



City of Arts & Innovation

AIRPORT COMMISSION

TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS

DATE: JULY 8, 2015

FROM: GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT MARKETING AND
BRANDING AND REQUEST FOR INPUT ON THE AIRPORT NAME**

ISSUE:

The issues for Airport Commission consideration are to discuss the: 1) marketing and branding of the Riverside Municipal Airport; and 2) name of the Riverside Municipal Airport.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Airport Commission:

1. Provide input on the marketing and branding for the Riverside Municipal Airport;
and
2. Provide input on the name of the Riverside Municipal Airport as it relates to
marketing and branding.

BACKGROUND:

Riverside Municipal Airport (Airport) was established in 1952 and has grown to become a major contributor to the local economy with a total financial impact exceeding \$45 million per year according to a 2008 analysis of airport financial activity. Between 2011 and 2014, Airport activity increased an average of 18% per year; the Airport experienced a 24% increase in 2014 alone. In the first five months of 2015, Airport activity has increased 43% when compared to the same time period in 2014.

The Airport's existing users include 13 businesses that provide all levels of flight training and maintenance service to aircraft owners, two aviation flight schools, two FAA facilities and a restaurant. In 2014 the two flight schools added more than 225 new students. This is reflective of the airline industry's stated needs for more professional pilots. With the completion of a new corporate hangar at the Airport in July 2015, two additional corporate jets will now also be based at the Airport.

Other potential changes at the Airport may result from the recent issuance of a request for proposals seeking the development of a major hangar complex on the west side of the Airport property. The proposed development will encompass approximately 21 acres and provide an opportunity for the Airport to increase its tenant base by approximately 30%. Over the next five years the Airport will commence several capital improvement projects totaling more than \$4 million. These projects will include asphalt and lighting upgrades, hangar painting, improving signs on the airfield to increase safety and maintaining the runways and taxiways to meet increasing demand.

In light of these activities, Airport staff is in the process of developing a marketing plan to raise the awareness of professional services currently being offered at the Airport as well as to elevate the profile of the Airport in both the general and corporate aviation markets. The campaign will include metrics, key messages and value propositions (selling points), tactics and a timeline. With the Airport's position as a key economic asset, the campaign will also tie into the City's Economic Development marketing efforts to attract businesses and quality jobs. Key messages for the campaign will include, but not be limited to, the Airport's strategic location to major markets, its competitive fuel prices, no landing fees, and its congestion-free environment. The campaign will also feature award winning City amenities and programs that support Riverside's quality of life and Business First philosophies.

Several key elements of the proposed Marketing Plan include:

- Print/electronic media – publishing articles/advertorials in trade magazines as well as economic development and other newsletters, website enhancements and improved social media marketing.
- Other media – actively participate in regional radio interviews and produce Government TV (GTV) spots.
- Host special events.
- Corporate and other public relations – highlight the Airport's more than 100,000 annual operations at trade shows and outreach to corporate site selectors.
- Branding – Branding is an organization's identity and its competitive positioning. Rebranding efforts are often initiated when an organization has significantly evolved over time but past perceptions remain firmly entrenched and may include efforts like renaming a product, place or company. Consideration of the Airport's name will be included as part of the branding strategy.

At the August 3, 2005 Airport Commission (Commission) meeting there was a discussion regarding a proposal from the then Airport Director to remove "Municipal" from the name of the Airport, suggesting that the "Municipal" identifier indicates a "smallness" that does not align with the goal of becoming a corporate and business centric airport; the then Airport Director recommended a name change to better reflect the area and targeted customer base served by the Airport. The Commission recommended that the City Council change the name of the Airport from *Riverside Municipal Airport* to *Riverside Regional Airport*. Airport Staff was unable to find a record of a City Council item on the Commission's August 3, 2005 recommendation. Given the time that has lapsed from the August 3, 2005 Commission recommendation to today, staff is also seeking input from the current Commission regarding the name of the Airport.

Based on this information, staff conducted a more recent survey of Airport names and determined they generally fall under several primary brand identifiers:

- Municipal: Usually associated with a city name for identification.
 - Fullerton Municipal, Corona Municipal, Modesto Municipal, Merced Municipal, Visalia Municipal, Chico Municipal and Redlands Municipal
- No supplemental identifier.
 - French Valley Airport, Van Nuys Airport and Chino Airport
- Field: Many airports established in the middle of the 20th Century were literally grass fields. The cities that grew up around these airports chose to retain the original nature of the airport with the name of the individual that first developed these “airfields”.
 - Torrance (Zampirini) Field, Brackett Field and Montgomery Field.
- Regional: Airports that serve small or lightly populated geographical areas.
 - Lancaster Regional (CA), Coastal Carolina Regional (NC), Atlanta South Regional (GA) and Southwest Iowa Regional (IA).
- Executive: Airports near commercial hubs with thriving communities.
 - Henderson Executive (near Las Vegas, NV), Chandler Executive (near Phoenix, AZ), Sacramento Executive (near Sacramento International) and Orlando Executive.

Staff is seeking the Commission’s feedback on the marketing and branding of the Airport, including on the name of the Airport.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the City’s General Fund. Adequate funds for the marketing and branding of the Riverside Municipal Airport were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2015/16 General Services Department, Airport Administration Account No. 2245000-421000 (Professional Services).

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