential Opposition.** Project sponsors should understand the breadth and depth of opposition. Is the objection coming from a small, passionate, vocal fringe group that will not likely be able to sway others, or is it coming from a broad group with the potential to create widespread, political opposition to the project? What are the financial resources of the opposition? Will they

likely seek legal action? The answers to these types of questions will help the sponsor determine how best to respond. In some cases, improved messaging may address the issue. In other cases, a strategic decision might be made to ignore the objection. When facing a widespread objection that appears likely to continue and expand, the sponsor may offer project adjustments or changes to address the objection.

- **Determine Cost and Complexity of Compromises.** Consideration of the costs and benefits to compromise is part of responding to opposition. In some cases, the project will fail without adjustments or concessions. Changes or compromises can also be a way to recognize and give value to community concerns. There are both costs and benefits to making compromises in project design, including impacts to image, cost, and schedule which need to be weighed. The timing and substance of changes, and the communication about those changes, are all critical.

4.1.2.3 Project Bystanders

Many project bystanders are potential project supporters. This is especially true for bystanders in the business community who may not provide support because of competing demands on their time, a lack of understanding the need for their active support, or because they do not know how to demonstrate active support. As a result, many project bystanders may not take the initiative to participate but may respond to specific request to demonstrate their support. Sponsors have found that there is a more positive response to a request for support when a menu of tasks and efforts is offered to them, such as the following:

- Speaking at civic and business organizations;
- Writing letters to the editor;
- Talking to political leaders;
- Organizing forums in which a sponsor spokesperson can explain the project; and
- Making statements in support of the project at public meetings.

Airport sponsors can go beyond having a menu of tasks by providing more tools to encourage participation. Some sponsors have developed participation tool kits that contain sample letters, newsletter copy, web copy, and a robust social media plan complete with a content calendar.

4.2 Stakeholder Involvement

Getting stakeholders involved is the first step in a larger engagement process that will continue through the life of the project. In some cases, stakeholder involvement continues even beyond commissioning and extends beyond seating them on a committee. Effective stakeholder involvement creates an open dialogue and sets the stage for making mutually beneficial compromises when necessary to keep the project moving forward.

4.2.1 Get Stakeholders Actively Involved

Sponsors should make sure stakeholders are actively involved in the process from planning through commissioning. As noted in Chapter 3, a stakeholder committee has proven to be an effective way to garner stakeholder participation, and sponsors should consider having a permanent stakeholder committee that meets before, during, and after a project. This facilitates full transparency, provides an opportunity to share project information, and serves as a forum to discuss and respond to issues as they arise.

There is a distinction between having had an experience with a stakeholder and having established a relationship with a stakeholder. Sponsors typically know who their primary stakeholders are at the start of a project and have usually had some type of contact or experience with each one. However, few sponsors reported having the type of relationship with each of the important stakeholders that would enable an effective identification of priorities and issues immediately. In cases where delays occurred in gaining approvals for a project, sponsors repeatedly noted at least one of the following:

1. They had underestimated the importance of relationships.
2. Their relationships were superficial with the key stakeholders.
3. They did not know the issues of importance to those stakeholders.

Successful stakeholder plans include strategies for assisting stakeholders with fulfilling their respective roles. This is done through an early coordination process where input is obtained, agreements are reached on how to address key issues, and collaboration is embraced by all parties.

4.2.2 Keep Stakeholders Informed

This investigation uncovered numerous ideas to help sponsors keep stakeholders informed, and many were related to carrying out a communications plan, including:

- Communicate through both specialized and general media outlets. Be transparent. Educate the public and media on the technical and financial realities of the project.
- Use various social media outlets (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to disseminate messages across the various stakeholder groups, and use these same media outlets to monitor and gauge public reaction, as well as that of any opposition group.
- Educate the prominent media connections. Do not expect media staff or others to understand the project quickly.

Be thorough with press releases and anticipate questions before they are asked.
- Ensure that the project team knows the messages, embraces them, and adheres to them.
- Do not try to hide data gaps. Rather, acknowledge data gaps and indicate how and when they will be filled.
- Share technical resources with stakeholders. Being candid and transparent are important; the trust and confidence that sponsors build with stakeholders will help ensure the success of the project.
- Mistakes will be made. Correct them quickly, apologize if appropriate, and move on.
- Be attentive to the premature release of information. Such releases can have serious and long-term consequences on the credibility of the project team and messages.
- Spend sufficient time up-front with both supporters and opponents explaining the project.

The communications plan and/or stakeholder plan should consider when and how to communicate with each stakeholder. In some cases, stakeholders with a regulatory responsibility have defined periods in which they are engaged and there may be formal processes for those communications. Most sponsors suggested that relationships with stakeholders with approval authority be established as early as possible so as to coordinate communication processes.

The topic of social media warrants special attention. The sponsor should consider taking advantage of the general public's use of social media for instantaneous access to information. For example, sponsors can post public meeting notices and project information on a Facebook page and tweet about it on Twitter, as they are now accepted means of professional communication.

In addition to disseminating information, social media venues also provide an opportunity to monitor public opinion. A sponsor can gain insights about the concerns and issues of stakeholders based on the content posted on their social media accounts. This, in turn, can help inform project discussions and guide the decision making process.

Social media should be considered to be part of every proactive, comprehensive communications strategy, and sponsors should actively engage with stakeholders by using social media tools to communicate and disseminate information. As part of the communications plan, the use of social media will be part of the larger, organized process described in Section 3.5. Of course, traditional media remains important and should also be part of a comprehensive communications plan.

4.2.3 Sharing Information About Project Cost

During the project processes, the details of the project will be generated. While there are specific requirements needed from these efforts, three key items form a foundation for building and maintaining support:

1. Effects of the project on the community.
2. The project timeline.
3. The cost.

The research and interviews indicated that the most challenging messages in airport capacity projects were those related to the project cost and timeline. Many projects had support waiver when schedules and costs were not well defined. Projects were generally more successful when sponsors were able to identify continuing opportunities to refine and reassess schedule and costs, and communicate the reasons for the changes.

One of the lessons learned related to sharing cost information is the importance of defining and communicating what is included in the cost. Through the course of the project, it is essential that the sponsor either maintain the same definition of cost or clearly communicate when there are changes to what is included in the cost or when better estimates are being used. This is because changes can become the source of negative media coverage and provoke controversy when often the change may be primarily due to the addition of new elements (airline costs, interest costs, etc.) to the previously disclosed cost estimates. Real increasing costs are enough of a challenge for sponsors without confusing the issue with unexplained changes to cost calculations.

Tied to this discussion of presenting a project cost is the issue of providing a project timeline. Because many capacity projects are large and complex, it is almost impossible to accurately predict their completion date during the initial planning stages. While those with experience in airport capacity projects understand that delays are common, stakeholders and the general public may question the validity of original estimates and projections. Delays may also taint the perceived transparency of the process and add to the challenge of the project.

The project research team identified several lessons learned related to sharing schedules and making adjustments as the scheduled changed, which are as follows:

- When a project does not stay on schedule, it is best to be up-front and honest concerning the implications of the changes for project costs and the implementation plan.
- As schedules are developed, clear deadlines should be established and refined collaboratively—organizations and individuals will have a greater success in achieving their schedules if they participate in developing them.
- Decisions should be put into perspective in order to prevent small decisions from driving the entire project schedule. Since it is not possible to anticipate each and every

event that might occur, it is important to develop a plan for contingencies.

The project team also found several examples of schedule changes that appeared to be politically motivated. An important lesson was that political schedules may significantly impact the project schedule, and therefore should be anticipated and addressed.

4.2.4 Reaching Out and Compromising

Major capacity projects are often built only after compromises that create mutually beneficial approaches with stakeholders are reached. Sponsors cannot unilaterally act to get projects built in most urban environments because their actions have impacts on a variety of other important institutions, organizations, and interest groups. Compromise may be needed with airlines, the FAA, community groups, and other regulatory agencies. The ability to arrive at a successful compromise usually requires open dialogue with stakeholders affected by the project and a mitigation plan to minimize impacts on the affected parties.

Sponsors can build a strong consensus for capacity expansion by starting with a spirit of cooperation and inclusivity. The art of compromise rests on the airport's ability to find common ground and develop a partnership with the community and stakeholders. The environmental mitigation process is an example of compromise that is built into the regulatory system. The NEPA process requires that the sponsor make adjustments to mitigate environmental impacts. When changes or compromises are needed, airports must work hard to maintain the integrity of the project and its purpose.

Open and frequent communication throughout the process is important to reaching a compromise. Leaders of successful projects should keep communication channels open, even when they carry bad news, because sharing information shows respect, and when stakeholders feel they are being heard and kept informed, they are more likely to cooperate.

Compromise by the sponsor can facilitate a project's moving forward. One example of compromise occurred when the sponsor and airlines worked through the planning for the redevelopment of an old terminal at a major airport that was considered by some to be a seminal work of a famous architect. Proponents of the historic preservation of the terminal became vocal opponents of the proposal, stating that the terminal should not only remain intact but that it should continue to function as an airport terminal. The historic preservationists were brought to the table as stakeholders, and compromises were reached that allowed the project to move forward. Although the project cost increased and the schedule was impacted, the project was completed successfully.

4.2.5 After the Project Is Built

Communication between the sponsor and the FAA with the various constituencies should continue during project construction and through the project's commissioning. Even after years of public meetings, briefings, and other outreach efforts preceding construction, it is sometimes only after construction is complete that the project impacts are clearly understood. These may include negative impacts such as increased noise or surface traffic.

The FAA and the sponsor can continue to communicate through media briefings, social media, and other communication methods to respond to community concerns in the months preceding commissioning, as well as after operations begin. Several project examples were identified where runway openings at major airports were followed by community complaints. In each case, residents said they were not told about how the new runways would operate. Some even suspected they had been intentionally deceived. In another city, the sponsor chose to continue media interaction for several years after the new runway opened. Messaging continued to help impacted communities gain a better understanding of new runway use and flight patterns.

4.2.6 Working with Local Stakeholders

Within the community, there are several groups who will likely be project stakeholders. These include the governing body of the airport and other elected officials, the business community, and the airlines. This section provides some insight into the interests and concerns of each of these groups as they relate to airport capacity projects.

4.2.6.1 Working with the Governing Body

With few exceptions, airports are owned and operated by government entities, and the governing body of the airport is an important stakeholder. The governing body of the airport includes board members of single-purpose airport entities (authority and commission) and elected representatives of municipally operated airports (city and county), and other state and local elected officials with major influence over the airport. Support from this stakeholder group is likely to be a major contributor to the project's success.

If there are any concerns or objections from this group, they should be addressed in the very early stages of project planning and organization. Individual meetings with the airport's governing body may be needed to identify and address questions and concerns. In particular, the airport's governing body should clearly understand its financial responsibility for the project, where the dollars will come from, and possible impacts on other airport purchases and investments.

Sponsors should keep in mind that turnover in governing board membership and political leadership is likely during the project, given the length of time needed for the complete project process lifecycle. With this stakeholder group, care should be taken to ensure continuation of support through transition. Trust can be built by the sponsor with this stakeholder group by being up-front and candid, and by keeping everyone informed—both those in favor of and those opposed to the project. In addition to building trust, this approach can also serve to avoid surprises or problems because with this stakeholder group, surprises or problems that cause political embarrassment can significantly hinder the project progress.

4.2.6.2 Working with the Business Community

The business community often makes up the largest group of supporters. Sponsors have found that chambers of commerce and other business organizations can be called upon to:

- Be visible at public meetings;
- Conduct letter-writing campaigns;
- Seek media coverage of issues; and
- Participate in project coordination efforts.

Gaining the support of the business community is often accomplished by connecting the value of improved airport capacity to the regional businesses environment. Presenting the airport as a business enterprise with little or no local tax consequence has been a successful message within the business community. These messages can also address community benefits in terms of long-term economic development such as jobs, payroll, induced economic activity, and new business development.

In addition to understanding the project benefits, the business community should be briefed concerning potential project opposition and should be educated on the value of their participation in visible public forums. That visibility is especially valuable as it provides a rallying point for other supporters. However, visible support from the business community can be difficult to achieve. Members of the business community may have many different relationships in the region; while active support for the airport project may be appreciated by the sponsor, it may strain other relationships.

Because some members of the business community often begin their stakeholder role as bystanders, sponsors need to work in an organized and thoughtful way through a stakeholder outreach plan to encourage their active support in project activities and meetings. One approach that has proven successful has been to recruit a few well-known, influential business leaders to be vocal project proponents or "champions." In this role, a few individuals have been able to influence the broader business community and gain community support. Regularly scheduled updates and site tours have been successful ways to keep the interest of the business community piqued.

4.2.6.3 Working with Elected Officials

In addition to gaining support from the elected officials that may serve on an airport's governing body, local political support is also needed, since local political elections are apt to be influenced by the position taken, whether pro or con, on local airport development. Seeking this support should be undertaken early on if the desired credibility and political commitment are to be attained.

The interviews revealed that in addition to direct contact briefing with political leadership, the business community and labor leaders have also provided an indirect pathway to obtaining project support from political leadership. A communications plan should identify a tailored approach to gaining and maintaining political support, and adequate resources should be dedicated to these efforts over the entire project lifecycle.

The need for political support from elected representatives to the United States Congress varies greatly from project to project and is most often focused on acquiring funding for major projects. Maintaining contact with these representatives is enhanced by briefing their staff and contacting members on home visits. Again, it is important for sponsors to tailor political efforts to their specific projects and needs and to the political culture in which they operate.

4.3 Working with Airlines

Airlines are one of the most important stakeholders in major capacity projects and provide much of the financing of airport development through fees collected at the airport through rates and charges. Engaging airline support early in the project is vital. In this investigation, interviews were conducted with more than 30 current and former airline corporate real estate professionals, since they are often the people responsible for the negotiations associated with the capacity projects. When asked how sponsors could gain airline support, one of the most common themes was establishing "good relationships with full, frank, and open communication and disclosure, early and often" during the process. Airline representatives indicated their primary initial questions concerning a project would be:

- What the project will cost them;
- How the sponsor proposes to finance the project;
- If and how the project will benefit their individual operations;

- How the project might benefit its competitors; and
- How and at what level sponsors should engage the airlines.

When revenue bonds or a local contribution from airport capital funds are involved in the capital financing plan, there is a financial "ask" of the airlines. This arises because, when completed and commissioned, the operation and maintenance expenses and associated debt service and/or depreciation of projects are passed on as landing fees and/or facility rental rates. Those long-term, ongoing expenses represent a big investment, and airline concerns about those long-term financial impacts on rates and charges should be addressed directly.

The initial response received from the airlines will typically be based on the overall project cost and the terms and conditions of the airport's current use and lease agreement. If an agreement does not exist, or if the agreement will expire in the near-term, sponsors should expect a request from the airlines to work out a new deal before acceptance of a project.

Sponsors should be prepared to promote and quantify the operational benefits that are expected to result from the project. Although the airline representatives may focus more intently on the project's impact on rates and charges, carefully planned messages will make clear the operational gains to be realized through the project.

It is also important that airlines be approached at the appropriate organizational level. While station managers are often the people seen most frequently by airport management, they are not responsible for capital and financial decisions. Every airline serving the airport has a corporate real estate or properties representative. This individual, assigned by the airline corporate office, is the official representative of the airline's interests at an airport. Airline coordination and communication about a capacity project should begin with this individual. The airline's governmental affairs staff should also be included in building project support. Large-scale airport capacity projects have a higher likelihood of success when the airport's airline partners are at the table as cooperating entities.

Prior to and during coordination, sponsors can address some of the airline-related concerns in a number of ways:

- Anticipate the airlines' concerns and objections before engaging with them.
- Be prepared with data about the operational benefits of the project, understand the financial implications, and have a financing plan.
- Consider retaining a representative with airline experience to preview the proposed plan and to help the airport think like an airline.
- Consider asking an airline spokesperson from the major carrier to take the lead for airline support.
- Encourage the airlines to assign a corporate real estate representative to the airport's planning team. This is an excellent way to engage the airlines and to help the airport troubleshoot the program before requesting official endorsements.

The best way to gain the attention and support of the airlines is to engage them early and often. Research showed that projects without airline support were much more likely to experience increased costs, delays, or ultimate failure.

A clear lesson learned from industry experience is that moving forward without airline support should be the route of last resort. However, in some cases, it is not possible to identify a mutually beneficial situation that meets the project need. The airport is a business operation that looks at a capacity project from a different perspective compared to other stakeholders, and it has the responsibility to decide what is best for the community it serves. Some capacity projects have been successfully completed without airline support when there was broad project support from elected officials, the community, and airport leadership because of the long-term community needs and the benefits to be realized from the new airport project.

4.4 Working with the FAA

On major airport development projects, the FAA is an approving agency, as are almost every other federal and state agency involved in airport development projects. The principal obligation of these agencies is to consider projects that are proposed by sponsors and approve them, if appropriate. Sponsors need to understand and appreciate the FAA's many roles and responsibilities relative to their project, which include the following:

- Review and approve the ALP and forecasts;
- Review, approve, and protect airspace for the project, and develop new flight procedures;
- Review and approve the safety and efficiency of the project/plan;
- Review and approve the SMS plan;
- Comply with environmental regulations (prepare the EIS) and review environmental documents for legal sufficiency;
- Lead collaborative effort to work with other environmental approving agencies;
- Review and approve compatible land use plans; and
- Issue Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants.

Because of these responsibilities, the relationship between the sponsor and the FAA is often very complex.

At a minimum, sponsors should establish a clear understanding of the project intent with FAA officials, and, ideally, support for the project within the FAA. Comments received during the interview process suggest that public expressions

of support from high-level FAA officials may positively affect project outcome, and well-informed FAA staff will be able to communicate more effectively with the public. Other suggested practices for sponsors working with FAA are summarized in the following sections.

4.4.1 Sponsor/FAA Relationship and Communication

Successful airport projects are characterized by a strong and effective working relationship between the airport sponsor and the FAA, with both parties acting in a partnership and often seeking the same goal. Much of a project's success usually depends on the airport's relationship with the FAA Regional Office and Airports District Office.

As with other stakeholder relationships, the sponsor should evaluate the strength and nature of the existing relationship and invest time and energy to improve it early in the planning process if necessary. In the project interviews, many FAA representatives indicated that their relationships with sponsors improved over the course of the project process, suggesting that projects had often started before credibility and trust had been established. It is also important that both parties understand the role and responsibility of the other. Information from the interviews identified this as a somewhat regular area of conflict, with a perception that their respective roles were not well established.

Once a capacity project has been identified, sponsors have found it valuable to sit down early with key high-level FAA officials to explain the project need, show the sponsor's commitment to keep the project on course, and define their coordination roles and protocol. These efforts demonstrate a stakeholder outreach plan and communication protocol that includes all affected FAA lines of business and all project phases. A specific example of this would be to meet with a high-level Air Traffic Organization (ATO) representative to get an initial reaction to the capacity project. The sponsor can anticipate a cautious reception to projects where emerging technologies (e.g., NextGen) are required to obtain the expected capacity.

The FAA is an extremely large organization with a complex structure. The primary dilemma for sponsors when designing a stakeholder outreach plan is determining where and when the project interface should occur. For example, the project interviews showed that sponsors need to work effectively with the FAA Airports District Office (ADO) because this staff is responsible for much of the day-to-day activity associated with the sponsor/FAA relationship. However, ADOs were sometimes not staffed to assist airports with complex capacity projects. It was not always clear whether sponsors should go directly to FAA Headquarters in Washington, DC, or work at the regional office level. As a matter of best practice, it is recommended that the airport sponsor ask the ADO early on in the planning process for a meeting with the regional office and with the staff at FAA Headquarters if needed. This action will help ensure that appropriate FAA resources are available.

In general, sponsors felt that involvement from FAA Headquarters was essential for major capacity projects. However, there was no agreement on how best to connect with key officials at FAA Headquarters. It was clear that elevating the issue to the next level in the FAA organization needs to be done diplomatically. When the sponsor went over the ADO to the regional office or over the regional office to Headquarters, relationships were strained. Most sponsors indicated that when they went over one party to a higher level, their relationships experienced a setback, but that ultimately they felt they got the attention of the right group at the FAA. Some sponsors noted that had they not obtained early Headquarters involvement, their processes would have been impaired. Sponsors need to make thoughtful decisions about navigating the FAA organization on a case-by-case basis.

In many cases, the ADOs are staffed and equipped to assist airports with complex capacity projects. However, project sponsors may find it helpful to anticipate the need to elevate issues from time to time within the FAA's management structure. In the interest of maintaining a positive relationship, both parties would find it beneficial to reach an agreement early in the project regarding the best way to elevate an issue.

Examples of major airports and the FAA establishing communication early in the project seemed to occur most often during an EIS project, where regular conference calls between the airport leadership and key FAA management and specialists were conducted to review status, check on progress with commitments, and identify and address problems.

4.4.2 FAA Lines of Business

The FAA Office of Airports can assist project sponsors with engaging other FAA lines of business early in the project's lifecycle. These lines of business include Air Traffic Control (ATC), Flight Standards, Flight Procedures, and Facilities. Many of these field offices report directly to their Headquarters staff in Washington, D.C. This can make it more challenging to get adequate resources approved for staff participation in the project planning, environmental, and design processes. The Office's roles do not officially begin until the project is complete and ready for operation, but their participation earlier in the project can add valuable insight and support during the project process. Sponsors should make every effort to secure this extended FAA participation.

Many projects have obtained the appropriate level of involvement with direction by FAA Headquarters and the early creation of a regional project team. This promotes effective relationships by identifying the roles and responsibilities

of each party. Sponsors may find it helpful to ask the FAA to formalize how to ensure the participation of all relevant FAA offices.

4.4.3 FAA Coordination with Other Federal Agencies

Sponsors may consider discussing with the FAA how best to establish an early and positive relationship with other reviewing and approval agencies. This may be particularly effective for those agencies involved in the environmental review and permitting process. Several of the sponsors interviewed reported that when other reviewing agencies had an early understanding of the project purpose and need and the likely environmental impacts, they were more likely to provide reasonable and timely reviews. They also noted it was helpful when the FAA identified a contact point within its own organization to monitor the progress of other federal agencies.

4.4.4 Other Advice for Sponsors

The following additional recommendations from the interviews relate to coordination with the FAA and were recurrent enough to justify inclusion in this guidebook:

- Sponsors should work with the FAA to develop clear and definite environmental mitigation agreements to support the operational success of the proposed project.
- A project need is justified based on projections of future activity at the airport. Those forecasts are required to fall within a specific tolerance range relative to the FAA's Terminal Area Forecast (TAF). Because major capacity projects take many years to complete, the annual TAF may change enough during the project to call into question the validity of the project projections. When that happens during the NEPA process, the project is often delayed while project data are reanalyzed. Sponsors should anticipate this problem and look for opportunities to proactively prevent project delays. One possible strategy is to request that the FAA share draft TAF numbers with the sponsor. This will help the sponsor anticipate the reaction various stakeholders may have to the changing numbers and prepare a timely response. During the interviews, one sponsor suggested asking the FAA to consider freezing the FAA TAFs during an EIS.
- For major projects, a two-level EIS project team structure has proven successful. In this model, one member from the FAA, the EIS consultant team, and the airport form a three-person team to handle high-level management issues between the sponsor and the FAA. A second team is organized to handle project details.

4.5 Working with Outside Agencies

As noted in Section 4.2, the list of project stakeholders in a capacity project is likely to include various outside agencies, including federal and state agencies, and local governments and their departments. In many cases, an agency has a regulatory responsibility, such as FAA approval of the federal action or the COE issuance of a Section 404 wetland fill permit. Other agencies have an interest, but not necessarily approval authority over the project. Sponsors should identify the various roles and responsibilities of each agency and factor this information into the stakeholder plan.

While the FAA is the primary agency involved in airport projects, there are often other outside agencies at the federal, state, and local levels that may need to be included in the project process. Since these agencies vary by location; a specific list of activities would be impossible to generate. Instead, a list of the key lessons from the stakeholder interviews and from the project team member experience regarding engaging and working with outside agencies is presented here.

- Non-aviation agencies are just that—non-aviation agencies. They may not understand airports, airport operations and the airport's regulatory setting. Sponsors will need to provide them with information to facilitate that understanding. Site visits and regular briefings are helpful in this regard. It is also important for sponsors to build the time needed for this educational process into the project schedule.
- Sponsors will likely find it helpful to encourage the FAA to participate in the coordinating activities with state and local agencies. FAA participation can be helpful in reinforcing the airport's regulatory framework and building the understanding about airports.
- When dealing with a regulatory agency impacting the airport project process, sponsors should work to ensure that a specific, high-level person in that agency is responsible for monitoring daily progress and decisions.
- Sponsors should set deadlines collaboratively with regulatory agencies and get agreements on how and when they will provide input into the project process.
- Sponsors should be prepared to financially assist agencies with performing their duties. For key agencies, sponsors may want to consider funding a designated position to assist the agency with completing its duties.

Occasionally, the other agencies indicated an initial lack of trust at the outset of a project due to a feeling that sponsors did not listen well and did not understand the issues of importance to the agencies. In some cases, this condition carried on through the project's conclusion. For projects

where the trust gap was narrowed, both parties gave credit to the other for listening and respecting the issues of concern. When that happened, the agency and sponsor were able to work collaboratively to address project issues. The projects that were most successful, or that incurred fewer delays, were noted by both the agencies and sponsors to be the projects in which:

- Coordination occurred early;
- The communication was open, candid and honest; and
- The parties attempted to find common ground that satisfied the needs of both parties.

This is consistent with other communication themes identified in this investigation.

4.6 Working with Local Communities and Citizens

Citizens of the local community who use the airport, live near the airport, work at the airport, and sell supplies and services to the airport are an important group of stakeholders for an airport capacity project. In addition to individual citizens, other groups of stakeholders include local agencies, representatives of political jurisdictions in the area, and official and unofficial citizen groups representing interests including important local issues such as a neighborhood interest group. For the purpose of this guidebook, the local communities and citizens will be considered an interested party without official approval responsibility.

It is important to recognize that even though the members of this group do not have an official, regulatory-based approval responsibility, their support and opinions weigh heavily on the decisions made by other stakeholders, particularly local, state, and federal agencies, as demonstrated recently on a major runway project. When local concerns were not addressed proactively, the vocal public opposition slowed state and local agency review in the permitting phase. One community representative interviewed observed that "airport sponsors need to deal with communities and citizens with respect, and avoid the notion that the airport is the big kid on the block that will always get its way."

There are two fundamental principles for effectively working with communities that are similar to principles outlined elsewhere in this guidebook. First, pre-planning is essential. Each community has its own culture that is reflected in the diversity of interests and the types of active organizations found there. Early in the conceptual stage of project planning, the sponsor needs to evaluate the issues that could fuel public opinion or mobilize either project support or opposition. This assessment should be done candidly and with an understanding of both the issues and the established community networks. The pre-planning assessment should be done for every project—even if a similar project was done in a nearby community or for the same community ten years ago. The findings should be incorporated into a community outreach plan that addresses the project's unique conditions.

It is important to make an early assessment of the local community and its citizens. In a community with an active environmental protection group, the sponsor should expect that the environmental impacts of the project will be closely monitored. For example, if a capacity project will impact a historic district with an active preservation board, the sponsor can expect that it will be an important issue that needs to be managed thoughtfully.

A proactive approach is the second theme or strategy that has proven to be beneficial. Although it may initially appear to be costly and time-consuming, a long-term view of project success will often provide a different perspective. The up-front investments will pay multiplied dividends when a project advances to time-critical phases.

A proactive approach in the communications plan to address interests of local concern would likely include regular meetings with interest groups as well as messaging to recognize their specific concerns along with information about mitigation options. The stakeholder plan should identify the most influential community organizations and should address them accordingly. This might include allocating staff time and resources on a regular basis to attend organizational meetings and including a representative from that organization on the steering committee.

The issues that are important to the citizens in the local community may not be the same issues that the sponsor and government officials have identified as key technical and regulatory hurdles for a project. However, if they are issues of local importance, they are important issues for the project's success.

Maintaining a proactive strategy requires carrying out the actions presented later in this section. It also includes being cognizant of community concerns and challenges early in the project process, when they are much easier to address or mitigate successfully. When a proactive strategy is successful in minimizing or calming the opposition, it also presents a better foundation for project proponents to speak out and be visible project supporters.

There are many examples to be found of projects that failed as a result of underestimating the project impact of community opposition. Even though these individuals and groups do not have an official role, they can certainly influence the outcome of the process. The project found a correlation between successful projects and those sponsors who invested in pre-planning and proactive communication and outreach strategies.

4.7 Working with the Media

The communications plan developed by the sponsor will provide an approach to working with the media, and communicating through traditional and social media. Sponsors should affirmatively and proactively seek to engage all appropriate media outlets to convey the substance, timing, and process for their project. All coordination efforts should be initiated in a spirit of cooperation and inclusivity from the beginning. It is important to include key media connections in the initial effort in order to encourage a positive relationship. Sponsors can use the media to broadcast the project messages and build support in the community.

Of course, sometimes the media coverage of the airport capacity project is not generated by the sponsor. In some cases, conflict between project advocates and opponents is covered by the news media. Coverage might include a vocal argument at a public meeting or a picket line in front of the airport. In other cases, traditional and social media will be used as a platform by project opponents. In addition to proactive messaging, the media plan should consider how to respond to negative press during the project.

There are two distinct relationships that can be nurtured with the local print media to encourage positive coverage in the local press. One is with the editorial review board, and the second is with the reporters responsible for covering the airport news. It is important to develop distinct relationships with both of them through outreach and education. Editorial board visits should, to the extent possible, include the sponsor and a diverse group of project supporters to demonstrate a broad base of support in the community.

Sponsors should remember that airport capacity projects are complex, and the issues related to the project may be completely foreign to the media. One of the lessons learned, reported during the interviews, was the benefit of taking time to educate key media leaders about project details. Advance education requires planning and thoughtful understanding of the needs of each media outlet. When this was done successfully, media leaders were better able to understand the substance and context for the news they were reporting. This approach increased the accuracy of the reporting and helped strengthen the relationship with the media. It also positioned the sponsor as an expert who was contacted by the traditional media for a reaction to a newsworthy event. The investment in educating the media was also credited with significantly increasing the sponsor's credibility and the likelihood that the media would accept the sponsor's perspective on the news.

The media communications plan should ideally describe a comprehensive strategy for ongoing public outreach and assign a variety of personnel to the tasks. Senior management can provide background briefings at public events or press conferences arranged for that purpose. Airport staff can organize tours of the airport. A professional consulting team can be called on to explain complex planning documents.

Finally, the sponsor's staff must be responsive to the needs of media professionals. If a television reporter needs a knowledgeable spokesperson, a newspaper reporter needs a detailed interview, or a blogger needs a quick response, the sponsor's staff should be prepared to respond in a timely manner. A thoughtful media relations strategy recognizes that different media outlets have different deadlines, different information needs, want different persona to speak, and always want their own unique angle on any newsworthy event. Sponsors who understand and respond to these needs will help ensure that their version of the story receives the attention they desire.

CHAPTER 5

Summary

Key Takeaways

- Recognizing that each project is unique, sponsors should determine individually how to tailor the recommendations in this guidebook to their specific situation. This guidebook is not a checklist that can be followed the same way on every project because airports, project details, timing, and location all differ.
- Time and money spent up-front on planning and organizational activities is the best investment that can be made. The expense pales in comparison to future construction costs or project delays.
- Know what development is needed, be clear about when and why it is needed, and have the necessary data to support that need.
- Be certain to have support from the highest level of state and local political leaders, support from the business community, and if possible, identify a prominent business leader to help champion the project.
- Develop a communications outreach plan before the project work begins. Be proactive with the project message.
- Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders is extremely important and takes time and effort. The specific approach begins with a stakeholder plan that needs to be flexible, as it will likely evolve over time.
- Understand the roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders. Anticipate their concerns and objections before engaging with them.
- Perhaps the most important aspect of organizing for success is to have a leader in the organization vested with project success. This person is both tasked with daily project oversight and accountable to the top leadership for the ultimate success of the project.
- Thoroughly consider project alternatives; if the sponsor does not, someone else will.
- Coordinate early with key high-level FAA officials to gain support for the project. Embrace a partnership with the FAA, and work through challenges.
- Deal respectfully with communities and citizens. Focus efforts on the most influential community organizations and the issues that are most likely to have widespread public traction.
- The media provides a vehicle for building either support or opposition, and for disseminating information. Be proactive with them. Social media provide free access to a wide variety of stakeholders for the exchange of information.

This investigation revealed a wide variety of methods used to build and maintain support for airport capacity improvements. While there is no way to create a single checklist and provide uniform, step-by-step instructions, there are many important themes and successful practices gathered in this guidebook that can be applied to airport capacity projects.

Common themes throughout this guidebook include establishing a communications outreach plan from the outset and organizing stakeholder groups, while also having transparent messages and open lines of communication. The value of building trusting relationships with project stakeholders by understanding their perspective and recognizing their concerns was another element that was regularly linked with project success. This guidebook can help the sponsor and others better understand the lifecycle of an airport capacity project, and can provide some instructions for navigating the complex and lengthy journey through the project process.

APPENDIX A

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADO	FAA's Airports District Office
AIP	Airport Improvement Program
ALP	Airport Layout Plan
ATC	Air Traffic Control
ATO	FAA's Air Traffic Organization
BCA	Benefit-Cost Analysis
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COE	Army Corps of Engineers
DOI	Department of Interior
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FWS	Fish & Wildlife Service
GA	General Aviation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NPS	National Park Service
SMS	Safety Management System
TAF	FAA's Terminal Area Forecast
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation

APPENDIX B

Glossary

Airline – An air transportation system including its equipment, routes, operating personnel, and management.

Airport – An area of land or other hard surface, excluding water, that is used or intended to be used for the landing and takeoff of aircraft, including any buildings or facilities (14 CFR 139.5).

Airport Improvement Program (AIP) – Provides grants to public agencies—and in some cases to private owners and entities—for the planning and development of public-use airports that are included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) (FAA).

Airport Layout Plan (ALP) – A scaled drawing of existing and proposed land and facilities necessary for the operation and development of an airport.

Airport Users – Airlines, aircraft operators, and other airport tenants (concessions, etc.).

Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) – A systematic process for calculating and comparing benefits and costs of a project.

Bystanders – Those stakeholders or individuals neither supporting nor opposing a project.

Charrette – A collaborative community planning and design process that brings stakeholders together in intensive work sessions to explore a range of design opportunities and solutions.

Clean Air Act – The law that defines EPA's responsibilities for protecting and improving the nation's air quality and the stratospheric ozone layer (EPA).

Clean Water Act – Establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters (EPA).

Community – Citizens, businesses, and political jurisdictions.

Consultant – A person or company that provides expert advice professionally.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – Determines the significance of the environmental effects of a proposed project and looks at alternative means to achieve an agency's objectives. The EA is intended to be a concise document that briefly provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an EIS.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A more detailed evaluation of the environmental impacts of a proposed project. An EIS can result from the findings of an EA, or in some circumstances an agency may wish to undertake the completion of an EIS without the initial drafting of an EA.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) – The United States government agency responsible for ensuring the safe and efficient use of the nation's airports and airspace. A few of the entities within the FAA include: Headquarters (HQ), Airports District Offices (ADO), and Air Traffic Organization (ATO).

Hubs – Airport hubs are classified by the FAA as either small (having between 0.05% and 0.25% of annual passenger boardings), medium (having between 0.25% and 1% annual passenger boardings), or large (having over 1% of annual passenger boardings).

Interest Groups – A group of persons working on behalf of or strongly supporting a particular cause (i.e., business, legislation, and environmental protection).

Master Plan – A document and drawings that address the development of a specific airport from the physical, economic, social, and political jurisdictional perspectives.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) – A formal business document used to outline an agreement made between two separate entities, groups or individuals.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – Establishes national environmental policy and goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment and provides a process for implementing these goals within the federal agencies (EPA).

NextGen – A comprehensive overhaul of our National Airspace System to make air travel more convenient and dependable, while ensuring the flight is as safe, secure, and hassle-free as possible (FAA).

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) – Stakeholders who have particular interests which may impact the development of a project. Examples of NGOs include the Sierra Club, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the National Parks Conservation association.

Opponents – Those stakeholders or individuals opposed to a project.

Passengers – People traveling, service animals in the cabin, and live cargo on board aircraft and in the terminal area.

Project Process – The technical work elements necessary to move projects from concept/planning through commissioning/operating. Typically, the process includes five phases: airport planning, environmental planning and permitting, design, construction, and commissioning.

Regulatory Agencies – Agencies at the local, state, and federal levels who have the authority to regulate development and other actions such as the USDOT, the Army COE, and the US EPA to name a few.

Safety Management System (SMS) – The formal, top-down business approach to managing safety risk, which includes a systemic approach to managing safety, including the necessary organizational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures. (Order VS 8000.367).

Social Media – Venues such as Facebook and Twitter that provide instantaneous and free access for the exchange of information.

Soft Costs – An industry term for an expense item that is not considered a direct construction cost.

Sponsors – Airport operators (public or private) of a public-use airport.

Stakeholders – Individuals or entities that have an interest or concern in something (i.e., airport development).

Supporters – Those stakeholders or individuals in support of a project.

Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) – The official forecast of aviation activity at FAA facilities. These forecasts are prepared to meet the budget and planning needs of FAA and provide information for use by state and local authorities, the aviation industry, and the public (FAA).

Use and Lease Agreement – A contract between two parties outlining the terms of use or lease of property.

APPENDIX C

List of Projects Researched for the Guidebook

New Airports
Denver International Airport
El Toro Reuse (failed military conversion)
Panama City, Florida New Airport
St. George Utah Replacement Airport

New Runways
Seattle Runway 16R-34L
MSP Runway 17-35
Atlanta Runway 10-28
Dulles Runway 1L-19R
LAX Runway Relocation

Streamlined EISs
New FAA Streamlined EIS (PHL)

New Terminal Projects
SFO International Terminal
Indianapolis New Terminal
DFW Terminal D
Jet Blue Terminal at JFK

Ongoing Projects
Chicago O'Hare Modernization Program
Ft. Lauderdale Runway 9R-27L Extension
Aspen Runway Extension
Mammoth Lakes Runway Extension
Sacramento New Terminal

Abbreviations and acronyms used without definitions in TRB publications:

A4A	Airlines for America
AAAE	American Association of Airport Executives
AASHO	American Association of State Highway Officials
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACI–NA	Airports Council International–North America
ACRP	Airport Cooperative Research Program
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APTA	American Public Transportation Association
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ASME	American Society of Mechanical Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
ATA	American Trucking Associations
CTAA	Community Transportation Association of America
CTBSSP	Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOE	Department of Energy
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FMCSA	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HMCRP	Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (2012)
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASAO	National Association of State Aviation Officials
NCFRP	National Cooperative Freight Research Program
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
PHMSA	Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
RITA	Research and Innovative Technology Administration
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005)
TCRP	Transit Cooperative Research Program
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998)
TRB	Transportation Research Board
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
U.S.DOT	United States Department of Transportation