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FAA approves Mobile Airport Authority’s Master Plan

**MOBILE, Ala. (April 6, 2021) –**  The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has approved the Mobile Airport Authority’s (MAA) Master Plan to relocate commercial air passenger service to the Mobile Downtown Airport (BFM). This accomplishment is the culmination of the three years of hard work that will cover the next twenty years of development.

Prior to the start of the Master Plan study, a feasibility study was completed in 2018. That study determined it was both feasible and critical for the Mobile Airport Authority to move commercial air passenger service from the Mobile Regional Airport in west Mobile to the Mobile Downtown Airport. The feasibility study, paid for by the FAA, found about 55% of the Mobile market is lost to neighboring airports, and Mobile could recapture this market by moving its location to the downtown area.

With that knowledge, the Mobile Airport Authority, the FAA, and consulting experts Leigh Fisher developed a Master Plan in 18 months, a process that typically takes three years. The Master Plan outlines the next twenty years of development for the Mobile Downtown Airport. Throughout the planning process, there were multiple opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to ask questions and provide feedback.

“The input from community leaders, business owners, and local residents was invaluable to our team,” said Chris Curry, Mobile Airport Authority President. “Their recommendations helped our team develop the best possible plan to provide premium air service from the Mobile Downtown Airport.”

The FAA’s approval now clears the path for developing a new international terminal at the Mobile Downtown Airport. At 130,000 square feet, the future terminal will be somewhat smaller than the current terminal at the Mobile Regional Airport, but it will be more efficient. The 20-year Master Plan overall estimated cost is $403M. However, phase 1, which consist of the construction of the terminal, parking garage, surface parking and tarmac expansion, estimated cost is $160M.The terminal will also be designed to house Federal Inspection Services operations necessary to qualify as an international terminal.

“We owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to U.S. Senator Richard Shelby, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey, and Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson. Their support and leadership have been crucial to the progress we have made towards providing high-quality and accessible air travel to the people of Mobile and Baldwin counties,” said Elliot B. Maisel, Chairman of the Mobile Airport Authority.

“The FAA’s approval of the master plan for the Mobile Downtown Airport is great news and a big step in the process in enhancing commercial air travel in the region,” said Senator Shelby. “I am pleased to see this progress and look forward to working with the Mobile Airport Authority and the FAA on this initiative, which will undoubtedly add to the current economic growth and success of Alabama’s Gulf Coast.”

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“This economic study proves what we have collectively known for a long time; moving the Mobile Airport downtown will be a win-win for Mobile and the surrounding Gulf Coast region,” Governor Ivey said. “When fully operational, the airport will maintain good-paying jobs while providing an increased economic boom for our region and offering additional opportunities to visit the Port City for work and play.”

“I want to congratulate the Mobile Airport Authority for their vision and leadership in creating a comprehensive Master Plan that will bring commercial air service to the Mobile Downtown Airport at Brookley Field. We are grateful for the decisive action by the FAA, which not only paves the way for citizens to enjoy better flight options and lower ticket fares, but also ensures a bright future for the downtown airport and the Port of Mobile,” said Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson.

“This is an exciting next step on Mobile’s path to progress. Having our airport downtown makes more sense for our residents and will be key in our continued efforts to make Mobile a hub for tourism,” said Levon C. Manzie, Mobile City Council President and District 2 Councilor.

“The FAA’s approval for the downtown international terminal is not only critical to recapturing Mobile’s lost air travel market but is an important factor in improving future economic development opportunities for our region,” said Connie Hudson, Mobile County Commission Vice President and District 2 commissioner.

MAA is currently working on a strategy to clear the space to build the new terminal. The new terminal is expected to open at the Mobile Downtown Airport in early 2024.

The Mobile Airport Authority owns and operates Mobile Regional Airport (MOB), Mobile Downtown Airport (BFM), and the Brookley Aeroplex generating $1.8 Billion in economic value for Alabama. Delta Airlines, American Airlines, and United Airlines serve the Mobile Regional Airport, providing direct service to four major hubs: Atlanta, Dallas, Charlotte, and Houston. MOB is also home to Airbus Space and Defense.

BFM is located next to the Port of Mobile. The unparalleled geographical location supports the Authority’s multimodal ability to bring maritime, rail trucking, and aviation together in one location. BFM also serves as home to Airbus Final Assembly Line, Airbus Engineering, ST Aerospace, and Continental Motors.

The Brookley Aeroplex is an industrial complex that supports the operation of BFM, and it is home to more than 90 businesses that include supply chain providers and others that support the transportation industry.

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