

PROJECT CONCEPT

AIRPORT SUSTAINABILITY GUIDEBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The word sustainability has many connotations that may imply different things to different audiences. As it relates to airports, sustainability can be considered in the context of administration, procurement, planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operations. The sustainability framework can consist of policies, procedures, and practices that reduce facility and operational costs as a result of better utilization of resources, higher levels of efficiency, and a greater emphasis on planning. For example, sustainability planning and performance benchmarking and tracking can have a profound impact on costs, both hard and soft, as a result of reduced resource usage (typically resulting in fewer greenhouse gas emissions), improved passenger satisfaction (leading to increased terminal concessions revenue and positive public relations implications), a more strategic use of airport property (increasing non-aeronautical revenue and decreasing airport-wide costs), and reduced waste generation and increased recycling (lowering waste management fees) to name a few. There are other positive impacts related to customer and employee benefits as well as improvements to environmental quality and stakeholder relationships, especially with neighboring residents, businesses, and local governments and permitting and regulatory agencies. It is important that considerations of economic viability and operational efficiency be the foundation of airport sustainability planning, with strong consideration also being given to natural resource conservation and the social responsibility of the airport.¹

An Airport Sustainability Guidebook will support the Department’s goal of having Florida’s public use airports being financially self-sufficient. Additionally, such a guidebook would further enforce FDOT’s and the Aviation and Spaceport Office’s mission to provide a system that “enhances economic prosperity and preserves the quality of our environment and our communities” and FDOT and ASO values such as integrity (“We always do what is right”) and customer driven (“We listen to our customers”).

There are two basic ways that airports can achieve financial self-sufficiency: increasing revenues and reducing costs. Currently FDOT provides guidance, technical support, and funding in an effort to help

airports achieve this goal of financial self-sufficiency. The current guidance provided by the FDOT Aviation and Spaceports Office addresses facility development and long-range planning through the master planning process, focusing on meeting design standards and planning for future needs. The existing GA Airport Business Plan Guidebook is an important resource that provides many helpful tools to increase revenues and build relationships within the airport’s community. The Airport Sustainability Guidebook would focus on making the most efficient use of airport



¹ This is consistent with the Airport Council International – North America (ACI-NA) definition of airport sustainability: a holistic approach to managing an airport so as to ensure the integrity of the Economic Viability, Operational Efficiency, Natural Resource Conservation and Social Responsibility (EONS) of the airport.

resources with an eye to reducing operational costs while providing a balance among economic growth, community needs, environmental concerns, and operations. Together, the GA Airport Business Plan Guidebook and the proposed Airport Sustainability Guidebook would provide Florida's airports with the tools needed to increase revenues, decrease costs, become financially self-sufficient, and support the overall goals of their adopted master plans. These tools also further strengthen the position of the FDOT Aviation and Spaceports Office as a nation-wide leader in aviation and airport development.

PROJECT NEED

As part of its Sustainable Master Plan Pilot Program, the FAA provided select eligible airports in the U.S. with AIP grant funds to complete sustainability planning documents for their facilities. These planning efforts included recommendations that help to achieve economic growth, financial self-sufficiency, and efficiencies for daily operations that result in reduced operating costs and improvements in other areas of the airport. The FAA awarded 44 grants during the Pilot Program phase to gather lessons learned that are forming the basis of national program guidance on sustainability planning currently in development. In Florida, Northeast Florida Regional Airport (St. Augustine), Vero Beach Municipal Airport, and Tampa International Airport have received funding for sustainability planning as part of FAA's Pilot Program. Comprehensive sustainability planning is typically done in two ways: sustainable master plans (for example, Vero Beach) integrate sustainability into all aspects of an airport's traditional long-range planning while sustainability management plans are typically stand-alone documents (for example, St. Augustine and Tampa) that develop a framework for integrating sustainability into all facets of an organization (administration, procurement, operations, maintenance, planning, design, construction, etc.). Both use various planning methods to identify ways to increase the economic benefits to airports along with other benefits such as reducing environmental impacts and improving public perception.

FAA funding for sustainable master plans or sustainability management plans is now available through the AIP. Sponsors should coordinate with the Orlando ADO to discuss planning scopes and AIP funding availability. Other airports in the state that have conducted some level of sustainability planning without FAA funding include (but is not limited to) Jacksonville, Orlando (GOAA), Lee County, and Naples. The proposed Airport Sustainability Guidebook will also examine and detail other sources of federal, state, local, and private funding options and partnerships available to airports to implement sustainability initiatives.

In addition to the FAA's evolving guidance on sustainability planning, other federal, state, and local requirements and guidance are being used in transportation and other areas; there is no one clear set of guidelines that Florida airports can follow. The range of guidance, from FAA to ACRP to others being used by cities and counties within Florida, needs to be distilled and evaluated for its relevance and usefulness to Florida's airports to maximize their investment in the planning effort.

GENERAL SCOPE

The anticipated scope of this project will be to develop a statewide resource document that can be used by airports in Florida to develop sustainability-related documents such as sustainable master plans, sustainability management plans, or to incorporate sustainability into their capital improvement planning process. This will involve developing an Airport Sustainability Guidebook that would be organized in a way very similar to the FDOT GA Airport Business Plan Guidebook and the FDOT Master Planning Guidebook. Based on the latest updates of FAA guidance on airport master planning, the AIP Handbook, recycling, and airport design, it is understood that the FDOT Master Planning Guidebook may be updated soon. The Sustainability Guidebook project could be coordinated with that update since the new FDOT Airport Master Planning Guidebook may contain similar sustainability content, particularly regarding the FAA's requirement to incorporate sustainability into federally-funded master plans in lieu of a standalone sustainability management plan.

The scope of services development should also mirror that of the GA Business Plan Guidebook by including a small group of stakeholders (a steering committee) who can provide input into the key points that should be considered.

This information can be used to develop a scope of work that will improve the quality, value, applicability, and accuracy of the final product.

The scope of work should include a framework for sustainability planning for airports of all sizes and types in the state (commercial service, GA reliever, other GA). The scope should also be comprehensive enough to provide guidance for varying focus areas/priorities depending on an airport's particular economic, community, environmental, or operational influences. This guidance can be based partly on the ACRP reports, FAA ACs, the Sustainability Aviation Guidance Alliance (SAGA), and other FDOT guidance, as well as sustainability initiatives that are in place for other modes of transportation and used by cities and counties, many of which are airport sponsors. In addition, a set of case studies can be included based on sample Florida airports of different types and sizes that have completed this type of planning or implemented various sustainability initiatives. The scope should also include a set of best management practices, sample scopes of work, and other helpful resources (including the possibility of computer or web-based tools to assist in planning and implementation).

To help guide the project, a group of stakeholders, including FAC, will be used to develop the guidebook. This can be an expanded group of the stakeholders that were utilized to develop the project's scope of services. Once the final product is completed, the project should also use CFASPP and FAC events to roll out the guidebook, describing its contents, benefits, and how to use the document.

BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING TO FLORIDA'S AIRPORTS:

- Increases the safety of individual airports and our state system as a whole;
- Reduces operating costs at airports;
- Results in better utilization of airport assets;
- Better addresses fluctuating energy costs;
- Stretches AIP and FDOT funding and grants farther;
- Increases operational efficiency;
- Reduces environmental impacts; and
- Builds community support for and positively impacts the public perception of airports.