

# Consultants Tell Stapleton Prospects

By HOWARD PANKRATZ  
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Denver must expand Stapleton International Airport, build a new airport on the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, or construct a completely new airport facility in the 5-county region if it is to meet future commercial air traffic demands, a San Francisco consultant said Monday.

Dan G. Haney, Denver project manager for Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co. of San Francisco, said city and county governments in the area must begin the project as quickly as possible since such airport construction or expansion will take from six to 12 years to complete.

The recommendations were made at a public hearing in the Jefferson County Court House, 1700 Arapahoe, Golden. Several other public hearings are scheduled in the metropolitan area.

Haney and David A. Pampur, assistant director for the Denver Regional Council of Governments (which hired the San Francisco firm), cited the vast projected growth of both commercial and general aviation in Denver. They also talked of establishing a new regional airport authority.

Haney's firm has been working with Meurer, Serafini & Meurer, Inc., of Denver in compiling the study for DRCOG.

## DOWN TO THREE

Haney said that at one time his company was considering as many as 43 alternatives to the Denver airport problem, but now has narrowed the field to three and is seeking public comment.

He admitted that the expansion of Stapleton or the construction of a new airport are the only feasible alternatives because the status of the Arsenal is uncertain. But he said the firm had considered the airport at the Arsenal because public pressure may be brought on the army to give up its Denver facility.

Continued gas shortages, he said, will favor airport alternatives that cost less and a philosophy of "making do with what you've got."

Haney said approximately 1.9 million passengers started their air trips in Denver in 1970, and that by the year 2000, this figure—based on Denver population, per capita income and airline fares—will rise to 19 million.

In addition, while there were approximately 212,000 takeoffs and landings at Stapleton in 1972, the projected aircraft operations in 2000 will be more than 600,000, well above Stapleton's current capacity of 50,000.

Pampur said up to 35 million passengers—the 19 million who will begin their trip here plus passengers transferring to other flights—will use Denver airport facilities in 2000, a 10-fold increase over 1970 traffic.

## LAND COSTS LOW

Haney said the advantage of an arsenal airport would be the zero or near zero cost of land and acquisition. However he said Stapleton will have to close an airfield is built at the arsenal.

He said "search areas" for a new airport—other than the arsenal—have concentrated in the northeast area of the 5-county region.

"These areas have been studied in depth, and individual sites have been visited," he said. "But we are not yet ready to identify where these sites are located."

The capital costs in 1973 dollars for construction of the three alternatives by 2000 will be \$165 to \$203 million at Staple-

ton and \$615 million each for the Arsenal airport or a new airport somewhere else, Haney said.

He said it will cost the air traveler \$1.60 and take him an average of 34 minutes to commute to Stapleton; \$2.02 and 47 minutes to go to an Arsenal airport and \$3.23 and 61 minutes to get to a new airport in northeast Denver.

The California consultant said two major alternatives have been eliminated: the "do-nothing approach" in which no facilities would be built and the construction of a new airport which would share commercial carrier responsibilities with Stapleton.

## MODERATE IMPACT

Haney said there will be for the most part a "moderate impact" on the environment no matter which of the airport alternatives are chosen. None of the airport sites will have the affect on city growth and land use that area officials actually want, he added.

He said members of DRCOG

have agreed that, if possible, the airport construction or expansion should:

—Reinforce development of Denver's central business district and the major corridors that feed the district.

—Spur major growth to the northwest and southeast.

—Curb urbanization in the Boulder Valley and "restrict" growth in the south, southwest and northeast.

"A new airport would pull more to the northeast, which is exactly the opposite of what is desired," Haney said. "None of the proposals did what was hoped for."

He said air pollution emissions will be moderate at both Stapleton and at the Arsenal as will their impact.

But he said the disruption of the natural environment at Stapleton will be less than the other two alternatives because environmental disruption has already occurred there. He categorized the disruption of the natural environment at a new

airport as "moderate to high" and as "moderate" at an arsenal airport.

As far as noise, the consultant said noise levels shouldn't increase during the next 25 years because aircraft are becoming appreciably less noisy.

## NO-GROWTH PARTISANS

He said there are those who currently favor a "no-growth" policy for Denver and he tried to answer questions they might have.

"If the airports aren't expanded, will the growth of Denver be slowed?" he asked.

"Not in the immediate future. If airports aren't expanded, who will be penalized? Air travelers and pilots and aviation-related economy of Denver," he said.

The persons "benefiting" from lack of airport expansion would be those near the proposed sites, he said.

People who have expressed a preference for expansion of Stapleton include the airlines

and air travelers, he said. Ways which Stapleton could be expanded, Haney added, are by building a third north-south runway near Quebec Street and adding an east-west runway on Arsenal property.

As far as general (private) aviation is concerned, Haney proposed three alternatives. He said they must be considered quickly because one private airport is closing and there are "strong indications the other three will close shortly."

The major alternatives for private aircraft are:

—Build six new general aviation (private plane) airports and put all general aviation capacity into them.

—Expand the existing airports in Jefferson and Arapahoe counties and in Longmont, and construct four new general aviation airports.

—Increase general aviation flights at Stapleton, placing 12 per cent of the load there and build three general aviation fields.

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