

# Airport report

## A New Airport Under Study

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In 2012 while working feverously to complete the over \$300 million modernization of Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, the New Orleans Aviation Board (NOAB) was also working on a feasibility study for a new airport terminal at the existing airport location in Kenner. New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu had sent a request for the study to the NOAB in their August meeting in 2011. Justification for the study revolved around a number of factors.

*Here are the top five.*

**1.) The Age of the Airport Terminal.** During the recent terminal modernization, issues from age were identified and addressed but were done so at a serious expense. It is inevitable that similar issues will continue with time. In the future, the buildings and other physical equipment of this historical institution will continue to need further attention and care. Particularly as it concerns the aging electrical system, an inefficient heating and cooling system (HVAC) and other support components that the Airport presently relies on for day to day operation. An aging facility hurts two ways. First, it does not make a good impression on behalf of our community and second, it costs more to maintain and increases cost to our airlines that results in hurting business here at MSY.

**2.) Reconfigure Concessions.** The optimum operation for the airport will have non-airline revenue from concessions greater than airline revenue. The correct configuration of concessions will increase our level of customer service with more options and achieve the revenue balance that is necessary. Because of the physical limitations of the existing terminal, the opportunity to reach optimum revenue balance is limited. Our recent modernization effort has maximized the concession configuration possibilities of the existing airport structure.

**3.) In-Line Baggage Screening Solution Needed.** A strategic deficiency in the present terminal is the absence of an inline Explosive Detection System (EDS) for screening checked baggage or luggage. It is a must-have feature in any modern airport of our size. Since September 11, 2001, airport security has been heightened to 100% screening of passenger checked baggage. This results in a high labor cost for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and a slow baggage processing rate. An inline system will improve efficiency by moving more bags in a shorter span of time which would provide a significant savings for the operation of the airport.

**4.) Lack of Full Airport Access.** Because the existing concourses in

the terminal were constructed as four unlinked structures, the lack of an option to transfer between flights on the secure side of the airport results in less flights and less people. The present terminal layout also eliminates full access to all of the new restaurants and concessions that the New Orleans Aviation Board has just introduced, restricting passengers to services on their particular concourse. Due to the present layout of the airport, the ratio of concessions both pre and post security are out of balance.

**5.) Consolidated Checkpoint Needed.** Finally, for the airport to efficiently process the growing number of passengers at Armstrong International through security it will require a consolidated checkpoint that cannot be constructed in the present structure. This was realized when we attempted to install one during the modernization endeavor. Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport handles 80% of the commercial passenger traffic in the state. As our passenger loads continue to grow, a facility that can efficiently serve them will be necessary.

To accurately assess and recommend a direction for the future, a team of seasoned professionals was selected and allocated funding to perform a thorough and exhaustive study. Following their studies, they have been instructed by the NOAB to prepare a summary report on possible design, land-use, feasibility and environmental issues of four alternatives. They are first, maintain the existing facility. Second, do additional construction to the present facility. Third, build a new structure to the west of the existing terminal. And fourth, build a new structure on the north side of the airfield.

As this process moves forward, we will continue to brief you on our progress to develop a world class airport here. The NOAB is committed to providing a first class facility through upgrades to the existing structure and the establishment of a new one as deemed prudent. ✈



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