

The Dallas/Fort Worth Regional Airport

(Economic History From the Prospective of the Future)

Jack D. Downey
Deputy Executive Director
Dallas/Fort Worth Airport

Joe L. Steele
Dean, M. J. Neeley School of Business
Texas Christian University

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPTS OF REGIONAL AIRPORTS

A DISCUSSION on the question of "regional airports" requires first that the term be defined. Almost everyone who thinks in terms of regional airports has a special set of experiences or design criteria that defines the term for him as an individual. But in order to discuss it with realism, we shall define it for purposes of this paper. A regional airport is a large capacity airport, central to a region of material production and/or population growth. This airport and its mission are designed to assimilate, disperse and transfer freight and passengers among various modes of transport as well as various units of the same mode.

Global transportation trends give rise to the potential need of massive air capability. Many factors in the world today make this statement viable. Even though population growth in the United States tends to decrease in rate, some definite geographic drifts of population give rise to more highly concentrated areas of aviation service demand.

Lifestyle levels have risen rapidly in the United States throughout the last thirty years and there is every reason to believe that the trend will continue. As the per capita Gross National Product increases, more discretionary money becomes available to individuals. As more of that free spending money appears, the individual tends to feel the need for even more of

it. This availability of income and the general upgrading of the degree of luxury that each family can attain form a direct index to higher air travel potential.

In business and in everyday living we are becoming increasingly more conscious that time is a vital resource. In actual dollar terms, human life-hours are of considerable value. In a less vital way the same is true for freight; the interest on the money borrowed and tied up in the handling and shipping process of freight goods is usually a significant cost of doing business. As a matter of investment, both for people and for freight, air is the most logical mode of travel for the future.

The education level of people throughout the world is being radically upgraded through a natural social revolution. As people become more educated at the base level, they tend to lose their fear of flight and want to move throughout the world to experience or utilize those things they have learned. We find that all age groups fly today. Not too long ago age group evaluation was of significant value in market forecasts, in that older people are flying as much as or more than the young due to the availability of funds and lack of fear. One can only conclude that the demand for transportation by air will continue to grow, probably at an accelerated rate due to new trends and basic understandings as well as increased availability of discretionary funds.

In view of the growing demand for air transportation, important questions rise concerning the satisfaction of new and

expanding users. The basic question is how do you get more units of air travel in and out of a given geographic region at the least cost in dollars and energy with the least disturbance to the environment? When this question is answered, the challenge becomes: How can these costs be paid?

There are three base line approaches to answer the first question. The first solution is one which centers on the present existing airport that is considered by the people of that locale as "good enough" for the growth pattern of their city or region. A second alternative involves the grouping of airports in a region that can be reworked to spread the commercial air traffic impact. This may include military, public and private airports. This solution envisions the upgrading of those airports only as required to allow commercial air traffic to serve the region. This, in effect, spreads the load. The third possible solution is to construct a regional airport.

In review of these options for increasing airport capacity an examination of the current and projected needs of the specific region is required. One might argue that a large capacity, modern airport is a worthwhile addition to any community. However, if the facility is not efficiently used after it is developed, the cost of unused extra capacity may represent as serious a misallocation of resources as that which occurs with insufficient facilities. A careful evaluation of the resource alternatives must be made concurrent with airport use projections. With a

simple three-category breakdown for identification of the airport expansion options open to a region, one may describe the variety of choices available to planners. These categories are as follows:

- (1) Solution A is one which centers on an existing airport;
- (2) Solution B is one which groups several airports as a region;
- (3) Solution C is one which creates a new regional airport.

The material below considers the basic economic factors that influence planning decisions for airport projects.

Construction of facilities is a major consideration for any planning exercise. The purchase of land would not, of course, be of concern in solution A, the use of the present airport, if one is willing to accept future limitations. Land acquisition might not be of much consequence in solution B which would combine several existing airports in the region. However, in these cases, land purchases will have to be considered at some future time and the cost of that land, if available, will be much higher. The actual cost of construction of buildings and airfield is a relatively high factor. Under the first two solutions, there may well be existing facilities that can be upgraded as time requires and a large capital investment may not be immediately necessary. But the later upgrading in efficiency and facilities of one or more airports in a given area to attain the passenger service level expected by today's traveler will more than likely

be at a high cost penalty. The cost of the regional airport is, at first glance, high in land and facilities; but on an overall basis, when compared with modification work on existing major airports, the totally planned regional airport is usually found to compare very favorably with solutions A and B. In addition to land costs, other basic expenses should be considered. Engineering costs will be higher with the regional airport because of planning studies required, but these studies may cost less than the step-by-step engineering studies which will be required to patch up a group of existing airports over an extended period of years.

The cost of access roads and mass transportation will be high in any of the proposed solutions and will be compounded where several airports require access rather than one. Ground transport costs for solution C may be highest if the distance of the regional airport from centers of population and material development is too great. For all options utilities costs vary almost directly with access. The cost of financing is a question that must relate to time. Again, multiple airport investments themselves could result in much higher financing cost due to incremental sales and the temporal increase in the cost of financing. These issues which influence the cost and design scale of an airport deserve major attention. The next portion of this paper will evaluate airport financial strategies.

ECONOMICS OF A NEW REGIONAL AIRPORT

The evaluation of the development of a new airport and its economic impact on the community requires that one consider the various stimuli and depressants generated by individual segments of the project during its development and construction and later operation. To accomplish this in an orderly manner one should consider the following sequential stages of development.

1. Preparatory funding and community groundwork;
2. Strategy of planning;
3. Basic economic agreements;
4. Funding implementation;
5. Cost control systems;
6. Regional economic impact.

1. Preparatory Funding and Community Groundwork

A most awesome aspect of planning an airport sized to handle tomorrow's air traffic is that of developing sources of new funds that can be directed toward building such an airport and covering all the related peripheral costs. Total airport costs include dollars for planning, engineering, construction, operation, and the interest cost on borrowed money. The usual sources of funding for major new projects is worthy of brief review and discussion. A common fund-raising device is the general obligation bond which is usually redeemed by property taxes, but which may be redeemed in part or whole through rates, fees, and charges

paid by the users of the airport. An alternative to the obligation bond is the general revenue bond. Such a bond is secured and redeemable only from rates, fees, and charges paid by the users of the general facility built by bond funds. A more restricted revenue source is provided by a Special Facility Bond which is sold to develop a specific facility. A special facility bond is guaranteed through a specific lease pledge to pay principal and interest. Typical facilities developed through this type of funding would include aircraft fueling systems, hangars, an airmail facility, and other independent units.

When bonds have been sold and the proceeds received, an inventory of temporarily idle cash in the form of construction money will develop. This inventory of cash will be available for short term investment use by the bond sellers, and this investment may be a source of a significant amount of interest income. In general, the longer the project the more important the management of the cash inventory. The amount of such income is dependent on the dollars available, the applicable interest rate, and the length of time involved. Federal Government funds are frequently available for specific portions of an airport project. Since governmental funds may be difficult to obtain at the precise time when needed, major reliance on such funding may seriously affect construction scheduling. Another source of funding is third party financing which may be an option if a single corporation offers to assume the financial respon-

sibilities of development and share the anticipated rewards from future operation.

Launching an airport program and attracting the necessary money to finance the project require proper community preparation before thorough master planning is begun. Community interest in the project must be generated and enabling legislation must be obtained to establish an organizational base. This legislation must give sufficient financial powers to the organization, so that it has the flexibility to create a variety of funds sources during the construction period and later manage its affairs on a sound businesslike basis during operation. If one is considering a new generation airport, it is obvious that there will not be any operating revenues from existing facilities available to finance debt service during the construction period. Therefore, it is just as necessary to have a clear understanding with the airlines as it is with legislative bodies. The affected airlines must be willing to support the airport and appropriate agreements must be signed with them specifying the intent of both parties. Such agreements form the foundation for financing the project. It is desirable to work closely with those local governments that are, perhaps, not the sponsoring organization, but will be affected by the proposed project. The employment of highly qualified bond councilors, negotiators, and dedicated financial advisors is also important, as mistakes made in the early financial and legal phases of development will penalize

the entire project.

All these factors are necessary in order to establish a solid foundation for launching a project of the dimensions of a regional airport. It must be restated that if the mission of the airport is not understood and supported by the community, and agreed to by the principal users (the airlines), it will be extremely difficult to generate the enthusiasm and dedication necessary for such a project and its funding.

2. Strategy of Planning

The strategy of planning for the new regional airport becomes most important when the preliminary community and financial groundwork is completed. By this point it has been established that there is a compelling need for the construction of the new facility. This need has been established by a series of sophisticated studies. One of these major studies is typically "The Master Plan of the Airport." Federal Government funds are usually available to support this type of study. As far as the regional economy is concerned, however, the airport's physical master plan is only the starting document for the total master planning that must be undertaken. Coordination with local governments, directly affected by the airport, must be maintained to assure that the land adjacent to the airport is developed in a manner that insures the economic viability of the airport as a functioning component of the region. Further, coordination with state and local agencies must insure that transportation,

communication, and utility systems of the surrounding area are capable of handling not only the airport and its development, but the later expansion of regional activity in response to the airport "economic pump."

Among the many important studies that influence and shape the strategy of airport planning are projected flight schedules that describe aircraft passenger and cargo flows into and out of the airport. These scheduling forecasts are usually made for the opening date of airport operation and for five year intervals thereafter. Those who offer such forecasts are well aware that accuracy in projection always varies inversely with time. That is, short term forecasts have greater reliability than do long term ones. These forecasts are of great value in establishing the feasibility of initial stage operational scale and the related generation of revenues. If an airport is to be opened in 1975, it should not open in 1975 with facilities in place that provide service levels not required prior to 1985. Traffic for 1975 will not provide sufficient revenue to support the excess capacity of the project. Forecasts that underestimate will result in service that is frequently interrupted and slowed; overestimation creates a system in which the costs of operation cannot be supported by reasonable service charges. These early forecasts which are developed from 4 to 7 years prior to airport opening day are clearly of great import.

Additional studies must be made to fit the airport's

facilities to its site, to determine optimal ground traffic flows, to establish noise and sound parameters, and to assure that the surrounding communities' building codes incorporate these considerations. The necessary accommodation to building codes will have a definite effect on the type as well as the cost of construction of buildings in the general area of the airport. The Corps of Engineers must provide an early input to assure that the hydrology of the surrounding areas is contained and controlled to avoid the loss of high production acreage in the immediate environs of the airport.

As these early studies are completed they provide the basis for a preliminary financial feasibility report. This report, which compares projected revenues with construction and operations costs, must establish the financial reasonableness of the preliminary design to the airlines and the airport staff. This report will later become the cornerstone for negotiating future agreements. These combined studies are the building blocks with which the airline negotiators and technical people justify and support the project. They are of a critical nature in developing an attractive, solid, economic atmosphere in marketing the bonds. A public hearing is usually held after the master plan and related studies are developed. This hearing's purpose is to assure that the region will not be adversely affected by the overlay of the airport on its normal development, and that the environmental aspects of the region are not adversely affected.

This period of strategy of planning is significant as an economic factor in the growth of the area in itself. Not only must a great deal of time and energy be spent in keeping the public aware, but the funds that support the necessary and extensive studies have a considerable wave effect out from the airport into the local economy.

3. Basic Economic Agreements

In establishing a reasonable, firm financial base for the development and operation of the airport, it is necessary that numerous agreements be reached among the various parties. It is imperative that these agreements not only be fair, but that they also contain enough flexibility for the airport to grow as demands change. This is true, in part, because of the natural reluctance of facilities users to spend money until a functional problem is no longer one of planning, but one of critical repair. These basic economic agreements describe the essential responsibilities and working arrangements that bind specific interests together in the performance of detailed airport activities. The essential elasticity of managerial response to the change-oriented nature of the air travel industry is created or destroyed in the language of these agreements. There are many agreements that must be considered both from the point of view of financial feasibility and that of maximizing net revenues to the airport available for debt retirement. The airport operator should be most dedicated to the latter function.

All types and classifications of basic economic agreements are defined and described in the Financial Feasibility report-- Airline Use Agreement, Fueling, Concessionaire, Utility, and Ground Transportation Agreements, Police and Fire governmental controls, and on in similar documents. All of these agreements should have flexibility and equitability built into them just as the physical master plan of the airport is plastic in its general layout and growth patterns. These agreements must form an equitable base for the expenditure of capital funds and a rate, fee, and charge pattern that will, in effect, make the airport the economic fulcrum for airline operation. They should not become a matter of extortionistic expense that would tend to restrain not only the economic growth of the airport in the future, but the free development of the total national and international air transportation economy as well.

As a matter of policy these airline agreements should provide for the creation of a reserve fund from the proceeds of each bond sale. The level of this reserve fund should be approximately equal to one year's average principal and interest requirements on the current debt. This fund provides additional protection to the bond holders and aids in selling the bonds at a lower interest rate.

In addition to this reserve fund a reasonable amount of debt service coverage must be built into the agreement. This coverage is the source of money for a capital improvement fund,

which, in turn, is normally used for the accomplishment of the small and currently unanticipated future development projects, major maintenance work, and other activities necessary to the operation of the airport not specifically funded from other sources. The creation of reserve and debt service funds provides airport management with a high degree of financial flexibility.

4. Funding Implementation

Prior to this step, airport planners have made a reasonably accurate estimate of the total cost of the first stage of construction, have preliminarily determined the method of financing this construction, and have concluded that the project is financially feasible. Concurrently with this initial work, a competent public relations firm should have been employed to implement an overall plan of public awareness and support for the airport throughout the critical development years. This firm's services should include the preparation of a well-conceived brochure and a complete land-use plan. These publications are not only important in their effect on the general public, but they also alert and inform bond rating companies, underwriters, and potential bond buyers to the necessity and the desirability of the project.

To establish a solid financial base, one of the first definitive steps to be taken is the acquisition of land for the airport. A prime reason for early land purchase is that it

gives additional visibility and credibility to the airport project. Up to this point the projected airport is just a vision described by reports, brochures, agreements, and public relations activities. Acquisition of land gives the new airport its first substance. From a purely economic view it is important to buy land early to avoid inevitable land price increases as speculators move in to ply their trade.

The timing of the sale of bonds is of crucial importance throughout the funding program of the airport. A shift in time of a bond issue by only a week can cost or save a year's technical expense, simply on the varied increment of interest cost over the life of the bonds. The size of the bond offering is important related to the bond market and the normal progress of construction. To assure the best interest rate on the bond sale, the financial advisor must have the capability to vary the size of his offerings to assure normal progress of construction without having to take large penalties through the interest rates. Market acceptance of airport bonds will have a direct effect on timing and the size of each bond sale. As the project proceeds, assuming that it moves forward without delays and major changes in cost estimates, each bond sale becomes more and more routine. Additionally, the amount of each sale will increase without a penalty in rate, as the market is educated to accept this airport's bonds.

The many approaches and strategies for bond issue sizes

and timing must be carefully coordinated among the Chief Engineer, the Director of Finance, and financial advisors. Accurate and intelligent implementation of bond issues will maximize the funds retained in the local area and will limit the non-productive dollars pumped into a remote market for handling costs.

5. Cost Control Systems

At this point when preparatory groundwork, planning, agreements, and funding have been accomplished, the most important managerial economic activity involved with the construction of the airport is the cost control system designed to guarantee maximum efficiency from each dollar expended. A direct coordination between the director of finance and the director of engineering is imperative on a day-to-day basis to derive maximum value and economy in the construction of the airport.

The first requirement for the cost control system is the establishment of construction cost forecasts in the form of gross preliminary estimates. These estimates will then be resolved into a cash commitment requirement schedule to be used throughout the construction period. These cost estimates and the time duration of construction from the benchmark from which all other systems costs are controlled.

The importance of the completeness and accuracy of costs in these early estimates cannot be overemphasized. Under-estimation will result in constant public and professional friction throughout the entire planning and construction period. It will cause

problems with the airlines in establishing rates, fees, and charges, and will make bonds less desirable in the market. Alternatively, over-estimation will create an inefficient climate for management and will establish attitudes not rewarding to good executive practices. Over-estimation of cash requirements tends to build in cost penalties that will ultimately make the airport less competitive because of inflated use rates.

Two factors are fundamental in cost control. The first is escalation. It has traditionally been the practice to apply a five to ten per cent contingency and a five per cent escalation factor for a given year's construction cost. Escalation today is running in the neighborhood of 1-1/4% to 1-1/2% per month, which amounts to 18% per year, which over a five-year period could increase the cost of the project by over 90%. The second factor is interest on unusable capital. If the construction program is not so scheduled that all of the sub-projects tend to finish together, a very high cost of interest must be paid on the capital that has been invested in the completed but not yet usable facilities. This cost can be even more severe than that due to escalation.

From a philosophical view point planning and coordination must be maintained between the airlines group and the airport administration as well as within the airport administration.) The purpose is to assure that personal differences and individual likes and dislikes do not result in millions of lost dollars due

to delay of total project completion or to a general upsetting of the critical planning path that would result in additional interest payments. Expenditures here are in non-value received dollars. These payments do not produce functional facilities, do not increase salaries, or upgrade the economic welfare of the immediate region.

6. Regional Airport Impact

Transportation and trade always have been linked together. A strong argument can be made that transportation modes and routes for people comprise the stimulus for shaping the nature, direction, and varieties of economic activity. Traditional land, water, and sea transportation networks have shaped the development of nations and regions, and now air transportation is becoming a vital and influential economic force. A brief review of the airport's role in a region can best be developed from the viewpoint of the airport planner who had to accommodate this intrusion of heavier-than-air vehicles into a given area.

In the early 1900's when man was endeavoring to overcome his earthbound state by rising into the sky, the question of facility planning and design on the ground, or the airport as it were, was raising its ugly head. In order for the Wright brothers to get their aircraft off the ground, it was necessary that someone make sure the field from which they flew was clear of trees and rises. The necessity for the launching board to be of the right length and smoothness and that the release

trigger mechanism work at the right time to release the aircraft satisfactorily was somewhat analagous to runway planning. It may be stretching the imagination to visualize these primitive questions as airport design problems, but that is exactly what they were. Airport design became a little more complex as the Ford Iri-Motor came into service, and in the late 1920's and early 1930's this aircraft began to persuade planners that some sophistication in airports had to be realized. In 1958 another revolution came about as the jet engine was applied to a commercial aircraft, presenting airport designers with several frightening problems. Passenger safety became a major problem because of the concern that the jet engines might suck people right off the ramp and grind them through the engine. Central buildings had already been built to keep people protected from the rail, but now passengers had to be enclosed in fingers on the ramps. Later this developed into upper level fingers which were completely enclosed and air conditioned and loaded directly into the aircraft. Because of this design, one now boards an aircraft in a complete atmosphere of comfort and safety. These aircraft of yesterday were design problems, because with each aircraft generation airport planners felt that the technological peak had been reached and they were unable to, or didn't want to, look very far into the future. And as each new and critical situation occurred, problems were solved with remedies developed two or three years after the problems arose.

Consider the difference between airport design and airport planning. Airport design is the satisfactory solution of problems that exist; airport planning, on the other hand, is the anticipation of future problems so that design can be effective over time. The difference can be illustrated. For years facilities have been built on a design basis that has adapted the airport to cope with changes in aircraft size and the resultant problems of passenger and baggage handling. These problems were solved after the fact in an engineering and architectural manner tailored to a given airport. The need today is to look forward at least twenty years into the future to insure a continuing scan on the problems of the future. The development of answers to those anticipated problems is airport planning. The 747 is a typical design problem because of its weight, more than double that of the workhorse 707. This presents some problems in the thickness of pavement; and the very size of the 747 requires greater turning radius on the taxiways and aprons. The fact that the 747 carries 350 persons compared to 140 persons in the 707 presents new design problems in terminal shape and configuration. The crowded condition of the airways over the United States, particularly at international gateways, is being repeated throughout the world. This dictates that we carry more passengers per aircraft unit in order not to increase the number of aircraft units flying. The C5A, or L500 could be used to implement such a plan. A passenger configuration of this

aircraft would probably carry 750 to 1000 passengers. It is difficult to imagine the impact on a facility of one thousand passengers from one aircraft, in the same space that is handling 190 to 200 today. While that aircraft is large, airframes being planned today are of even greater capacity. One can translate this growth and change in aircraft into costs. The costs of aircraft have changed rapidly in the decades. The DC 3 cost in the neighborhood of \$55,000; the Constellation aircraft about \$2.5 million; the 707 in the neighborhood of \$7 to \$8 million; the 747 about \$21 to \$26 million, and future SST aircraft may cost anywhere from \$50 to \$60 million per unit. This means that schedulers must consider every minute of the life of these aircraft as of great economic value. As a matter of fact, efficient aircraft utilization (or the actual number of hours carrying a payload from origin to destination) is the difference between a profit and a non-profit industry. Therefore, in planning an airport, if it is to attract traffic and contribute to the overall development of the region, it must have a very flexible and maneuverable layout in order to minimize all non-essential delays. The high cost of crew time, and the interest on loans made to buy an aircraft fleet running to thousands of dollars per hour, demand that all delays of operation be planned out of the airport.

The discussion above differentiates between the design of an airport's facilities and the planning for a regional airport's

projected needs. The regional economic impact of an airport will depend on whether it was designed or planned. The airport which was designed to relieve a crisis of bottlenecks is destined to serve as a high cost facility which will be grudgingly used by airlines to satisfy minimal passenger demand. These airports will be served at a penalty and schedulers will route around such airports at every opportunity. On the other hand, those airports which reflect a true planning approach will provide a dramatic economic stimuli to their regions.

The Dallas-Fort Worth region is the largest in the United States that has no direct access to water navigation. This airport will serve a regional population of approximately three million. The products produced in this region are not of the type to require massive transportation of low grade (or low value) inputs. As a consequence, approximately 85% of this region's product is currently air transportable from a cargo rate viewpoint. Access to and from the airport and the surrounding local area is very important. This airport is in the middle of a major metropolitan area, composed of some four thousand square miles. An extensive highway plan that will grow and mature has been developed by a state highway agency to service the whole regional area. High speed automated trains will also be needed to travel between the two major city centers and the airport.

The master plan of the airport represents facility planning. With seventeen thousand acres available for use, a thorough st

was developed, which describes the ultimate airport consisting of thirteen terminal buildings, along a Spine Road that can provide 230 B 747 gates in the ultimate plan. At the north and south ends of the airport are flattened horseshoe shaped facilities that can house 200 large air freighter aircraft. In addition, over 1,400 acres have been set aside for maintenance facilities.

The first phase of the airport will be finished in September, 1973. Originally, the opening date configuration called for five terminal half-loops, but only four are to be ready because of the slackening in projected passenger demand during the past three years. Two of the four north-south runways will be constructed each with a length of 11,400 feet. One of the two diagonal runways is being built at a length of 9,000 feet. The total amount of land used in the first phase is about 8,500 acres, leaving almost 13,000 acres undeveloped. The master plan will ultimately use these acres completely.

The planning efforts devoted to this airport make it possible for us to view the current small scattering of buildings and improvements through the perspective to the ultimate master plan. The forces that will move the 1973 configuration into the ultimate plan are:

- (1) The profitability factors of a near friction-free airport operation;
- (2) The observation that almost all major hubs in the

United States are restrained in one or more of the problem areas identified earlier;

- (3) The unusually strong local support for the new airport;
- (4) The fact that this region has the highest per capita air travelers of any in the United States;
- (5) The inevitable emergence of air cargo as the major factor in the growth of any airport of any size in the future. Prior high transport costs resulted from a lack of sufficient tonnage-lift on a regular scheduled basis; new large bodied aircraft possess enough belly space to stimulate the air cargo market. By 1985, cargo revenues are projected to overtake passenger revenues. The Dallas/Fort Worth airport has the space for automated structures that could handle a total of 200 C5A size aircraft--giving a potential of moving more freight per day than the world's largest seaport does today.
- (6) Location of this region geographically on the great circle route between South America and the Orient. It is a transfer point between Europe and the developing South Pacific.

In short, the location of the airport, its capability to handle the future of air cargo, its local support and its friction-free operation should make it one of the major hubs in the world within the next ten years. Approximately five years ago, this

airport was just undeveloped ranch land. Today, the buildings are taking final shape and the highways and runways are virtually completed.

In its ultimate development, the airport will be a major factor in the air industry of the world. There may be another six to ten of these airports built throughout the world and these will be the pivotal hubs, the ports of the ocean of air. Planning is what makes this possible and planning is the only thing that will produce a reasonable payout tomorrow on the investment of today.

CONCLUSION

The primary focus of this study has not been on those variables most often linked with economic impact. While gross figures for employment, dollars spent, and freight tonnage are important indices of on-going enterprise, such figures often obscure the nature of a particular economic vehicle (such as an airport). The purpose of this paper has been to define the concept of a regional airport and to explain in detail the options, steps, and strategies which must be considered in the planning of a major new airport. The new Dallas/Fort Worth Regional Airport was planned to act as an economic catalyst functioning as an economic stimulus and generating new uses for this region's resources through the early years of the 2000's. This project is a conscious device to shape this region's economic future. Economic historians who review this region's performance 50 years from now will be able to pass judgment and evaluate the performance of this airport's pioneering planners.