



EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

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To: Board of Directors
From: Council Staff
Subject: St. Louis Lambert International Airport
Date: February 24, 2020

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At the January 29 meeting of the Board of Directors staff was directed to begin identifying a scope of work for a study of St. Louis Lambert International Airport. To help inform the development of the areas to study/research staff asked Board members, Executive Advisory Committee members, and partners from across the region, to provide insight on what they think should be considered in such a report. A summary and analysis of the survey results is attached.

Based on the results of the survey, staff presented the Executive Advisory Committee with an initial study scope that was general in nature. That scope consisted of ten items/areas of study:

Proposed Study Scope

- Identify key stakeholder priorities (interviews)
- Current strengths and weaknesses of Lambert
- Aviation industry trends
- Review of airport finances
- Economic development potential around Lambert
- Analysis of airport physical investment needs
- Analysis of airport's economic impact on the region
- Analysis of airport's impact on surrounding communities
- Coordination with other airports: regional aviation system
- Governance options: Governance structures supporting objectives outlined above

Staff has recently learned that the business community will be partnering with the City of St. Louis and Lambert Airport to undertake work related to a Facilities Plan; that work appears to address four of the previously identified activities:

- Current strengths and weaknesses of Lambert
- Aviation industry trends
- Economic development potential around Lambert
- Analysis of airport physical investment needs

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Absent the activities anticipated to be undertaken as part of a Facilities Plan much of the work being considered as part of a potential study through East-West Gateway would include research around regional economic impact, finance, coordination, and governance.

Proposed Study Items for Review/Research

- Identify key stakeholder priorities
- Review of airport finances
- Analysis of airport's economic impact on the region
- Analysis of airport's impact on surrounding communities
- Coordination with other airports: regional aviation system
- Governance options: Governance structures supporting objectives outlined above

Approach

- Understanding that Lambert is owned by the City of St. Louis participation and buy-in by the City is critical to the success of the effort.
- Transparency and openness is of key concern; therefore, a public engagement component to the study is a priority, and will be applied at every step of the process.
- Some of the identified topics have been addressed previously in other reports, therefore a review of prior studies will be an important objective early in the study and will be used as a basis for the study effort.
- Much of the work being proposed can be done with existing staff and revenue. Activities that would require the use of consultants, to address specialized technical issues, is also eligible under existing revenues in the context of Regional Competitiveness.
- There is no plan for final recommendations to come from this study; rather a slate of options will be presented for the elected leaders to consider at the conclusion of the process.

The Process

The activities would be separated into two parts. The initial work, used to establish a baseline, inform more detailed analysis, and establish a scope of activities for consultants to address specialized technical issues, would take between four to six months, and would include:

- Establishment of a study committee with representation by key stakeholders
- A review of past studies and literature
- Interviews with key stakeholders for informational purposes as well as to identify priorities for the future of Lambert and other topics of regional significance
- Comparison of Lambert and other U.S. airports, including governance structures

The second phase of work is anticipated to take approximately 12 months. Information gleaned from the first phase would determine which of the following requires further study, and establish a scope of activities for consultants to address specialized technical issues.

- Review of airport finances
- Analysis of airport's economic impact on the region
- Analysis of airport's impact on surrounding communities
- Coordination with other airports: regional aviation system
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Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Board endorse the Proposed Study Items for Review/Research, Approach, and Process; and authorize the Executive Director to commence work on the effort. The procurement of consulting services would come to the Board as separated action items.