

Public Workshop #4 Event Summary

July 13th, 2023, 6:30-8:30 PM
Metzner Early Learning Center, 680 Franklin Avenue, Hartford, CT

Introduction

The fourth Public Workshop for the Hartford-Brainard Airport Property Study was held on July 13th, 2023, at the Metzner Early Learning Center at 680 Franklin Avenue in Hartford, CT. Approximately 40 members of the public were in attendance. The workshop consisted of a presentation from Frank Fish and Thomas Madden of BFJ Planning, James Olsen and Joseph Canas of Tighe & Bond, and Jamison Dague of HR&A. The presentation included an update on the project schedule and economic and environmental conditions. Following the presentation, attendees visited stations to discuss the following topics with members of the Planning Team: environmental conditions, economic conditions, airport operations, and the highest and best use for the airport property.



Presentation

Frank Fish of BFJ Planning began the presentation by introducing the Planning Team and subject matter experts. Mr. Fish outlined the study components defined by the legislative mandate and updated the project schedule. Thomas Madden of BFJ Planning then provided an overview of the three identified study decision pathways. Option #1 is for the airport to remain open. Alternative use option #2 is for the airport to close. Lastly, alternative use option #3 is for the airport to remain open and Runway 11-29 to close.

Mr. Madden then elaborated on each option, describing the decision pathway associated with each scenario. For Option #1, in which the airport remains open, Mr. Madden gave an overview of necessary improvements to the site and neighborhood that would need to be addressed, the need to create a remediation and development plan for improvements, the associated improvement costs, and the potential economic impacts and planning actions. For alternative use options #2 and #3, if the entire airport were to close or if just Runway 11-29 were to close, Mr. Madden described the role of the ongoing economic market analysis and environmental assessment, the federal, state, or local government obstacles to implementation, and subsequent economic impacts and planning actions.

In the next section of the presentation, Jamison Dague of HR&A summarized the methodology used to determine the economic impacts of HFD operations. Mr. Dague explained the conceptual HFD operations impacts model, which analyzes each option's quantitative and qualitative impacts. He then described the process of IMPLAN modeling, a widely used economic tool that allows users to analyze the economic effects of changes in various economic sectors. To determine the economic impact analysis of HFD's current operations, HR&A is considering the total impacts from a set of drivers, including onsite and offsite spending by airport users and employers, capital investments in the airport, visitor spending, and CAA capital maintenance spending. To model the economic and fiscal impacts of the redevelopment scenarios, HR&A is analyzing the potential impacts of construction costs, sales, visitor spending, and employment.

James Olsen of Tighe & Bond then described the current Phase II/Phase III Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) status. Site work was completed June 23rd, 2023, and Phase II/III ESA observations included brown fine to medium sand and silt of varying depths overlying a silt/clayey silt. Urban debris consisting of asphalt, brick, and concrete was noted at several locations. Mr. Olsen showed a map of Phase II/III ESA release areas, highlighting the release areas that exceeded RSR criteria. Additionally, groundwater impacts are currently being identified. DEEP is reviewing Phase II/III ESA findings. The next steps include a remedial action plan to examine how any identified conditions would likely be remediated under the development options, stormwater, and flood analysis, and a cost proposal for any clean-up if warranted for the development scenarios. Subsequently, Joseph Canas of Tighe & Bond described the methodology for floodplain considerations, including gathering data (available maps and levee data), visiting the site, confirming regulatory requirements, identifying risks, and developing conclusions and recommendations.

Next Steps

The next and final Public Workshop will be held on August 10th, 2023, from 6:30-8:30 PM at the Metzner Early Learning Center at 680 Franklin Avenue in Hartford, CT.

Stations

Following the presentation, representatives from the Planning Team discussed comments and concerns from participants at stations organized by the following topics: environmental conditions, economic conditions, airport operations, and the highest and best use for the airport property.

