

1. MASTER PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Background

In September of 2016, the City of Gary, in conjunction with the Gary/Chicago International Airport Authority (GCIAA) and its contracted airport operator, AvPORTS, initiated a Master Plan Update for Gary/Chicago International Airport (GCIA or the Airport) to provide a guide for the Airport’s future growth and development. The Master Plan evaluates existing Airport infrastructure and capacity, comparing it to potential demand, to determine how the Airport can efficiently accommodate aviation demand throughout the planning horizon (20-year period).

The Airport’s previous Master Plan update was completed in 2001. Since that time, the aviation industry, the Airport, and the region have changed significantly, making it important to update planning under a new set of goals and objectives. These goals and objectives provide guidance to move the Master Plan forward in a direction that best meets the needs of the Airport, its stakeholders, and the community it serves. Goals and objectives were developed as one of the first work products of the Master Plan, conducted on September 7, 2016 during a meeting among the planning team, including GCIAA and AvPORTS staff.

GCIA serves as the third Chicago airport and participates in an agreement with the City of Chicago Department of Aviation (The Compact) that provides mutual benefit and annual funding to GCIAA for operations and capital improvements at the Airport. The Compact recognizes the Airport’s role and its benefit to the Chicago area as a reliever airport for cargo and passenger air operations. This compact, and the Airport’s proximity to a large metropolitan area create opportunities for growth at the Airport.

While there is no scheduled commercial passenger activity at GCIA General Aviation is thriving. In addition to corporate tenants such as Boeing’s Corporate Flight Department, two Fixed-Base Operators (FBOs) provide charters and house private aircraft. During the planning horizon, both FBOs will be expanding facilities and services, with the Airport specifying minimum levels of investment. GCIA is also one of the diversion airports in the region for Southwest Airlines, however the airport is not high on the priority list due in part to the ready and available facilities needed to deplane and process passengers and bags. The Master Plan will need to recognize and plan for the growth in both General Aviation and commercial passenger traffic to achieve the airports goals and objectives.

1.2 Master Plan Goals and Objectives

During the September 7, 2016 Master Plan kick-off meeting, the GCIAA and AvPORTS established a Master Plan Vision statement used to develop a series of goals and objectives based on the feedback received in the meeting’s visioning session. While some of the documented goals and objectives extend outside the scope of what the Master Plan could accomplish, they are captured to highlight the importance to GCIAA and other key stakeholders. Goals and objectives were organized by Overall and Master Plan specific, and further categorized by forecast, airside, landside, terminal, support facilities, environmental, and financial, land use and community. Specific actions and considerations were also discussed for elements of the Master Plan analysis.

Master Plan Vision Statement

Position the Airport as a driver of economic growth, create a business-friendly environment for firms that require support, rail, highway, marine, pipeline, and air-oriented modes of transport, and market Gary and Northwest Indiana as a nexus of robust transportation and infrastructure networks.

1.2.1 Overall Goals and Objectives

1.2.1.1 The Airport

Three key initiatives are underway for the Airport by GCIAA and AvPORTS which will directly influence the Master Plan. These include return of commercial service to the Airport, securing customs capabilities and extending crosswind Runway 2-20.

Return of Commercial Service

GCIAA envisions a return of commercial service to GCIA, first in the form of charter activity and then growing into scheduled service, ideally from a Low-Cost Carrier that is new to the region. An air service study estimated that approximately 3 million passengers live within the catchment area, providing a customer base for a carrier. GCIAA is actively marketing the Airport's benefits and potential to passenger airlines.

Additionally, GCIAA and AvPORTS are investigating opportunities and marketing potential air carriers to initiate dedicated cargo carrier operations at GCIA. Current cargo activity is handled by the FBOs and is limited to small just-in-time shipments of small quantities of high value goods. However, the proximity to the greater Chicago area with its active movement of goods provides a long-term opportunity for the Airport. Cargo growth is envisioned to need a dedicated area for aircraft parking, warehousing, and truck parking/movements.

Secure Customs Capability

GCIAA is in the process of establishing secure customs capabilities necessary to establish international service at GCIA. At the time of the kick-off meeting, GCIAA had secured 30-percent complete design for a General Aviation customs facility. This is expected to be heavily used by FBOs and individual corporate tenants at the Airport. An additional Federal Inspection Services facility would be necessary to allow for the introduction of scheduled and charter international passenger service.

Runway Extension

GCIAA recently completed extension of Runway 12-30 to 8,859 feet providing greater range for current tenants and itinerant aircraft. GCIAA continues to market the runway and the Airport's capabilities.

In addition, the Master Plan will address an extension of crosswind Runway 2-20. Preliminary planning was done to evaluate possible lengths and showed that an 1,800-foot extension may be possible, resulting in a total runway length of about 5,400 feet. Tenants have expressed a need for the crosswind runway when wind conditions don't favor use of Runway 12-30, however at its current length Runway 2-20 has limited utility. The Dean Mitchell Power Plant located off the extended runway centerline of Runway 2-20 is being decommissioned and demolished by its owner/operator, IPSCO. The stacks and other buildings in the plant had been identified as airspace obstructions for the runway. Removal of these will improve the ability to extend Runway 2-20.

1.2.1.2 Surrounding Land

GCIAA recognizes that access to and compatible development of land surrounding the Airport will support future development at the Airport. Goals related to surrounding land include:

- Advance Buffington Harbor, Airport Road, and Clark Road improvement initiatives. With the development of Buffington casinos, the Airport lost direct access from Airport Road/Industrial Road to Cline Avenue going northbound. The on-ramp was removed because it was too close to the Buffington intersection. Regaining a more direct route to Cline Avenue would be beneficial for

access. Airport Road and Clark Road are the main links between the Airport and the highway network but are in poor condition. Improvements have been proposed by the City and State.

- Advocate for higher and better use of lakefront properties, particularly with land uses compatible with the Airport.
- Integrate long-term Airport access vision with local and regional planning.

1.2.1.3 Infrastructure

GCIAA's goals related to infrastructure include both on and off airport improvements. These improvements will spur functionality and foster economic growth and activity as new business joins the region. Goals can be summarized as:

- Advance off airport road improvement projects
- Improve Airport utilities, including expanding to future developable airport properties
- Promote on- and off-airport development opportunities to both domestic and international parties.

1.2.1.4 Natural Assets

GCIAA wants to enhance the natural assets in the Airport environs. While these actions do not directly affect the Master Plan, they will be considered during the planning process. These objectives include:

- Formalize the Airport's sustainable practices protocol
- Implement Rails to Trails Project
- Pursue a comprehensive approach to wetland issues

1.2.1.5 Community Participation and Support

The Airport's role in the community is as an employer and generator of economic activity. However, what happens at the Airport and how that activity benefits the community is not widely known by much of the community. While community participation is a component of the master planning process, the goals identified in this section are those that go beyond the Master Plan and fosters a relationship between the Airport and the community it serves.

GCIAA expects that as Airport businesses grow and thrive, they will provide additional opportunity for members of the Gary community and the region. The Airport could benefit from a regional workforce development commission that could provide training and resources needed by residents to help fill jobs at the Airport and elsewhere.

As such, GCIAA's goals around community participation include:

- Develop a central information resources database
- Job postings on the Airport website that are also linked to community and trade organizations

1.2.2 Master Plan Analysis Goals and Objectives

Flowing from the Master Plan Vision Statement, this section outlines specific goals and objectives developed to help guide this Master Plan Update. These objectives were developed based on discussions of needs and prioritizing those needs by Airport and AvPORTS staff for various planning elements and functional areas.

1.2.2.1 Forecast

Two goals were defined for the forecast elements:

- 1) Consult with FAA to reach agreement on methodology to develop a realistic passenger and operations forecast
- 2) Propose feasible air service scenarios by demonstrating demand for air service

1.2.2.2 Airside

Three goals were defined for the airside elements:

- 1) Extend Runway 2-20 to provide additional capacity and support to the Airport's primary Runway 12-30
- 2) Evaluate the opportunity to improve the Airport's approach capabilities to allow for additional aircraft operations in inclement weather
- 3) Evaluate the reconstruction of Taxiway B to provide greater runway to taxiway separation for larger aircraft along the full length of the Taxiway

1.2.2.3 Landside

Two goals were defined for the landside element:

- 1) Acquire property around the airport to allow for future expansion and development (i.e. property west of the airport)
- 2) Improve landside vehicular access to development sites in and around the airport

1.2.2.4 Terminal

Two goals were defined for the terminal elements:

- 1) Provide facilities to accommodate international services such as Federal Inspection Services (FIS), and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- 2) Expand and reconfigure existing facilities to accommodate future growth

1.2.2.5 Support Facilities

Four goals were defined for support facilities:

- 1) Plan for expansion of FBO facilities to accommodate future growth as a result of general aviation operations being moved from Chicago O'Hare and Midway
- 2) Plan for stand-alone cargo operations with future expansion capabilities as an alternate or supplemental cargo option in the region
- 3) Improve and/or relocate Airport Administration, Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF), and Air Traffic Control Tower to optimize facility placement, response times and visibility
- 4) Increase ramp and apron space to allow the Airport to facilitate diversion aircraft

1.2.2.6 **Environmental**

Four goals and considerations were defined for environmental elements:

- 1) Mitigate environmental impacts as a result of any Airport development projects which include Runway 2-20 extension
- 2) Review locations of wetlands on Airport property and in the vicinity to minimize potential development challenges
- 3) Evaluate zoning ordinance (to consider compatible land use for both on and off-airport)
- 4) Consider ground water issues (contamination and shallow water table) in planning for development

1.2.2.7 **Financial**

GCIAA's goal is to be financially sustainable. Four objectives were defined for the financial elements:

- 1) Maximize revenue sources to allow the Airport to be financially sustainable
- 2) Provide infrastructure and amenities to grow and attract new tenants
- 3) Identify opportunities to expand non-aviation revenue (i.e. restaurants, hotels, etc.), both at the Airport and within the Airport environment (i.e. along Airport Road)
- 4) Maintain relationship with the Chicago Department of Aviation (through the Compact) and continue to market the Airport as Chicago's 3rd Airport