

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) NUT TREE AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE

1) Who owns and operates Nut Tree Airport?

Nut Tree Airport was donated to Solano County in 1970 and has since been continuously owned and operated as a public-use airport by Solano County.

2) How is the operation of Nut Tree Airport funded, and what is the annual operating budget?

Nut Tree Airport operates as an “Enterprise Fund” and, as such, is completely funded by airport users and revenue generated by airport businesses, and receives no funds from the Solano County General Fund. A revenue and expense summary for the Airport consisting of the last five fiscal years is provided in Chapter B of the *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE* entitled *Inventory of Existing Conditions* (Chapter B was included in Working Paper 1).

Nut Tree Airport takes no funding from the Solano County General Fund. The annual budget, including operating and non-operating costs for the Airport, was \$2,274,128 for FY 2009.

3) How is the Airport Master Plan funded?

The *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE* is funded with an FAA grant of \$349,125 and an FAA required \$18,375 match from Solano County.

4) What is the purpose of the Airport Master Plan Update?

The purpose of the Nut Tree *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE* is to provide a long-term development plan for the Airport that addresses the existing and future needs of the Airport. The development plan will include recommendations for airport facilities development, on-airport land use, surrounding area and supporting infrastructure development, as well as implementation steps for future improvements.

Projects included in the development plan will only be implemented when needed and justified by actual aviation demand, and will require approval of the Solano County Board of Supervisors.

5) What opportunities exist for public input in the planning process?

To ensure that the long-term airport development plan reflects the interests and concerns of airport users, local residents and businesses, Solano County is actively seeking public input in the Nut Tree *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE*. Five public meetings were included in the study scope to enable opportunities for interested community members to provide input to the County. These meetings (including the next meeting scheduled for December 8, 2010) provide the public an opportunity to ask questions, learn more about the master planning program, and obtain needed feedback. At the meetings, comment forms will be provided and public input gathered.

6) How can the public get a copy of the Airport Master Plan Update?

Reports, newsletters, working papers, meeting presentations and notes, meeting announcements, and other informational documents are posted and updated on the Nut Tree Airport website at www.solanocounty.com/airportmasterplan

7) Is closing the Airport something that will be considered in the Airport Master Plan Update?

No, closing the Airport is not a consideration in the *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE*. Solano County considers the Airport a valuable community asset and is committed to the future operation and development of the Airport. Should the County decide to consider closure of the Airport, the FAA would have to agree to the closure. This would require a determination that the Airport is not a necessary part of the National Airport System, and would likely require the repayment of any FAA grant monies the County has received.

8) What can be done about low flying aircraft?

Control of aircraft in flight is pre-empted by the Federal Government and regulated by the FAA. The height of aircraft on final approach to a runway or departure from Nut Tree Airport is not regulated by Solano County. Once an aircraft departs the Airport, the County (or any local government body) has no regulatory authority over aircraft in flight. However, consistent with Federal Aviation Regulations, the Airport does publish a standard traffic pattern and traffic pattern altitude for both small and large aircraft. The traffic pattern altitude is 1,717 feet (above) Mean Sea Level (MSL). This means that aircraft circling to land or performing touch-and-goes at Nut Tree Airport should maintain this altitude until turning on final approach and beginning their descent.

According to Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 91.119, there are minimum standards for operations (excluding when necessary for takeoff/landing). Generally, over congested areas, an altitude of 1,000 feet above the ground is required, except for during takeoff and landing procedures. Complaints on low flying aircraft may be filed with the FAA Office of Flight Standards, which monitors aircraft operations. The local Sacramento Flight Standards District Office can be reached at 916-422-0272.

Once the facts have been recorded, an FAA aviation safety inspector will attempt to identify the offending aircraft operator. For more information on low flying aircraft complaints, please visit the following website: http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fsdo/

9) Can the County control or change aircraft flight paths?

No, once an aircraft departs the Airport, the County has no regulatory authority over the aircraft. Also, see response to Comment number 8, above.

10) Is “Do Nothing” an alternative that will be considered in the Airport Master Plan Update?

The “Do Nothing” alternative will be considered in the alternatives chapter of the *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE*. However, the purpose of the plan is to provide a long-term development plan for the Airport that addresses the existing and future needs of airport users and maximizes compatibility with the surrounding area. Ultimately, the County Board of Supervisors will decide which alternative and what projects to implement.

11) Will you be re-aligning the runway at Nut Tree Airport?

No. According to the analysis in Chapter D of the *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE*, re-alignment of the runway at Nut Tree Airport is not required to meet FAA wind coverage requirements or other FAA design standards.

12) I am concerned about noise and safety issues. I am concerned about the volume of noise increasing and that there is no control tower. How is an increase in airplane traffic handled from a safety perspective?

As stated in the *Introduction and Vision* chapter of the *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE*, the role of Nut Tree Airport is not expected to change over the 20-year planning period. The Airport complies with most major FAA airport design standards and is currently operated in a very safe and efficient manner.

Aviation activity is expected to increase at the Airport, but at a conservative growth rate of approximately 1.1% per year. This projected increase in aircraft operations is not expected to have a significant noise impact or safety impact on the surrounding community; however, a noise analysis will be completed as part of the *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE*.

Projected aircraft operations are not expected to negatively impact safety or warrant the construction and operation of an Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT). Moreover, the vast majority of airports operate without an ATCT.

13) I am inside the noise contour; how is noise measured?

The FAA has defined the 65 DNL (CNEL in California) contour as the threshold of compatibility for residential development. Under the federal standard, any noise contour greater than 65 DNL/CNEL is considered incompatible for residential, school, hospital, places of worship, etc. The *1988 Airport/Land Use Compatibility Plan* (ALUCP) for Nut Tree Airport defined the 60 CNEL contour as the threshold of compatibility for residential development. Solano County staff and airport staff recognize that noise does not stop at these contour lines and will do everything possible to mitigate aircraft noise impacts.

Noise contours on a map connect equal points of noise energy, similar to the way a topographic contour connects points of equal elevation. The Day-Night Average Sound Level (or DNL) is the average noise level over a 24-hour period. The noise between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. is artificially increased by 10 decibels.

The noise contours shown on Figure B8, page B.26, were produced using the standard FAA software modeling program called the Integrated Noise Model (INM). These contours were produced during the *1993 Nut Tree Airport Master Plan Update* to represent a future scenario (year 2011) based on the forecasts in the 1993 plan (approximately 180,000 annual operations). Aircraft operations for 2009 were estimated at approximately 101,500 and are forecasted to reach just over 127,000 by 2030.

New base year and future noise contours will be produced later in this *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE*, after the future conceptual airport layout is determined, using the most current INM model available.

14) Does the length of the runway restrict the size of the aircraft?

Yes, the length of the runway provides a physical constraint to some larger business jet type aircraft. However, under federal law, Solano County, as the owner and operator of a public use airport, cannot restrict or otherwise discriminate against any type or class of aviation activity.

In practical terms, the runway length, width, and weight-bearing capacity at any airport define airport activity. Nut Tree Airport is primarily designed for a wide range of general aviation aircraft, including smaller business jet aircraft. That said, an operator of a larger business jet, weighing in excess of the runway's published weight bearing capacity of 30,000 pounds single wheel gear (SWG) may operate at Nut Tree Airport on an infrequent basis without overloading the pavement or being too large for the runway. From time to time, larger business jets will continue to make use of Nut Tree Airport.

15) What are the plans to integrate the Airport into the larger community?

The goal of the *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE* is to present a long-term physical development plan that identifies space for potentially needed facilities and considers how airport land is best used in consideration of anticipated future demand. The integration of Nut Tree Airport with the community, and specifically with the new Nut Tree commercial development, was an issue that was mentioned in many of the stakeholder and community meetings conducted in January 2010. Going back in the history of the Airport, the aircraft parking apron was once located near the approach end of Runway 2 adjacent to the original "Nut Tree" (the popular highway stop that included restaurants, shops, orchards, and gardens). The aircraft parking apron and the Nut Tree highway stop were also connected by a ¼-mile small gauge railroad track constructed in 1955. The railroad track has been relocated to the new Nut Tree development and there are currently no plans to extend it to the Airport; however, a pedestrian

walkway and bridge over Pine Tree Creek was recently constructed to allow local and visiting pilots convenient access to the new Nut Tree development.

Nut Tree Airport is integrated and can be further incorporated into the community in many other ways. The Airport contributes to the local economy by supporting local business with air travel needs and indirectly by the dollars spent by visitors to the community who utilize the Airport. The Airport is also integrated into the community through programs associated with Solano County Community College and other civic organizations and events that are often held at the Airport.

16) Nut Tree Airport is an asset to the City and County. What is the relationship between the two specifically in terms of land use issues surrounding the Airport?

Nut Tree Airport is owned and operated by Solano County. As described in the *1988 Airport/Land Use Compatibility Plan* and on page B.21 (Working Paper 1) of the *AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE*, the Solano County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) oversees and adopts land use compatibility planning standards to prevent land use conflicts and facilitate compatible development within the airport environs.

17) What is the public outreach for this planning process?

The remaining two public meetings (the fourth is on December 8, 2010) will focus on the proposed alternatives for potential airport growth and then the last meeting will provide opportunities to comment on the recommended alternative. The public will also have an opportunity to comment when the Solano County Board of Supervisors has it on their agenda.

For the upcoming December 8, 2010 meeting, the outreach plan has been augmented to include a direct mail announcement of upcoming meetings. This notice has been mailed to approximately 10,900 residents and businesses that reside within the Airport Influence Area (defined by the Nut Tree Airport Compatibility Map, see Page B.23 of Working Paper 1). This area includes the entirety of Browns Valley.

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our outreach program and welcome ideas/suggestions from local community members to increase our effectiveness in providing the community with meaningful information.

18) How does Nut Tree Airport activity compare to other same-sized general aviation airports?

There are over 5,000 public use airports in the United States, the majority of which are single runway, general aviation only airports similar to Nut Tree Airport. Activity levels at urban area general aviation airports range from as few as 36,000 operations and 10 based aircraft at Franklin Field south of Sacramento to as many as 500,000 operations and 680 based aircraft at Van Nuys Airport in Southern California. Activity and based aircraft estimates for Nut Tree Airport for 2009 were 101,500 annual operations and 201 based aircraft.

19) Have you (the Consultant) received a copy of the Travis AFB AICUZ? Will it be factored into plans for Nut Tree Airport?

Yes, we have received a copy of the Travis Air Force Base Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ) study. This study will be factored into the plans for Nut Tree Airport and we look forward to the participation of Travis Air Force Base representatives.