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**The Broomfield Enterprise, Volume 4, Number 37, June 13, 1979  — Environmental report recommends improving Jeffco airport [ARTICLE]**

# Environmental report recommends improving Jeffco airport

by Susan Townsend

Improving Jefferson County Airport is the best way to meet future aviation needs in the area. It will allow the airport to provide service at increased levels of capacity, efficiency and safety.

But further development will result in some adverse environmental effects, both short and long-term, which cannot be avoided, according to the draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the airport's 20-year master plan.

The airport property will undergo a minimum amount of change if the master plan is implemented, and "...this site is relatively insensitive from the standpoint of its natural and human environment," the report noted.

The airport improvements, planned over the next 20 years, are designed to meet the increased demand for services at the facility.

These include constructing new taxiways, acquiring Upper Church Lake and 520 acres for clear zones, constructing a new runway south of two existing east-west runways, relocating one of the existing east-west runways, adding new tie down and hangar areas, relocating streets and installing radar in the control tower.

The report rejects other alternatives, such as diverting service to other airports, which would be difficult because of overcrowding at other facilities, and relocating the airport, which would be more costly and

environmentally disruptive. A third alternative, doing nothing, was rejected on the grounds it will lead to the deterioration of the airport and affect safety.

"Increased air traffic and proposed airport improvements will have some environmental impacts but the magnitude and extent should be limited to short-term construction effects and long-term consequences of increased aircraft operations," the EIA noted.

Some short-term effects include increased air pollution, as a result of construction dust and vehicle emissions, increased noise from construction equipment and aircraft delays, traffic delays and the acquisition of additional land. Long-term effects include some losses of vegetation, degradation of noise and air quality as a result of additional aviation, an increase in surface run-off, improvements in aviation safety and stimulation of the private and public economics.

The report noted short-term effects are acceptable

since they are temporary in nature and enhance the long-term productivity of the airport, while the long-term effects are outweighed by the positive impact of the improvements.

Although noise levels at the airport will rise as a result of more traffic, future federal regulations are expected to require reductions in the noise individual aircraft can make, according to the report.

#### Most of the airport

property and areas outside the airport will be exposed to less than 65 ldn (day/night level) in noise which is not considered objectionable. By 1989 about 35 residents east of the airport could be exposed to between 65 to 75 ldn if the proposed federal regulations are not enforced. If the regulations are enforced only airport property will be impacted by that noise level, the report concluded.

Broomfield has a number of public lands and facilities north of the airport but none are within the approach surface to Runway 20, the 3,000-foot north-south runway.

"The airport causes some disturbance to residents of Broomfield, but these effects are likely to occur intermittently on public lands and recreation areas in that community. Disruptions have not been continuous, however, as evidenced by the lack of sustained complaints from the community," the report stated.

The plan recommends land acquisition and runway development to help control noise as well as provide for long-range airfield capacity.

"A third parallel runway will shift training operations further to the south thereby reducing flight pattern activity over Broomfield. Use of this runway, land

acquisition (including noise buffer areas), approach/departure procedural improvements and federal engine noise abatement standards are all expected to limit noise impact to the airport property and portions of the primary approach zones," the assessment noted.

The report recommends future residential uses and other noise-sensitive uses and uses within the airport's influence area be discouraged.

"Continued compatibility between the airport and the surrounding community can be expected from a noise standpoint, as long as appropriate precautions are taken to limit development in the approach areas, particularly to the east," the report added.

The airport is a designated reliever facility for Stapleton International Airport and handles general aviation traffic diverted from that airport.

The airport has experienced a steady increase in air traffic from 183,398 take-offs and landings in 1970 to 248,351 in 1978. The number of take-offs and landings is expected to climb to 331,000 by 1983 and 605,000 by 1998.

A public hearing on the airport's plan will be held July 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Jefferson County Court House in Golden.