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Jeffco Airport presents proposed expansion plans to Boulder County

The proposed expansion of the Jefferson County Airport, located southwest of Broomfield, was discussed by airport officials and the Boulder County Commissioners Aug. 2 at the Boulder County Courthouse.

The airport recently received tentative confirmation of a \$751,000 Federal Aviation Administration grant to study and design the expansion. As now envisioned, the main runway will be extended about 1500 feet to the northwest which would put it in Boulder County. Jeffco officials wanted the county commissioners to be apprised of the project before major planning was begun.

According to Dave Gordon, Jeffco Airport manager, an estimated \$7 million will ultimately be needed to complete the extension of the main runway. Gordon told the county commissioners that once the FAA invests money in a project it rarely abandons it. He anticipated final word on the first grant to come around Sept. 1.

"We're hoping the funding will come from the FAA," Gordon said in a telephone interview. "Several more grants will be needed." He said about 90 percent of the costs will be assumed by the FAA and that Jeffco will pick up the remainder.

Gordon and Bill Reefer, a member of the Jeffco Airport Authority, which owns and operates the facility, told the commissioners that the primary reason for extending the runway was safety. In its present state, the runway rises about 80 feet toward the west. According to Reefer, this creates a hazard if an airplane needs to make an emergency landing immediately after take-off.

He cited runway conditions, the weight of the plane at full load and the air temperature as factors influencing a plane's ability to take off on Jeffco's main runway. When the air is thinner in summer, a plane cannot take off as easily, Reefer observed. Also, Gordon said that some businesses, whose jets use Jeffco, have requested the lengthening of the runway because their planes cannot take off with a full fuel load because of the rise in elevation.

The rise in the runway will be removed when the extension takes place, Gordon said.

The expansion will require Colorado Highway 128 to be relocated two miles to the north. The road will swing north

just past the Colorado Aerotech building and reconnect with the existing 128 about a mile and a half from Simms St. That street will also be affected by the expansion, with the existing road closed at W. 108th Ave. sometime this fall, Gordon said. The new road will angle west from W. 108th Ave. to intersect with the rerouted 128 about a mile from its current intersection. When the Simms St. relocation would take place has not been determined.

Gordon said that Interlocken and the City of Broomfield's comprehensive plan showed the relocation of 128. He also said only two land owners, both developers, will be affected by the expansion and that Jeffco is negotiating with them now. Gordon said until the design phase is completed, sometime in early 1985, he would not know how much land the airport authority would need to acquire.

The county commissioners had little to say about the expansion. However, Buz Smith said: "A concern that I have . . . is that a member of the (Jeffco Airport) authority be from Boulder County" so that the county might be kept

abreast of airport developments.

"I don't think any of us could predict where Superior's going to be in 30 years," Smith added.

Ed Tepe, director of Boulder County's land use department, advised Gordon that the airport authority would have to submit the expansion plans to receive a special review and that amendments to the Boulder County comprehensive plan must also be made.

"We planned on agricultural zoning (around the airport) and want to leave the land as free and open as possible," Tepe said. He suggested the airport authority buy adjacent lands or maintain open space through zoning.

Gordon said that the expansion would have little impact on the City of Broomfield. It would not alter the types of aircraft it currently handles, nor would it alter the traffic pattern that aircraft using Jeffco follow. He also said he did not anticipate an increase in air traffic initially or a significant change in the future.

"I don't think the people that live off the airport will notice one bit of difference," he said.