The posts below, were originally published in 2013 on the stopcta.info "Factoids" blog. Note that many of the verification links to the original sources no longer exist due to technological 'advances' and the demise of local news publications, many through corporate media acquisition. RIP community news.

March 2013

Friday, March 8, 2013 **We're baaack**

Things have been quiet on the StopCTA blog for several months. But that does not mean we haven't been keeping a close eye this project and revisiting the documents that spawned the aberration to uncover new insights.

Note to those who think the proposed CTA is dead . . . it's not over till it's over and never assume otherwise. Even if the 381 Agreement with Bastrop County were to vanish into history, the airport could still be built if enough deluded investors buy into the developer's fantasy.

StopCTA will remain vigilant . . .

Posted by noairport at 06:45:33 in Announcements, Players, Developer, County, The 'expendable'

Friday, March 08, 2013 Banking on it

A few weeks ago, the USACE posted a Public Notice for 'XS Ranch Mitigation Bank'. See: http://www.swf.usace.army.mil/Media/PublicNotices/tabid/6600/Article/10308/swf-2008-00281-xs-ranch-mitigationbank.aspx

Just what is a 'mitigation bank'?

According to Wikipedia: See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitigation_banking

"Mitigation banking is the restoration, creation, enhancement, or preservation of a wetland, stream, or habitat conservation area which offsets expected adverse impacts to similar nearby ecosystems. The goal is to replace the exact function and value of the specific wetland habitats that would be adversely affected by a proposed project.

In the United States, the federal government (under section 404 of the Clean Water Act) as well as many state and local governments, require mitigation for the disturbance or destruction of wetland, stream, or endangered wildlife habitat. Once approved by regulatory agencies the mitigation bank 'may sell credits' to developers whose projects will impact these various ecosystems."

So why is this being posted to the StopCTA site? There are several related reasons. It is a reminder of another (and more desirable) development on the banks of the Colorado River in Bastrop County and also of the role of mitigation banking in the process.

In the case of XS Ranch, the low-density, low-impact land use would not require extensive mitigation. But improving the habitat near Big Sandy Creek would benefit the ecology of the area and also provide a source of revenue for the project. Anyone familiar with the trading of carbon credits will be familiar with the concept. It will be a while though before the bank is approved and established. One already established mitigation bank is at Wilbarger Creek.

The proposed CTA has been on hold for just over a year for failure to submit an adequate mitigation plan to complete the USACE permitting process. (An analysis of the situation that led to the developer's failure to meet the June 30, 2012 deadline is detailed in 'The big stall' posted on July 07, 2012 in http://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2012/factoids2012.pdf .

One way that deficiency could be satisfied would be to buy mitigation banking credits. If there is the will, all it would take is money to breathe new life into Bastrop County's most notorious albatross.

Posted by noairport at 20:47:00 in Players, Developer, Federal

Sunday, March 10, 2013 **Size matters**

Size matters

When T. R. Reid confirmed in the October 31, 2010 Austin American Statesman article 'Airport faces headwinds' that larger aircraft such as 737s would not be barred from the airport, those of us opposing the CTA project felt vindicated as we had been predicting for some time that would be the case.

On the other side of the equation, county employees and elected officials generally expressed surprise and denial. We had been told again and again they 'believed' the airport would only be used for smaller aircraft. But a recent discovery indicates that T. R. Reid's 'revelation' should not have come as a surprise to those who masterminded the 381 Agreement with the CTA.

The Perryman Group's May 2009 PR snow job titled 'The Sky's the Limit' leaves no doubt that large jets would be using the proposed CTA. In fact, accommodating those aircraft was presented as a major selling point. On page 15, a bullet point under the section Lack of similar facilities states:

"The 7,500 foot runway would allow for the landing of any type of jet if needed, a service not offered at other general aviation airports nearby. The longer runway planned for CTA can also accommodate the requirements of larger corporate aircrafts."

It is interesting to note that sections of the scanned document that we received from an ORR to the County appear to have been highlighted. The bullet point quoted above was one of the highlighted passages.

So there is no doubt that the County was on notice about the aircraft that would be using the airport even before the first draft of the 381 Agreement was submitted on September 1, 2009. Hopefully, that will put the 'we-didn't-know' myth to rest once and for all. You've been busted so let's move on.

Posted by noairport at 06:29:03 in Impacts, Quality of life, Players, Developer, County, The 'expendable

Monday, March 11, 2013 **Too bad, so sad**

In the beginning there was the 'private' **Colorado Riverland Ranch Airport**. Then there was the 'public' **Central Texas Airport**. Not a very appetizing addition to the idyllic Bastrop County landscape. But then the 'Green Corporate Centers' (GCC) and the promise of mega economic development came along to entice our County Commissioners and get them on board. Suddenly the airport was more than just an airport even though the first mention of the GCC, couched in generalizations and almost an afterthought, doesn't appear until page 9 of the infamous Perryman Group's report.

The question is . . . did the promise of the 'Green Corporate Centers' development actually make it into the 381 Agreement? If it's there, StopCTA can't find it.

The project requirements, defined in Section 9 of the 381, include the following elements:

(i) the Airport (ii) Commercial Improvements and (iii) Infrastructure Improvements

But nowhere in the 381 Agreement is there any description of what those 'commercial improvements' might be. Even the Perryman report is vague about exactly what the project would include. Page 7 of the report suggests:

"... bringing aviation-related business as well as others wanting to take advantage of the airport to the business park."

The next bullet point is more specific about the CTA's plans:

"Among other things, Phase I will include the basic infrastructure for the airport and roadways as well as 35 hangars."

Maybe all that GCC hype is lumped under 'other things'. Or perhaps 'other things' merely refers to MRO (Maintenance and Repair Operations or Overhaul) facilities necessary to support airport activities. Likewise, the 381 Agreement provides no specific answers in the parameters of the 'Required Project Development'.

To add insult to injury, this clause makes it absolutely clear that all promises of greeny goodness have vanished:

Section 3. Entire Agreement.

(a) All Agreements. All oral and written agreements between the Parties to this Agreement relating to the subject matter of this Agreement that were made prior to the execution of this Agreement have been reduced to writing and are contained in this Agreement.

Then came the final admission in the revised 'Environmental Information Document' (EID) submitted to the USACE in January 2012, that states unequivocally that the requested permitting is only for the airport.

So much for that pie-in-the-sky economic development project. Too bad, so sad. The Commissioners have no one to blame but themselves for unanimously approving an inadequately constructed contract that has burdened the County with a stinkin' airport. Period.

Posted by noairport at 04:51:56 in Players, Developer, County

Tuesday, March 12, 2013 **Bye, bye baby**

Bastrop County got more than just a stinkin' airport (see 'Too bad, so sad' immediately above). We got an airport free from regulatory encumbrances regarding public safety that would be troublesome for the developer. This reality is not news to anyone with half a working brain cell who is familiar with this issue. See: 'Fessing up at last' posted January 24, /2011/ in http://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2011/factoids2011.pdf

Let's revisit just how that exemption to the FAA's 14 CFR Part 139 found its way into the 381 Agreement. See: http://www.stopcta.info/docs/14cfr

The exemption was included at County Engineer, Ronnie ('Mr. Aviation Expert') Moore's request. Apparently, the necessity of doing so was sold to the Commissioners as a protection that would exclude large regularly scheduled commercial passenger flights at the proposed CTA. And indeed it does that. But it appears that Mr. Moore failed to inform the Court or legal team that doing so would also exempt the developer from standards outlined in the Advisory Circular 'Hazardous Wildlife Attractants on or Near Airports'. See: https://stopcta.info/docs/FAA_wildlife_hazards.pdf

His priorities and lack of communication open the door to unflattering speculation as to his motivations but this mess is not his fault alone.

Mr. Moore's recommendation was accepted by the Commissioners without an investigation into the full implications of the consequences. Neither did the County's legal advisors raise an objection that this might not be a good idea. All they had to do was actually READ the FAA documents. Instead they allowed the baby to be thrown out with the bathwater. Bye, bye baby. Hello public safety hazard. So much for due diligence.

Posted by noairport at 17:42:24 in Costs, Safety, Players, Developer, County

Saturday, March 30, 2013 Inching forward

In the last few months, the proposed CTA has been quietly inching forward. Last month, the developer's new

environmental consultant, 'Integrated Environmental Solutions', submitted a revised mitigation plan that was requested by the Corps a year ago in February 2012. Should this mitigation plan be accepted by the Corps and TCEQ, permitting for the CTA would be granted.

StopCTA has been aware of the activity at the Corps for months but we were waiting for copies of the submitted documents before making a public statement. Federal agencies have 20 working days to respond to a FOIA request and the requested documents were scheduled to be sent by March 28. But instead of the FOIA documents, we received a letter stating that our request has been sent to the Southwestern Division for "review and determination of releasability".

This is not the first time a FOIA request has been kicked up the bureaucratic chain of command. So it's anybody's guess when that decision will be made and if the documents will be provided or withheld.

In the meantime, the permitting process continues to move forward, inch by inch . . .

Posted by noairport at 14:51:59 PM in Announcements, Developer, Federal

April 2013

Sunday, April 14, 2013 Breaking the code

The documents that had been languishing in FOIA purgatory (see 'Inching forward' immediately above) finally arrived a few days ago. They were responsive to two FOIAs, one submitted on February 13 and another on March 6. Both cast a broad net for any correspondence or submissions regarding the proposed Central Texas Airport from May 1, 2012, the date of our last FOIA, to the present.

Redact-o-mania

These new documents are riddled with redactions. The cryptic codes assigned to each redaction are explained in the cover letter which also cites precedence for the redactions. See: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2013/13docs/13-04-09_cover.pdf

Only a few documents have content that is not redacted and at first glance, it seemed that there was very little to be gleaned from our latest catch. But a closer look revealed some very useful factoids which will be the topics of the following blog entries.

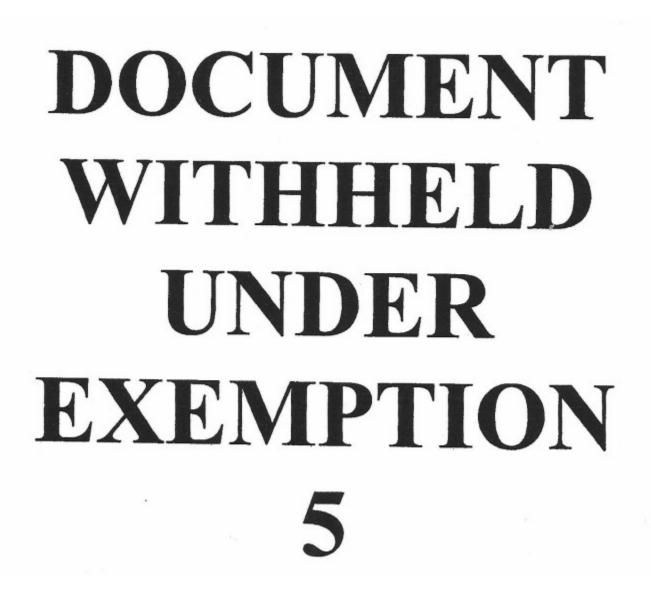
And off we go!

Posted by noairport at 01:12:54 in Developer, Federal

Sunday, April 14, 2013 Let there be light

Nearly a year ago on May 08, 2012 ACI consulting's Lauren Dill submitted a revision to the January 2012 'Environmental Information Document' EID concerning light emissions. The attachment to this email is titled 'EID REVISIONS-light Impacts.doc'.

But this document is nowhere to be found in the FOIA documents we received. In its place, there is a 2 page PDF: See: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2013/13docs/12-05-09_light.pdf



However the Corps did include an FAA document - 'Chapter 16. Light Emissions and Visual Effects' - from the 'Airports Desk Reference' section on Light Emissions. This seems to be a part of the redacted document as it was not listed as a separate attachment in the email header. The significance of this inclusion is the yellow highlighting of section 2. Applicable Statutes and Implementing Regulations on the first page of the document which states:

"There are no Federal statutory or regulatory requirements for adverse effects. State, regional, or local requirements may apply to airport-related light emissions or visual effects."

No Federal regulations govern light emissions or visual intrusions. However, FAA will consider potential effects to properties, and people's use of properties, covered by Section 4(f) of the U.S.Department of Transportation (DOT) Act, Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (and 14 of this Desk Reference,LWCF), and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). See Chapters 7 respectively, for more information."

In other words . . . let there be light and let night become day in rural Bastrop County.

Posted by noairport at 10:42:34 in Quality of life, Property, Developer, Federal

Sunday, April 14, 2013 Is anybody there?

Over a month after the Corps' December 11 response to Mr. Carpenter et al, the developer answered with an email on January 25, 2013 to address the Corps' request for revisions to the mitigation plan that had been outstanding for nearly a year.

See: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2013/13docs/13-01-25_greenport.pdf

"As you know, we are working with the Wilbarger Creek Mitigation Bank team and their consultants to achieve a mutually agreeable off-site mitigation solution for the Central Texas Airport/Greenport project. The individuals copied above on this email are authorized to work with you and the USACE on our behalf and have access to any information or materials related to our project."

StopCTA has been aware of the increasingly popular mitigation banking option for some time. See 'Banking on it' posted above on March 08, 2013. Now that the developer has opted to buy his way out of the remaining hurdle, the USACE permitting process is once again moving forward.

But discovering that outsourcing to a mitigation banker is going to resolve the stalled permitting process is really not the most interesting bit of information in that email. Much more titillating is the possibility that the 'Central Texas Airport' will morph into the 'Central Texas Greenport'. Will the re-greening of the CTA to the CTG ever become a reality? Will there be another publicity stunt at the Bullock Museum? Sometimes you just have to shake your head and chuckle . . .

Posted by noairport at 04:17:49 in Quality of life, Developer, Federal

Sunday, April 14, 2013 **Re-greening the airport**

Over a month after the Corps' December 11 response to Mr. Carpenter et al, the developer answered with an email on January 25, 2013 to address the Corps' request for revisions to the mitigation plan that had been outstanding for nearly a year.

See: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2013/13docs/13-01-25_greenport.pdf

"As you know, we are working with the Wilbarger Creek Mitigation Bank team and their consultants to achieve a mutually agreeable off-site mitigation solution for the Central Texas Airport/Greenport project. The individuals copied above on this email are authorized to work with you and the USACE on our behalf and have access to any information or materials related to our project."

StopCTA has been aware of the increasingly popular mitigation banking option for some time. See 'Banking on it' posted above on March 08, 2013.

Now that the developer has opted to buy his way out of the remaining hurdle, the USACE permitting process is once again moving forward.

But discovering that outsourcing to a mitigation banker is going to resolve the stalled permitting process is really not the most interesting bit of information in that email. Much more titillating is the possibility that the Central Texas Airport will morph into the Central Texas Greenport. Will the re-greening of the CTA to the CTG ever become a reality? Will there be another publicity stunt at the Bullock Museum? Sometimes you just have to shake your head and chuckle . . .

Posted by noairport at 19:46:09 in Quality of life, Developer, Federal

Monday, April 15, 2013 **The undead**

The proposed Central Texas Airport hasn't been in the news since the developer's failure to meet the June 30, 2012 deadline specified in the 381 Agreement. And it appears from these most recent documents that the developer had not been communicating with either the USACE or ACI consulting for most of last year. But contrary to popular opinion which has assumed the airport is dead, we now know otherwise. Surprise, surprise! It's baaaaack!!

On February 15, 2013, 'Integrated Environmental Solutions' (IES) submitted the Mitigation Plan needed to complete the CTA's permit application at the USACE. The email from IES simply states:

"Attached is the revised mitigation plan for the Central Texas Airport, SWF-201-506. This mitigation plan supersedes all previous versions."

This mitigation plan is quite different from the previous versions because the mitigation banking credits are calculated according to a very specific formula - the Texas Rapid Assessment Method (TxRAM). Those data forms are not being made available here because they were completed by hand so rather illegible and the data itself is rather cryptic.

After the Corps makes a final determination and generates the necessary document (which could be quite lengthy), it will be sent to the TCEQ which will have 10 days to respond. If both agencies approve it, the permitting will be granted.

Wake up and get ready for round two, folks. It's not over yet . . .

Posted by noairport at 23:46:05 in Players, Developer, State, Federal

Wednesday, April 17, 2013 Marginal tales

The last item of the FOIA, an email from the Corps to 'Integrated Environmental Solutions' (IES) is dated March 04, 2013, about two weeks after the revised mitigation plan was submitted. The unredacted portion of this email states:

"... I looked at the revised mitigation plan for the CTA last week. I also started working on the EA [Environmental Assessment]. I plan to continue work on the EA this week."

That's pretty straightforward. But there is an attachment which a little more interesting. Most likely it is mentioned in the redacted portion of the email. It is a document well-known to us - FAA Advisory Circular 150/5200-33B - which deals with Hazardous Wildlife Attractants on or near Airports. This publication describes the procedures that airports MUST follow if any Federal funding is involved or if the passenger quota exceeds a certain number.

But thanks to the exemption to '14CFR Part 139' that was included in the 381 Agreement on the recommendation of Ronnie Moore, County Planning and Project Management Director, the proposed CTA can do whatever they want even if it violates these recommendations, potentially endangering those unlucky enough to live in the flight path.

The feature that has been the subject of on-going controversy is the 26 acre permanent elevation pond that the CTA will be creating about a 1000 ft from the runway. From citizen comments, the USACE was well aware of this man-made hazard. And from the October 25, 2011 meeting notes, we know that they were doing their best to convince the developer to eliminate this permanent water feature.

The question is . . why was this document sent to IES at this time? A closer look at the document offers some clues. In the margins, there are vertical marks highlighting passages relating to airport safety. Here's an example:

"Was the Corps making one last attempt to convince the developer to remove the pond? That's what it looks like to us. We will only know for sure once a decision on the permit has been made. Then the documents that were redacted as being 'pre-decisional' should be made available to us. Until then we can only speculate exactly what was intended. If despite their best efforts, the pond becomes a reality, we can at least be thankful that the Corps did their very best to do the right thing for the people of Bastrop County."

As to the developer who would choose aesthetics over public safety . . . [redacted] . . .

Posted by noairport at 00:10:24 in Players, Developer, Federal 2 comments

JUNE 2013

Tuesday, June 25, 2013 USACE grants permit

It's been a long time coming. Last Friday, the USACE finally granted the permit for the proposed Central Texas Airport. The TCEQ has also reviewed and OK'd the document and all parties involved have signed on the dotted line. StopCTA has already submitted a formal request to obtain the document which consists of an 'Environmental Assessment', a 'Statement of Findings' and an 'Alternatives Analysis'.

But even with permit in hand, this saga is far from over. Stay tuned as the next chapters unfold . . .

Posted by noairport at 00:10:35 in News, Announcements, Developer, State, Federal

Wednesday, June 26, 2013 Don't panic, folks

The news that the the proposed Central Texas Airport finally received its permit from the USACE is undoubtedly causing waves of panic among the clueless and under-informed. But relax. The permit is just the first of many obstacles that could derail the project.

In fact, it should not come as a surprise that the permit was granted. The Corps did their job and did it well. But ultimately their hands were tied because of the lack of any Federal funding which would have triggered greater environmental and safety protections.

Moving forward, keep in mind that no concrete plans have yet been submitted to Bastrop County for review. Neither has the County accepted the claim of 'Force Majeure' made by the developer just before the June 30, 2012 deadline for commencement of the project was missed. In fact, the County has yet to receive the documentation supporting Force Majeure that was promised one year ago despite multiple requests (probably because there isn't any). There will be regulatory involvement with the TCEQ over several environmental issues. And remember that the FAA denied renewal of the CTA airspace in fall of 2011. Oh and then there is that fact, that although the airport land is supposedly under contact, it is still not owned by the developer.

Meanwhile, the clock is ticking. If the airport is not completed by June 30, 2014, the 381 Agreement expires and the County can breathe a sigh of relief. Of course the airport could still be built without the 381 Agreement if the money can be found. In this economy, that seems like a long shot.

Onward!

Posted by noairport at 15:42:54 in Players, Developer, County, State

Sunday, June 30, 2013 **365 days to go!**

The deadline in the 381 Agreement for completion of the proposed Central Texas Airport is exactly one year from midnight tonight, June 30, 2014. When the Agreement was signed in June of 2010, that seemed such a very long way off and now it's just around the corner. And so begins the countdown to a deadline that will be a challenge for the developer to meet. Keep your fingers crossed that date will mark the end of this contentious project once and for all.

Posted by noairport at 18:38:12 in Announcements, Developer, County

JULY 2013

Friday, July 12, 2013 Still a no fly zone

Reservation of airspace for the proposed CTA (then the 'Colorado Riverland Ranch Airport') was first granted in 2007. The airspace was renewed in 2009 and again in 2010. But in 2011 the FAA refused another request for renewal.

StopCTA has stayed in contact with the FAA by phone and email to see if there have been any developments on the CTA's airspace approval since then. The answer has always been that they had not heard from the developer or his agents. Just to be sure, a FOIA for any communications between the developer, his agents and the FAA was submitted at the end of May 2013. The response was that the Southwest Region Airports Division "found no responsive documents". If this FOIA is accurate, it looks like the CTA airspace status is still in limbo. That seems rather odd in light of the recently issued permit from the USACE. It's a bit of a head-scratcher.

Posted by noairport at 02:42:49 in Announcements, Players, Developer, Federal

Friday, July 12, 2013 USACE permit update

Late yesterday, StopCTA received a copy of the permit issued by the USACE for the proposed Central Texas Airport project. It's over 100 pages long so will take some time to sort out. We'll post our findings once we've had time to analyze the document. Stay tuned . . .

Posted by noairport at 03:25:43 in Announcements, Federal

Wednesday, July 17, 2013 Permit overview

We have received over 100 pages relating to the USACE's permitting of the proposed Central Texas Airport. The following are included:

- 1. A cover letter to the Permit dated June 21, 2013 which was sent to the developer and copied to agency stakeholders in the permitting process.
- 2. The 4 page Permit issued June 21, 2013 which includes five 'Special Conditions' that the developer must follow.
- 3. A Combined Decision Document which consists of an Environmental Assessment, 404(b)(1) Guidelines Evaluation, Public Interest Review and Statement of Findings.
- 4. A Wildlife Hazard Management Plan which the USACE required of the developer to compensate in some way for the lack of mandatory Federal oversight of wildlife safety issues.
- 5. And finally, the Mitigation Plan describing the purchase of credits from the Wilbarger Creek Mitigation Bank which was submitted to the Corps in May 2013 at which time we obtained the document.

A careful reading of these documents confirms that the Corps did everything possible to address the many deficiencies of this project that were included in comments submitted by Bastrop County citizens during the Public Comment period in the spring of 2011. Unfortunately, they had no jurisdiction over many of the issues that were raised. They did the best they could, folks.

Posted by noairport at 14:30:26 in Players, Developer, Federal

Thursday, July 18, 2013 **Deadline or deadlines?**

The County's 381 Agreement for the proposed Central Texas Airport, defines the deadline for 1.) the commencement of construction of airport improvements and 2.) the commencement of construction of commercial improvements for the CTA as June 30, 2012 last year. Those two events share the same deadline.

However, there are those in the Bastrop community who are interpreting the two events with the same due date as two deadlines. StopCTA does not agree with that interpretation and finds it quite confusing. We are of the opinion that a deadline is the date by which an event should occur not the event itself. Sure everyone's entitled to their opinion but we thought it would be worth a post just in case readers run across a mention of missed 'deadlines' for the CTA and end up scratching their heads wondering exactly what the 'deadlines' might be. Now you know.

Posted by noairport at 08:43:19 in Announcements

Friday, July19, 2013

No more Moore

Looking at the Commissioners Court agenda for July 22, please notice the very last item:

24. Discussion and possible action re: approve committee to review applications and interview for County Engineer and bring recommendation to Court; Judge Pape

Looks like there is no more Moore for us to kick around . . . at least in regard to the questionable role he played in drafting the 381 Agreement.

See: 'Fessing up at last' posted January 14, 2011 in http://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2011/factoids2011.pdf.

Throughout his tenure at the County 'Mr. Airport' has been the CTA's number one apologist and cheerleader. https://www.stopcta.info/flatpress11/index.php/2011/02/14/funny-business

What are the odds that if the proposed CTA ever gets underway, Ronnie Moore, former Bastrop County Engineer, will be at the helm? Time will tell . . .

Look for an upcoming article in the Advertiser about his departure. See: http://www.statesman.com/news/news/local/moore-leaves-bastrop-county/nYxRg/

Posted by noairport at 09:38:24 in News, Announcements, County

Friday, July19, 2013 Permit particulars

document.

The Corps has confirmed that the Permit for the proposed Central Texas Airport issued on June 21 follows a standard template.

See: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2011/11docs/usace_permit.pdf

The only unique additions are the project specific data and the five 'Special Conditions' attached at the end of the

See: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2013/13docs/usace_conditions.pdf

The cover letter also appears to be pro forma. Several passages in both the standard form and project specific material caught our attention. See: http://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2013/13docs/usace_permit_cover.pdf

The most interesting paragraph of the cover letter advises the developer:

"To use this permit the person responsible for the project must ensure that the work is conducted in accordance with the terms and conditions of the permit. We caution you to submit revised drawings to us for approval prior to construction should any changes be found necessary in either the location or plans for the work. Approval of revised plans

may be granted if they are found not contrary to the public interest."

We questioned the Corps about the 'plans' required by the Corps. Remember that to date no formal construction plans have been submitted to the County. The Corps responded that the 8.5 x 11 drawings submitted by the developer's consultants, ACI were sufficient for their permitting process. Keep in mind that only plan changes affecting waters of the US would be reconsidered not plan changes in upland areas outside the permitted area.

Moving on to the the permit itself, General Condition 1 sets the time limit for completing the work authorized by the Corps as December 31, 2018. However, General Condition 6 states that:

"the Corps will normally give favorable consideration to a request for an extension of this time limit".

Be aware that this deadline is only for the work specifically authorized by the Corps. The June 30, 2014 date for completion of the CTA outlined in the County's 381 Agreement is independent of the deadline for work permitted by the Corps.

Note that **Item 4**, under **Further Information** states the following:

"Reliance on Applicant's Data: The determination of this office that issuance of this permit is not contrary to the public interest was made in reliance on the information you provided."

This is followed by a section describing circumstances under which the Corps might reevaluate a decision including failure to comply with conditions of the permit, submission of 'false, incomplete or inaccurate information' and 'significant new information' which was not considered in the original public interest decision.

The wording of these passages reminds us that the Corps has a mandate to consider the effects of a project on the public interest. The 'Public Interest Review' section of the supporting documents (Environmental Assessment etc.) which includes the Corps' responses to issues raised in comments submitted by the public and stakeholder agencies during the Public Notice comment period, provides some very interesting reading. More on that later.

The first item of the 'Special Conditions' states that the mitigation plan must be implemented before "commencing any ground-disturbing activity within the waters of the United States". See: http://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2013/13docs/usace_mitigation_plan.pdf

Since the credits from the Wilbarger Creek Mitigation Bank have already been purchased, work can begin at any time.

If your next thought is that the developer can't start because he doesn't even own the land yet, think again. According to USACE Federal rules, a developer does not need to own land before commencing a project. The 381 Agreement however, requires ownership to benefit from the tax rebate.

Those of you living north of the river should be paying special attention for any activity at the proposed site now that the Corps has opened the way for work to begin.

Posted by noairport at 12:53:35 in Developer, County, Federal

Sunday, July 21, 2013 **Construction constraints**

The first two items of the 'Special Conditions', address the details of implementing the Proposed Central Texas Airport's mitigation plan. Mitigation banks provide off-site mitigation so that bad environmental things can happen in another location (very similar to carbon credits). Mitigation banking has previously been addressed on this blog. In this case, the necessary credits have been purchased from the Wilbarger Creek Mitigation Bank. Commencement of construction is dependent on completing this transaction.

The third item, cautions against starting work in the permit area that has not been evaluated by the Corps including but not limited to "haul roads, equipment staging areas and borrow and disposal sites". The language is verbose and attempts to be a big stick. It's encouraging to see that the Corps is doing its best to lay down some ground-rules but developers are notorious for cutting corners that lead to environmental destruction. The question is, who's watching?

Unfortunately, it's pretty much an honor system. The 'Corps' Compliance and Enforcement' division (for permitted projects and unpermitted projects respectively) consists of three field and one clerical officers. They are allotted 10% each of the Corps' budget totaling 20%. Even with an awareness that the CTA project is a contentious issue, how often do you think they'll be driving down from Fort Worth to pay us a visit? If and when the time comes (hopefully never!), the County should consider assigning someone on their staff to monitor things on a regular basis or deputize citizen volunteers to keep an eye on things. A close watch will likely be needed.

Posted by noairport at 08:34:47 in Developer, Federal

Sunday, July 21, 2013 **Eagle watch**

'Special Condition 4' requires monitoring for the presence of bald eagle nests within 1000 feet of airport operations until such time as the airport becomes fully operational. We asked the Corps why an operational airport would trigger termination of the monitoring program. They answered that the eagle experts they consulted advised that eagles are unlikely to nest in proximity to an operational airport.

If bald eagle nests are found, the applicant is required to notify the Austin Ecological Field Office of the U.S, Fish and Wildlife agency in order to comply with regulations relative to the bald eagle. What a great idea! And thanks to the Corps for trying to protect a magnificent bird. But again who's going to be watching? And if nests are found will they be reported? Or would their presence be interpreted as an operational hurdle to be neutralized? Could this requirement actually put bald eagles in danger?

If construction ever gets underway, eyes on the river would be a real asset not only to help locate nests but also to make sure those nests are reported to Fish and Wildlife. StopCTA will work with Audubon and other area birders, to encourage regular citizen monitoring.

Posted by noairport at 12:50:45 in Environment, Developer, Federal

Sunday, July 21, 2013 Quackery exposed

If there are any lingering skeptics who think that the Corps ignored our collective concerns, 'Special Condition 5' leaves no doubt that they not only heard us but went to the mat on our behalf. It simply states:

The permittee shall implement and abide by the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan dated May 15, 2013.

Before proceeding, please familiarize yourself with the background to the inclusion of this condition discussed in 'Quack, quack' and 'More quackery' posted in April 2012. See: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2012/factoids2012.pdf

The Corps clearly understands that if the FAA thinks the pond is a hazard, the private funding loophole does not magically neutralize the hazard. Throughout the 'Public Interest Review' section of the supporting documents the Corps repeats its concerns. Here are some examples culminating in the inclusion of the 'Wildlife Hazard Management Plan' in the Special Conditions.

See: http://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2013/13docs/usace whmp.pdf

Appendix A itemizes 62 specific concerns gleaned from the Public Comments. The response to Comment 6 clearly explains the Corps' position which laid the groundwork for the WHMP as one of the five 'Special Conditions':

Although the USACE worked in earnest to encourage the applicant to redesign the proposed stormwater pond to incorporate a dry basin, the applicant insisted on maintaining the current design. Due to the USACE limited scope of analysis for this project, combined with lack of federal funding, the USACE could only strongly encourage, not require such a pond re-design. As such in an effort to minimize these effects, the applicant proposes to implement standard bird abatement

procedures which would become a special condition of any Section 404 permit issues by the USACE.

These concerns are repeated in the main part of the supporting documents. On page 38, Item 9. General evaluation criteria under the public interest review item b cautions that:

There are unresolved conflicts as to resource use; however there are no practicable reasonable alternative locations and methods to accomplish the objective of the proposed work. The FAA Advisory Circular, AC No: 150/5200-33B, dated August 28, 2007, on hazardous wildlife attractants on or near airports does not prevent the CTA project from building an on-site floodplain detention basin. Because the CTA project uses no federal funding and the airport would not be an FAA Part 139 airport facility, the USACE does not have sufficient federal control and authority to prevent the applicant from constructing an open water feature. The applicant was advised that the USACE believes this pond is an avoidable hazard and and strongly encouraged the applicant to incorporate a dry pond design.

Finally on page 39 the 'Public Interest Determination' officially requires the Special Conditions which include the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan:

I find that issuance of a Department of the Army permit is not contrary to the public interest (with the inclusion of the appropriate and practicable special conditions listed below to minimize pollution or adverse impacts to the aquatic environment).

That all sounds great! The Corps tried its best to rectify a dangerous situation. But who is going to be implementing this program? According to section 2.1 of the WHMP:

"The Airport Manager will have the ultimate responsibility for the implementation and administration of the WHMP at the airport."

And who's going to be watching the Airport Manager who undoubtedly will be under pressure from corporate to maximize profits and minimize expenses?

Posted by noairport at 11:18:38 AM in Developer, Federal

Monday, July 22, 2013 CTA Timeline updated

The CTA Timeline has been updated and revised so that it's now current. Note that the PDF is not a standard size like the previous one so will probably not print a usable hard copy. Please let us know if we've missed anything.

Federal County City State The Project August 6, 2007 - Application to the FAA for the Colorado Riverland Ranch Airport. March 12, 2008 - Earliest dated document in the ORR (to Lee Dildy) 2009 Legislative session - Attempt to introduce a bill to annex airport land to the Cottonwood WCID#3 in Austin. This bill was never introduced to the egislature. 2009Legislative session - SB 1615 would have established creative ways to generate alternate financing for the airport. This bill died in commit he end of the 2009 Legislative sess March 30, 2009 - City of Bastrop sends questions to Jim Carpenter April 13, 2009 - Jim Carpenter's pitch to the Commissioners Court April 14, 2009 - Jim Carpenter's pitch to the Bastrop City Council April 28, 2009 - Resolution of non-support for the entral Texas Airport September 1, 2009 - Cease and desist letter sent to Jim Carpenter alleging "blatantly false and nisleading" statements September 1, 2009 - First draft of the 381 Agreemer arrives from Carpenter's attorneys. September 22, 2009 - FAA application for the Centra fexas Airport (formerly the Colorado Riverland Ranch Airport) March 31, 2010 - City of Bastrop sends questions to the FAA June 10, 2010 - County informs the media and developer that the project will need USACE approva June 13, 2010 - Commissioners Court approves the 381 Agreement for the proposed Central Texas Airport without any public input as to its merit Summer 2010 - Concerned citizens alert USACE to proposed CTA project. Fall 2010 - USACE contacts developer to inquire about the project and begin the permitting proces October 19, 2010 - Eco-Merge unveiled in Austin November 10, 2010 - Team Carpenter pitches a wate district to the City. City requests more information. Carpenter disappears. 2011 Legislative session - Second attempt to e annexation legislation. The bill was never introduced to the Legislature. March 8, 2011 - SB1257 which "seeks to ensure county support before existing water districts in one county are able to annex land in another county" is filed. Dies in House committee March 25,2011 - USACE posts Public Notice of an application permit submitted by the proposed CTA April 4, 2011 - StopCTA is told that the count engineer does not plan to submit comments to the USACE Public Notice. April 7, 2011 - StopCTA has learned that neither the Commissioners or the County Judge have been informed of the permit application. April 11, 2011 - There is nothing on the Court agenda about the USACE Public Notice but StopCTA announces it during the public comment period. April 24, 2011 - Original deadline for submitting comments to the USACE. Comment deadline is extended to May 9. April 25, 2011 - A letter to the USACE has been prepared by the County. Some concerns re: water are added at Commissioner Beckett's request. April 29, 2011 - Meck-CTA LLC purchases Falcon seaboard (Dewhurst) property on Pope Bend. May 3, 2011 - County sends letter to the USACE. May 9, 2011 - USACE comment period closes. 60 comments were received. Only two were in support of the airport. August 19, 2011 - Environmental Informati Document (EID) submitted to the USACE. September 7, 2011 - USACE requests additional information. No response as of January 11, 2012. November 12, 2011 - FAA reservation of airspace opires March 21, 2012 - USACE denies a Public Hearing March 29, 2012 - TCEQ denies a Public Meeting. January 2012 - Revised Environmental Information June 14, 2012 - Developer submits claim of Force Majeure. County requests supporting evidence fo consideration. June 30, 2012 - Developer defaults on the deadline for commencing Phase 1 of the proposed Central exas airport and commercial improvements. 2013 - No airport related activity in the Texas June 21, 2013 - USACE grants permit for the proposed Central Texas Airport. Pending - Evidence to support claim of Force Majeure never received by the County. ending - Reservation of airspace still expired Pending - Site for the proposed CTA still has not een purchased June 30, 2014 - Deadline for **completion** of Phase 1 of the proposed Central Texas Airport and commercial improvements. June 30, 2014 - Developer defaults on the deadline for the completion of Phase I of the Central Texas Airport and commercial improvements.

Central Texas Airport Timeline

For larger image: http://www.stopcta.info/docs/timeline_ud.pdf

Posted by noairport at 13:01:55 in Announcements

Wednesday, July 24, 2013

Spinning disaster

helicopter firefighting equipment based at CTA . . ." Vitally important? Isn't that a bit of an exaggeration considering that the Colorado River sits right at the end of the runway? Gotta love those spinmeisters. The Corps did their best to get this feature removed but the developer stood his ground. See 'Quackery exposed' posted above on July 21.

The fingerprints of the proposed Central Texas Airport's spinmeisters can be seen throughout the USACE permit. Sometimes passages are blatantly promotional other times more subtle like one we found in the 'Wildlife Hazard Management Plan' that subliminally spins disaster into justification of a feature that itself is a hazard to the safety of Bastrop County citizens. The disaster would be the fires of 2011 that devastated the County and the lives of thousands

of individuals. The feature that is being justified is the 26 acre 'duck' pond located only 1000 feet from the runway.

"The planned stormwater pond will provide a vitally important water source for pump trucks and

Posted by noairport at 10:00:23 in Players, Developer, Federal

Friday, July 26, 2013 Still MIA at the FAA

Today the FAA confirmed that they have not heard from Jim Carpenter in over 1 1/2 years. The developer went missing when the FAA requested/required a copy of his business plan in order to continue reserving the airspace f or the proposed CTA after it expired November 12, 2011. The FAA has been dealings with this project since 2007.

See: 'No fly zone' posted above on July 12, 2013 for details.

Posted by noairport at 13:54:49 in Announcements, Developer, Federal

Friday, July 26, 2013 **Regrettable regurgitations**

After reading citizen comments submitted in response to the March 25, 2011 Public Notice, the Corps realized that there was no clear description of the scope of the proposed Central Texas Airport project. At an October 25, 2011 meeting, the Corps pressed the developer to define exactly what the project included. The response can be found on the very first page of the revised 'Environmental Information Document; (EID) submitted in January 2012. The passage is worth repeating here - it's priceless!

"The proposed, action [the proposed CTA] as described above, is a complete and independent project. No funding or approval for development beyond this proposed action has been obtained. The elements of the conceptual Eco-merge project (for example: commercial, industrial, or energy production, hotel, infrastructure, and other development features) are a second and independent project from the proposed action, on which the proposed action does not depend for its purpose and need. The specific design and feasibility of future actions will depend on what is economically feasible in the future."

Yet, for a project that's 'complete and independent' from any other development, there is sure a LOT of promotion for 'development beyond this proposed action' in the 'Combined Decision Document'. So how did all those regrettable regurgitations slip into the Corps' permitting process?

The Corps clearly states in the 'Permit' as well as throughout the 'Combined Decision Document' that they relied on data provided by the applicant. The first EID was a particularly empty and egregious PR blitz. The revised EID was somewhat more restrained but there are still long passages reminiscent of the Bob Bullock Museum Eco-Merge hoopla in 2010, T. R. Reid's half page 'infomercial' in the April 30, 2011 Bastrop Advertiser and the Perryman Group's infamous and fanciful 'The Sky's the Limit' written in May 2009 for the Commissioners benefit before the 381 Agreement was negotiated. In addition, the developer responded separately to citizen comments submitted during the Public Notice.

So it's no surprise that passages from these 'sources' are referenced any time a 'hook' relating to 'green' or 'economic impact' or concern about 'noise' or 'light pollution' or whether the project is even needed etc. appears. But it is especially disheartening that citizen concerns in the 'Public Interest Review' section provided such fertile ground for the developer to strut his stuff. An unsavory reminder of the imperfections in regulatory-land and the persistent onslaught of development that flies in the face of reason.

Posted by noairport at 11:28:45 in Developer, Federal, The 'expendable'

SEPTEMBER 2013

Monday, September 2, 2013 Whine me up

The latest documents received from Bastrop County offer some rather interesting behind-the-scenes insight and reactions to the USACE's handling of the permitting process. In his own words, Jim Carpenter predictably plays the victim and whines in frustration when things don't go his way.

In a candid email to Greg Hill dated August 19, 2011, Jim Carpenter complains about the Corps' delays, the very effective activist opposition and the City of Bastrop's 'misrepresentation' of their ETJ authority with regard to the proposed CTA.

Ronnie Moore, then Bastrop County Engineer, figures prominently in this little tirade as the person ready, willing and able to clarify the misunderstandings and move things along. This is not the first time that Mr. Moore has been presented as an apologist for the CTA project. He appears to have been the developer's in-house 'wingman' on more than one occasion.

It was interesting to learn that at one time, the Corps was actually considering a public hearing - an idea which did not please the developer:

"In my personal 45-minute long telephone conversation with Stephen Brooks I was disturbed by his complaint to me about our team not providing his staff with suggested locations to conduct 'the public hearing' on our Individual Permit application.

... I explained to him [Stephen Brooks] that the Corps was failing to understand the adverse impact of an unwarranted public hearing that would result in a media circus for activists that have been unable to stop this private development or to dissuade the unanimous support for this project by the Bastrop County Commissioners Court."

Eventually, the Corps decided a hearing was not needed. Just how was that decision reached? We'd sure like to know what went down behind the scenes. We'll keep digging . . .

Phrases like 'unreasonable delay', 'unwarranted time delay', 'unnecessary delay' etc. in this email also set the stage for the claim of 'force majeure', which was submitted to the County just prior to the June 30, 2012 deadline for commencement of the project on which the developer defaulted. Over a year later, the developer has failed to provide evidence to the Bastrop County County Commissioners Court to support the claim of 'force majeure'.

Complaints of a perceived USACE delay surfaced again when the developer attempted to extend the FAA reservation of airspace which was due to expire on November 12, 2011. In an email to the FAA on November 10, 2011 he writes:

"The USACE permit has caused a year delay in this critically important economic development activity because they came back last year with a completely unexpected jurisdictional water finding on a manmade stockpond."

Note that as of July 2013 no extension has been granted because the developer has failed to comply with the FAA's request for more detailed information about the CTA project.

The issue of delay culminated in a letter from Mr. Carpenter to Stephen Brooks on April 12, 2012. Mr. Brooks' response on April 19, 2012 thoroughly debunks the accusations made against the Corps with a detailed timeline of events.

Another document included in the latest ORR finally settles once and for all the issue of delay and who failed to start the USACE permitting process in a timely manner. Gottcha!

So just who is Greg Hill? Read on . . .

Posted by noairport at 22:20:35 in Players, Developer, County, City, Federal

The whining wingman

Several months after Jim Carpenter's letter to Greg Hill, Ronnie Moore followed up with a letter to Stephen Brooks on November 30, 2011. The stated purpose of the letter is to provide 'accurate information' regarding ETJ authority related to the 'CTA Green Corporate Center project' but it quickly declines into blatant cheerleading for the project.

There is subtle guilt-tripping:

"... if this project does not come to fruition as a result of inaccurate information, the biggest potential loser is Bastrop County and Elgin ISD; i.e. students in the Elgin School District."

And a dig at the USACE for their thorough but time-consuming handling of the permitting process:

"It is my understanding that the standard of practice for the USACE review of these types of permit applications is: the level of review of the project will be commensurate to the level of impact to waters of the U.S. The permit application is to fill a small man-made stock pond . . ."

Then after a regurgitation of the promotional passages in the 381 Agreement, Mr. Moore plays the 'wildfire disaster' card:

"In order to assist in the recovery from this disaster, we should all be doing what we can to boost the ad valorem tax base of our County, and to create additional job opportunities for the residents of Bastrop County.

Projects that have a potential of creating job opportunities and adding value to the ad valorem tax base, create an opportunity for Bastrop County to recover economically from the recent wildfire disaster. Please keep that in mind as you consider any project, in Bastrop County, that comes before you for review and permitting."

But all that is not the real story of this letter. It was sent not only to Mr. Brooks but copied to eleven other individuals including those at the FAA (who had just denied the CTA's request for an extension of the reservation of airspace), the TCEQ, Sen. Kirk Watson, Rep. Tim Kleinschmidt, Rep. Glen Hegar in the Texas Legislature and in Washington D.C.,Rep. Lloyd Doggett, Rep. Michael McCaul and the mysterious Greg Hill who appears to be Rep.McCaul's Chief of Staff. The cozy relationship that the developer seems to have with Greg Hill is disconcerting. Especially so considering that Rep. McCaul has received generous contributions from aviation related industries. In politics, just follow the money . . .

While it's easy to fault Mr. Moore for this letter it does have one saving grace. If the project fails and the developer decides to extract revenge on Bastrop County, this letter would defend the County's fulfillment of the Mutual Assistance requirement of the 381 Agreement.

Posted by noairport at 11:28:17 in Players, Developer, County, City, Federal

Tuesday, September 3, 2013

No more excuses

A few days before the 381 Agreement for the proposed Central Texas Airport was approved, Cyndi Wright, editor of the Advertiser emailed Jim Carpenter this request:

"it looks like the possibility of approving a 381 agreement is on the agenda for Monday's commissioner court meeting. Would you like to make a statement for the pre-meeting story?"

Within minutes, the developer emailed Geoff Connor and County Engineer Ronnie Moore for advice about what would be "best for the project's success from both the County's perspective as well as ours". By the end of the day, Moore had taken charge and emailed a three paragraph blurb to both the Advertiser and separately (with an explanatory preface) to Jim Carpenter and Goeff Connor.

The first two paragraphs explain some basics about the 381 Agreement. But the third describes actions outside the 381 Agreement that **CTA must take in order to begin construction of the airport:**

"CTA must still secure all necessary financing to purchase the land and obtain approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for modifications to the FEMA-designated flood plain. The project must also comply with the 'Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES)' requirements as implemented and monitored by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality."

Mr. Moore may have been confused as to WHY the CTA needed a permit from the Corps - FEMA handles flood plain issues, the Corps domain is Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. But he was correct that approval from the Corps would be required.

So there you have it. We now know what Jim Carpenter knew and when he knew it. He was on notice BEFORE the 381 Agreement was in place that the Corps needed to be involved with the project. He ignored Ronnie Moore's advice. If concerned citizens had not brought the project to the Corps' attention would the developer have ever contacted the Corps? Or would airport construction have started without a permit in place? That seems like a real possibility. And what a mess that would have been!

So please Mr. Carpenter . . . no more whining about delays and no more excuses. You have no one to blame but yourself.

Posted by noairport at 21:27:42 in Players, Developer, County, State

Wednesday, September 4, 2013 What's with 'Mythbusting'?

StopCTA participated in every Commissioners Court public comment period for nearly a year. We only stepped back when the Big Fire became the County's number one priority. One of the last comments presented by StopCTA on August 8, 2011was titled 'Mythbusting'.

'Mythbusting' outlined some details about Jim Carpenter's second failed attempt to create a MUD during the 2011 legislative session - the first try was in 2009 - and discussed Rep. Mark Strama's involvement with the proposed bill. Then the process of how a MUD could be created without involvement of the legislature was presented. But perhaps most importantly, acquisition of the Falcon Seaboard property (located just across the river from the proposed CTA site) by airport interests (Meck-CTA, LLC) was publicly announced for the first time.

On August 9, the day after those comments were presented to the Court and posted to the Factoids blog, County Engineer Ronnie Moore shared 'Mythbusting' by email with Jim Carpenter. Mr. Moore stated more than once that he kept up with what StopCTA was posting. But we're curious as to just what in that post made it worthy of sending to the developer. Maybe someday we'll have an answer . . .

Posted by noairport at 13:03:31 in Players, Developer, County, The 'expendable'

December 2013

Wednesday, December 25, 2013 Are we confused?

Not likely. But that is the rationale that the USACE used to deny FOIA requests from two separate individuals in the last few weeks. Here are the exact words:

"The withheld documents are deliberative and predecisional. However these documents were not used in making the final determination regarding the permit. After my review of the documents and the case law as stated above, I have concluded the release of these documents many result in the public confusion as described above. Therefore I must withhold the documents under the

DOCUMENT WITHHELD UNDER EXEMPTION 5

Public confusion? Really? We know that's just code-speak to justify non-transparency.

To add insult to injury, the identical letter (except for identifying information, of course) was sent in response to both FOIA requests by the same bureaucratic troglodyte at the Southwestern Division of the Corps up in Dallas.

One of the FOIAs has been appealed, accepted and sent off to the Secretary of the Army in DC for a determination. Note that the last appeal has languished in DC for nearly two years. We're not hopeful about this one escaping the black hole of bureaucracy either.

Nope. There's no confusion here.

Posted by noairport at 08:11:1 in Players, Developer, Federal

January 2014

Wednesday, January 1, 2014 **Tick tock**

2014 is finally here! It's been a long and stressful four years but finally the June 30 deadline for completion of Phase One of the proposed Central Texas Airport is on the horizon. There may be some surprises in the coming months but it's unlikely that any last minute efforts to resuscitate the project will get much traction. So sayonara and RIP. There's the door . . .

Posted by noairport at 16:24:44 in Announcements

END OF 2013 ENTRIES

The posts below, were originally published in 2014 on the stopcta.info "Factoids" blog. Note that many of the verification links to the original sources no longer exist due to technological 'advances' and the demise of local news publications, many through corporate media acquisition. RIP community news.

January 2014

Tuesday, January 7, 2014 A blank canvas

The stories of 2014 regarding the proposed Central Texas Airport have yet to be written. Currently all is quiet . . . not a peep out of the developer or anyone on his 'team'. While we're waiting for the (hopefully) final act, why not revisit the events of the last four years! Here are links to the Factoids year by year:

2010 Factoids: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2010/factoids2010.pdf

2011 Factoids: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2011/factoids2011.pdf

2012 Factoids: https://www.stopcta.info/factoids/2012/factoids2012.pdf

2013-14 Factoids: (You're already here!)

Something to do on a cold winter's night!

Posted by noairport at 09:30:05 in Announcements

Thursday, January 16, 2014 Birds on the wing

This post is dedicated to those who think that birds on the wing are not a threat to airplanes and public safety. Five years ago, Canada geese disabled both engines of a passenger jet that eventually landed in the Hudson river. This five-year anniversary report is from NBC Nightly news today. Unfortunately, you'll have to bear with the promo at the beginning . . .

BROKEN MSNBC LINK

Posted by noairport at 12:26:41 in News, Media, Safety

Monday, May 26, 2014 **Collision course**

More bird strike news from NBC, this time from MacDill AFB in Florida. Shows what a vulture can do to the nose of a small jet.

BROKEN MSNBC LINK

Posted by noairport at 00:16:15 in News, Media, Safety

There isn't much buzz about the proposed Central Texas Airport these days. So why has traffic to this site actually been increasing? Our stats tell us that about 95% of the traffic is coming from bookmarks or links in emails etc. So just who has been visiting us?

A clue arrived in an email from Rose Bridger in the UK announcing her book titled 'Plane Truth: Aviation's Real Impacts on People and the Environment'. We had no idea how many communities worldwide were fighting battles similar to ours! That could account for the increased interest in the StopCTA site.

Should we find ourselves having to do another round with airport development in Bastrop County, this book could help us craft an even more effective opposition.

Posted by noairport at 00:25:57 in News, Announcements, Costs

Wednesday, July 2, 2014

The undead

At the stroke of midnight yesterday, June 30, the the developer of the proposed Central Texas Airport failed to meet the second deadline for the completion of Phase One of the CTA as required in Section 9 of the 381 Agreement with Bastrop County. It's been a long four years since the contentious deal was unanimously approved by the Commissioners in June of 2010 and we've waited patiently for this day to arrive. But hold the celebration! The termination clause in Section 9 (c) of the 381 Agreement reads as follows:

County may terminate the Agreement in the event that construction of Phase One of the Project in accordance with this Section is not completed by June 30, 2014.

So the 381 Agreement is still alive and well despite the failure of the developer to fulfill the conditions of the contract. Termination of the deal will require action by the County. Will they step up and get this undead thing off the books? Or will it linger in an indefinite state of limbo.

Enough is enough. Time to put an end to this boondoggle once and for all.

Posted by noairport at 07:49:32 in News, Announcements, Developer, County

Tuesday, July 22, 2014 It gets worse

So now we know that the 381 Agreement with Bastrop County is still alive and well, although in a state of limbo. But hold on . . . it gets worse.

Remember the permit that the USACE issued for the project in June of 2013? Well, we recently, learned that it is good for FIVE years! Not from the actual date of issuance but rather at the end of the fifth year after it was granted. That's December 31, 2018...4 1/2 years from now. Does that get your attention?

And here's another twist . . . at any time during the 5 years, the permit can be sold and/or transferred to another party. The only limitation is that it cannot be altered in any way. Any changes to the plan would require re-permitting.

So it's time for the good citizens of this County to wake up because this airport fiasco is far from over. Note that terminating the 381 Agreement would not terminate the project although it removes a major financial incentive to proceed. Should private funding become available, it could still be built without County involvement.

So we must remain vigilant and continue to oppose this project in any way possible. Let's start by getting the 381 Agreement off the books.

Posted by noairport at 09:46:51 in Developer, County, Federal 2 comments

Monday, June 22, 2015 New terminal for ABIA

Hopefully no need for the proposed CTA now that this facility catering to the 1% is being built.

Red McCombs backs construction of private jet terminal at ABIA

By Jan Buchholz Austin Business Journal June 11, 2015

A new general aviation complex promising upscale services and design aimed at private aircraft customers is underway at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

The \$25 million facility is a partnership of San Antonio-based McCombs Enterprises and Million Air Interlink, a Houstonbased chain of fixed base operations or FBOs. FBO facilities cater to private plane users.

The privately owned and operated terminal is expected to be completed in September 2016.

San Antonio entrepreneur Red McCombs — one of the major investors behind the development of the Circuit of The Americas racetrack southeast of ABIA — said events such as the U.S. Formula 1 Grand Prix, South By Southwest, the X Games and other tourism factors prompted investment in the new facility.

"Our belief in Austin and its growth into a top national and international business and entertainment destination drives our investment in market changing ventures," McCombs said in a statement.

He added that Austin "is long overdue for a world class FBO facility" and said Million Air will provide the level of design and service to make that a reality.

Million Air, which dates back to 1999, operates 29 facilities in the U.S., Canada, South America and the Caribbean.

Currently there are two FBO operators at ABIA, and Million Air officials say their new facility will provide a level of service unavailable to this point.

The complex will include a 17,000-square-foot general aviation terminal, 42,000 square feet of service facilities and shortterm aircraft lease space, 82,000 square feet of private long-term aircraft lease space and seven acres of available ramp space capable of serving any aircraft. The terminal will include a contemporary passenger lounge, pilot club, state-of-theart flight planning room and multimedia conference rooms.

MPA Architects of Austin is the designer. Byrne Construction Services of Texas is the general contractor.

See: http://www.bizjournals.com/austin/blog/real-estate/2015/06/red-mccombs-backs-construction-of-private-jet.html? ana=e_aus_rdup&s=newsletter&ed=2015-06-12&u=TfanEGZ2ifPWnJ4e9cXVbw0c980640&t=1434321254

Posted by noairport at 14:41:12 in Media
