



City of Santa Barbara
Airport Department

Memorandum

DATE: March 9, 2022
TO: Rebecca J. Bjork, City Administrator
FROM: Brian D'Amour, Interim Airport Director
SUBJECT: General Western Aero Hangars Feasibility Update Study

BACKGROUND

The two General Western Aero Hangars (also known as Building 248 and Building 249) are located on the northeast portion of the Santa Barbara Airport near the intersection of Fairview Avenue and Hollister Avenue adjacent to San Pedro Creek. These two hangars were constructed in 1931 and were the genesis of the Santa Barbara Airport. Throughout the 1930's, the hangars supported aircraft manufacturing and commercial operations. During the 1940's, the Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Marines Corps began filling in the Goleta Slough and expanding the airport with new buildings and hangars. By the 1950's, the hangars were still functional, but the airfield had grown substantially to the west and south, thereby making the hangars appear set back from the airfield.

Limited documentation available between the 1950's and 1980's suggesting the hangars were less used for aviation purposes and used more for storage. It appears that minimal maintenance was performed on the hangars over this period.

Beginning in the 1980s through present, a number of studies were performed and plans developed related to the future disposition of these structures. Both structures are well beyond their useful life and are no longer providing a useful function to airport operations.

TIMELINE

- 1984 - Swalley Consulting Structural Engineer completed a structural assessment of the two hangars. The report of that structural assessment was not locatable at the time of this memo.
- 2002 - Lenvik and Minor Architects (LMA) completed a Conditions Use Study that analyzed three options for the future use of the two hangars. Swalley Consulting Structural Engineer completed an updated structural assessment of the two hangars as a subconsultant to LMA. The options analyzed included: restore for full use, adaptive re-use, and historical documentation and demolition. The three options ranged in cost from \$207,000 to \$2,300,000 with historical documentation and demolition being the least expensive option and full restoration being the most expensive option.

- 2014 - Historic Structures Report completed for eight buildings at the Santa Barbara Airport, which included the two General Western Aero Hangars. The report evaluated each building for City Landmark, Structure of Merit, and Potential Historic Resources designation, California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) eligibility, and assessed the potential impacts. The report concluded that the General Western Aero Hangars are City eligible and CRHR eligible.
- 2017 - Airport Master Plan (SBAMP) shows buildings 248 and 249 to be relocated out of the floodway. Three alternate sites were proposed. In addition, a demolition alternative and a mothball alternative were analyzed in the SBAMP Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and described further below.
- 2018 - Airport staff solicited proposals to perform structural assessment and feasibility study with the intent to mothball the two structures in their current location. The City CIP had proposed \$75,000 to fund this contract with another \$750,000 tentatively proposed in FY 24, however the \$75,000 was reallocated to other priorities. A draft PSA was compiled, but the PSA was never executed.
- 2021 - Airport staff received several inquiries from the public, Airport Commission, City Council, and redevelopment groups about the future of the two hangars. Proposed potential redevelopment ranged from a hot rod garage to an aviation museum. Both of these potential redevelopments suggested they would privately fundraise the cost of redevelopment, if the City would perform an initial feasibility study. The initial feasibility study would flush out the necessary structural repairs and the FEMA requirements (historic building in a floodway and whether wet or dry floodproofing is required).
- In late 2021, Airport staff solicited proposals to perform a structural assessment and update the 2002 conditions use study. LMA Architects provided a reasonable proposal and Airport staff intended to have City Council award a contract to LMA Architects in spring 2022.
- February 2022 – City is notified by California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation that the hangars were nominated to be added to the national register of historic places. The City may choose to object to this nomination.

The current City CIP FY22-26 proposed \$500,000 in FY22 and \$4,100,000 as future needs for the hangars. Currently, only \$75,000 is available for the execution of the pending LMA contract. Private funding is likely necessary to support any redevelopment or relocation as any Airport investment in these structures would need to be directly and substantially related to the actual air transportation of passengers or property. Given the location within the floodway, this location is minimally suited for supporting airport operations.

It is staff's recommendation to move forward with the updated study. Provided it is feasible to preserve and/or relocate these structures, the Airport would then pursue options in the following order of preference:

1. Secure off-site location and entity wishing to take on these structures and preserve them (would require additional environmental review);
2. Documentation and Removal (Class 1 Significant Impact in 2017 SBAMP EIR)
3. Preserve in place - will require floodproofing or elevating structures. (Mothball option – would be Class 2 Less than Significant Impact in 2017 SBAMP EIR)

4. Relocate within Airport property (would be Class 2 Less than Significant Impact in 2017 SBAMP EIR)
5. No Action (Class 1 Significant Impact in 2017 SBAMP EIR)

If you have any questions regarding this memo, please contact Brad Klinzing, Supervising Engineer, at BKlinzing@SantaBarbaraCA.gov or 805-692-6020.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian D'Amour". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian D'Amour, Interim Airport Director

cc: Sara Iza, Airport Development Manager / (E-File)
Andrew Bermond, Facilities Manager / (E-File)
Brad Klinzing, Supervising Engineer / (E-File)