



# Introduction

A master plan provides an evaluation of an airport's aviation demand and an overview of the systematic development that will best meet that demand. The master plan establishes development objectives, provides for a 20-year planning period, and details the rationale for various study elements, including airfield configuration, facility development, on-airport land use recommendations, and support facilities. It also serves as a strategic tool for establishing airport improvement priorities and justifying the need for federal and state funding assistance.

Lea County Regional Airport (HOB) serves the southeast New Mexico and west Texas region as a commercial service and general aviation airport. The airport is part of a larger state and nationwide system of airports that comprise the National Airspace System, connecting people and goods to larger economic markets.

HOB is owned and operated by Lea County and is located adjacent to the City of Hobbs, New Mexico. The airport contributes to the economic vitality of the region and provides air service to the Permian Basin, the highest producing oil basin in the U.S. In 2023, Lea County was the top oil-producing county in the United States. Lea County recognizes the value the airport brings to the community and region, as evidenced by this update to the airport's master plan. With a sound and realistic development plan in place, HOB can maintain and grow in its role as an important link to the regional, state, and national air transportation systems.

## ABOUT THE STUDY

### WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recommends that airports update their master plans every seven to 10 years, or as necessary, to address local changes at the airport. The last planning study for HOB was completed in 2015 as part of a larger system plan that evaluated the public-use airports in Lea County. The preparation of this master plan is a necessary and timely reassessment of the development direction of HOB to meet the needs of the surrounding region's population and economy, as well as the ever-changing air transportation industry. The airport sponsor (Lea County) received an Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant from the FAA to update the airport master plan.

Lea County is responsible for funding capital improvements at the airport, as well as obtaining AIP and *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* (BIL) development grants through the FAA and state grants through the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Aviation Division. In addition, Lea County oversees facility enhancements and infrastructure development conducted by private entities at the airport. **The airport master plan is intended to provide a true vision for how HOB is developed, guidance for future development, and justification for projects** for which the airport may receive funding through an updated capital improvement plan (CIP) to demonstrate the future investment required by Lea County, as well as the FAA.

An airport master plan follows a systematic approach outlined by the FAA to identify airport needs in advance of the actual need for improvements. This is done to ensure that Lea County can coordinate environmental reviews, project approvals, design, financing, and construction to minimize the negative effects of maintaining and operating inadequate or insufficient facilities. An important outcome of the master plan process is a recommended development plan, which reserves sufficient areas for future facility needs. Such planning will protect development areas and ensure they will be readily available when required to meet future needs. The intended outcome of this study is a detailed on-airport land use concept that outlines specific uses for all areas of airport property and includes strategies for revenue enhancement.

The preparation of this master plan is evidence that Lea County recognizes the importance of the airport and the associated challenges inherent in providing for its unique operation and improvement needs. The cost of maintaining an airport is an investment that yields impressive benefits to the local community. With a sound and realistic master plan, the airport can maintain its role as an important link to the regional, state, national, and global air transportation system. Moreover, the plan will help support decisions for directing limited and valuable resources for future airport development.

**Figure iA** summarizes what a master plan is and what it is not.

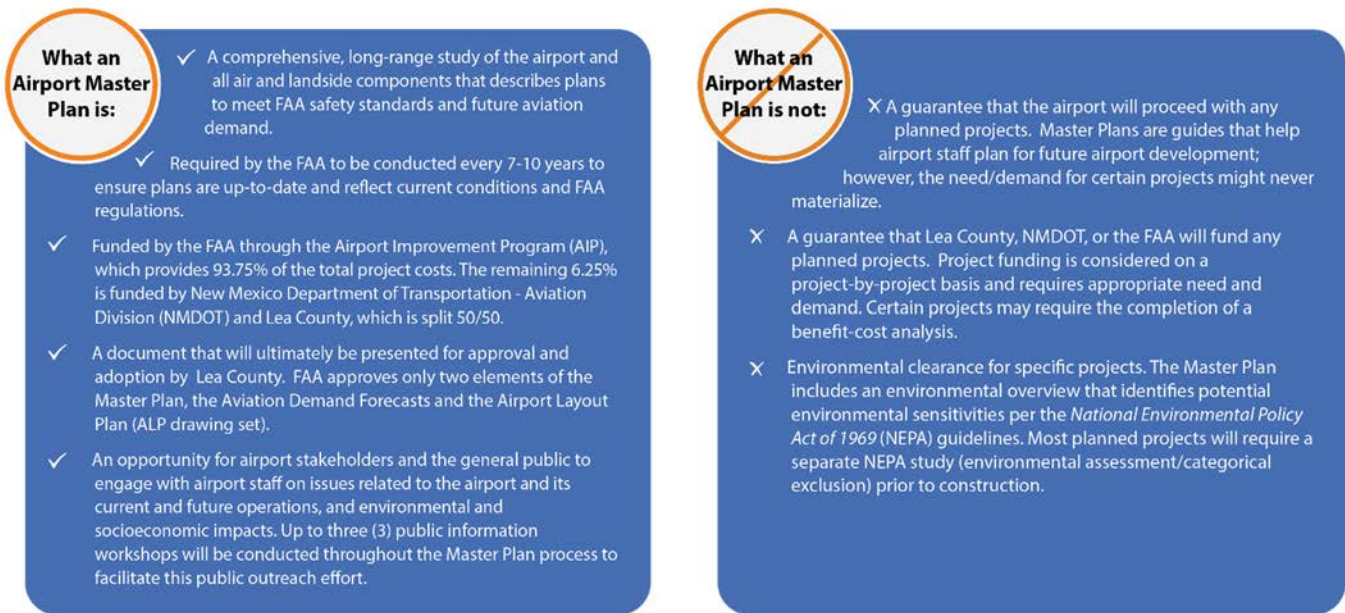


Figure iA: Master Plan Definition

## WHO IS PREPARING THE MASTER PLAN?

Through a qualifications-based selection process, Lea County has contracted with Molzen-Corbin & Associates (Lea County's current on-call engineer) and Coffman Associates, Inc. to prepare the master plan. Coffman Associates is an airport planning and consulting firm that specializes in master planning and environmental studies.

The airport master plan will be prepared in accordance with FAA requirements, including Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5300-13B, *Airport Design* (as amended), and AC 150/5070-6B, *Airport Master Plans* (as amended). The plan will be closely coordinated between Lea County, the City of Hobbs, the FAA, NMDOT, and other local and regional agencies, as appropriate, while accounting for other relevant planning studies.

## STUDY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this master plan is to develop and maintain a financially feasible long-term development program that will satisfy aviation demand of the region; be compatible with community development, other transportation modes, and the environment; and enhance employment and revenue for the local area. Accomplishing this goal requires an evaluation of the existing airport to decide what actions should be taken to maintain a safe, adequate, and reliable facility. **Figure iB** summarizes the objectives of this master plan.

**MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>DEVELOP</b> strategic visions and mission statements to guide airport development/growth</li><li>• <b>RESEARCH</b> factors likely to affect air transportation demand segments in the region over the next 20 years</li><li>• <b>DETERMINE</b> the airport's current and future critical design aircraft</li><li>• <b>ANALYZE</b> the airport's existing airfield system to determine if any deficiencies exist and correct areas of non-standard geometry</li><li>• <b>EVALUATE</b> highest and best uses of airport property for aeronautical development, including hangar expansion and maintenance facilities</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>CONSIDER</b> options for non-aeronautical development that could produce additional revenue streams for the airport</li><li>• <b>DEVELOP</b> a phased, demand-based 20-year capital improvement plan</li><li>• <b>PRODUCE</b> an updated airport layout plan drawing set that details future airside and landside development</li><li>• <b>REVIEW</b> future use and zoning of airport property, instrument approach areas, and nearby developments to ensure flight safety and land use compatibility is maintained</li></ul> |
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*Figure iB: Objectives of a Master Plan*

**BASELINE ASSUMPTIONS**

A long-range planning study requires several baseline assumptions that will be used throughout this analysis. The baseline assumptions for this study are as follows:

- HOB will continue to accommodate commercial air carriers and general aviation tenants, as well as operations by air taxi and military operators.
- The aviation industry will develop through the planning period as projected by the FAA. Specific changes in national aviation industries are described in Chapter Two – Forecasts.
- The socioeconomic characteristics of the region will generally change as forecast (Chapter Two).
- A federal and state airport improvement program will be in place through the planning period to assist in funding future capital development needs.

**MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS AND PROCESS**

The airport master plan includes eight elements that are intended to assist in the evaluation of future facility needs and provide the supporting rationale for their implementation. **Figure iC** provides a graphical depiction of the process involved with this study.



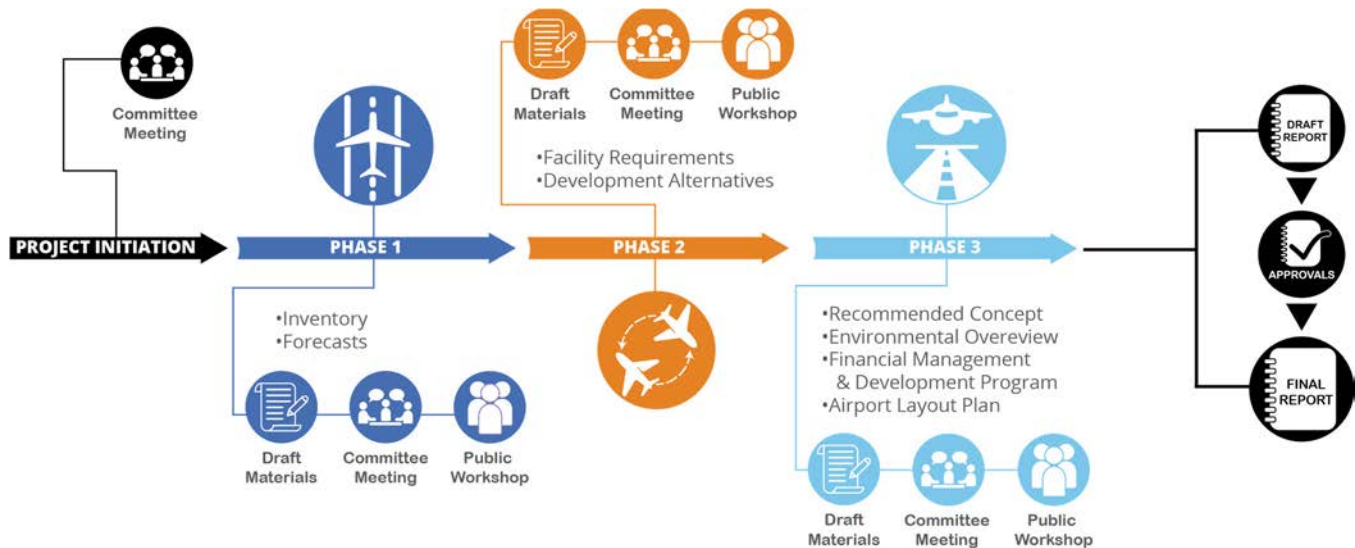


Figure iC: Master Plan Study Process

**Element 1 – Initiation** includes the development of the scope of services, schedule, and study website. Study materials will be assembled in a workbook format. General background information will be established that includes outlining the goals and objectives to be accomplished during the master plan.

**Element 2 – Inventory of Existing Conditions** is focused on collecting and assembling relevant data pertaining to the airport and the area it serves. Information is collected on existing facilities and operations. Local economic and demographic data are collected to define the local growth trends, and environmental information is gathered to identify potential environmental sensitivities that might affect future improvements. Planning studies that may have relevance to the master plan are also collected.

**Element 3 – Aviation Demand Forecasts** examines the potential aviation demand at HOB. The analysis utilizes local socioeconomic information, as well as national air transportation trends, to quantify the levels of aviation activity that can be reasonably expected to occur over a 20-year period. An existing and ultimate critical design aircraft, based on AC 150/5000-17, *Critical Aircraft and Regular Use Determination*, is also established to determine future planning design standards. The results of this effort are used to determine the types and sizes of facilities that will be required to meet the projected aviation demand at the airport through the planning period.

**Element 4 – Facility Requirements** determines the available capacities of various facilities at the airport, whether they conform to FAA standards, and what facility updates or new facilities will be needed to comply with FAA requirements and/or projected 20-year demand.

**Element 5 – Airport Development Alternatives** considers a variety of solutions to accommodate projected airside and landside facility needs through the long-term planning period. An analysis is completed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each proposed development alternative, with the intention of determining a single direction for development.



**Element 6 – Recommended Master Plan Concept** provides both a graphic and narrative description of the recommended plan for the use, development, and operation of the airport. This includes both airside and landside recommendations, as well as on-airport land use classifications and development of a 20-year recommended plan. The airport’s noise exposure and land use compatibility will also be evaluated. An environmental overview will identify any potential environmental concerns that must be addressed prior to the implementation of the recommended development plan.

**Element 7 – Capital Financial Plan** analyzes the costs that may be associated with the development plan, with in-depth financial analysis to estimate capital funds required from federal and state grant-in-aid programs. A 20-year capital improvement program and development schedule that prioritizes projects will be established.

**Element 8 – Airport Plans** involves coordination with airport staff and the planning advisory committee and will result in the selection of a recommended development concept. Airport layout plans will be developed to depict the recommended development concept. The drawings will meet the FAA’s Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), *Standard Procedure for FAA Review and Approval of Airport Layout Plans (ALPs)*, effective October 1, 2013. The updated ALP set will be included as an appendix to this master plan.

**Element 9 – Final Reports** will include production of the draft final report and ALP drawings in print and digital form. These materials will be presented to Lea County and the FAA for review and approval. Once approved, a final report will be prepared and made available in print and digital formats.

## COORDINATION AND OUTREACH

This study is of interest to many within the local community and region, including local citizens, local businesses, community organizations, city officials, airport users/tenants, and aviation organizations. As a component of the regional, state, and national aviation systems, HOB is of importance to both state and federal agencies responsible for overseeing the air transportation system.

To assist in the development of the master plan, a planning advisory committee (PAC) is established to act in an advisory role. PAC members will meet four times at designated points during the study to review draft materials and provide comments to help ensure that a realistic, viable plan is developed.

Draft working papers and exhibits will be prepared at various milestones in the planning process. The working paper process allows for timely input and review during each step within the master plan to ensure that all issues are fully addressed as the recommended program develops.

A series of three open-house public information workshops will be held as part of the study coordination and outreach efforts. Workshops are designed to allow all interested persons to become informed and provide input concerning the master plan. Notices of meeting times and locations will be advertised through various local media outlets. All draft working papers, reports, meeting notices, and materials will be made available to the public on a study-specific website ([leacountyregional.airportstudy.net](http://leacountyregional.airportstudy.net)).



## SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis is a strategic business planning technique used to identify **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats associated with an action or plan. The SWOT analysis involves identifying an action, objective, or element, and then identifying the internal and external forces that could (or do) positively and negatively impact that action, object, or element in a given environment. A SWOT analysis was conducted at the first PAC meeting and the findings of the exercise are presented below.

<b>S</b> STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The airport has great leadership</li> <li>• Strong partnership between City of Hobbs and Lea County / Strong support from elected officials</li> <li>• Airport currently has commercial airline service</li> <li>• Runway extension project is now complete</li> <li>• High pavement strength ratings on runways</li> <li>• Airport has an ILS approach and uncongested airspace</li> <li>• Proximity to other commercial service airports provides great connectivity</li> <li>• Free parking and surplus parking capacity</li> <li>• Municipal water service on airfield</li> </ul>
<b>W</b> WEAKNESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited commercial air service</li> <li>• Limited rental car availability / consistency</li> <li>• Lack of rideshare businesses</li> <li>• Possibility of reducing commercial flights as aircraft size increases</li> <li>• Taxiway and apron pavement strengths do not match runways and creates limitations</li> <li>• FBOs offer limited services</li> <li>• Lack of developable land</li> <li>• 3 year county leases limits investment opportunities</li> <li>• Market leakage to other commercial airports</li> <li>• No food service in secure area</li> </ul>
<b>O</b> OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop better connectivity throughout the state</li> <li>• Possibility of adding a second airline</li> <li>• NMDOT Intrastate EAS funding</li> <li>• Agreement with Enterprise Rental Car</li> <li>• State land west of airport could be acquired for business and or MRO facilities</li> <li>• Opportunities for GA SASOs</li> <li>• Access to federal and local funding</li> <li>• Possible service by JetSuiteX and increased enplanements</li> <li>• Possibility of PFCs</li> <li>• Covered parking with solar capability on top</li> <li>• Increased digital art and advertising signage in terminal</li> </ul>
<b>T</b> THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property to the East and North is now owned by the City of Hobbs, which may not be able to enforce Lea County zoning</li> <li>• Passenger leakage</li> <li>• Carlsbad and Clovis have EAS which could attract passengers</li> <li>• Impacts of pilot shortage and aircraft mechanics</li> </ul>