



# Cameron Airpark District Report of Activities December 2019 to December 2020

Cameron Airpark Board President

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## **Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION**

Cameron Park Airport is a public use airport located in Cameron Park, El Dorado County, California. It is owned by the Cameron Park Airport District (CPAD). This airport is included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems for 2019–2023, which categorized it as a general aviation facility.

## **Chapter 2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

This report is intended to provide an overview of Board and Airport management activities for the period of December 2019 to December 2020. The primary activity continues to be tasks relating to resolving the temporary restriction of night operations which is covered in detail in the Obstruction Mitigation Plan, update letters, and associated documents. The management team is also involved in many other activities which are summarized in this report.

## **Chapter 3. MANAGEMENT**

Starting in January 2021 the five-person Board of Directors will have two newly elected members, one of which was an appointee in the previous two-year term. We welcome them to this volunteer team and look forward to working with them for the benefit of the District.

## **Chapter 4. OBSTRUCTION MITIGATION**

During this reporting period, restoration of Night Operations through Obstruction Mitigation has been the primary focus of the Board, the airport manager, and several valued volunteers. The effort started with the creation and ongoing updates of a comprehensive mitigation plan, an informal but detailed survey of obstructions in the runway approach and lateral areas, and the ongoing efforts to remove the identified obstructions both within the district and in adjacent neighborhoods.

Caltrans conducted two interim inspections during this period but have yet to lift the suspension of night operations. While Caltrans recognized that significant progress has been made, it is clear the Airport used up a lot of goodwill over the years due to our long-term inability to clear identified obstructions. As such, Caltrans is holding firm on requiring substantial compliance before lifting the restriction. The good news is we are nearing the end of the mitigations identified in the last inspection and it looks like they may be completed in December 2020.

We update the Caltrans inspector on our progress on a frequent basis and will request an inspection as soon as the latest priority work is complete.

This year we are in a critical budget situation and have had to trim all other operating budgets below appropriate levels to keep going forward with the mitigation efforts.

## **Chapter 5. FUEL SYSTEM**

Selling aviation fuel is a priority for the district that, by state and local regulation, requires regular training, inspections, maintenance, and repairs to the system. CPAD has so far been able to meet the requirements of the various permitting agencies and insurance carriers to keep operating; however, maintaining the system's function and attaining compliance will be increasingly challenging as all the equipment ages further beyond its useful life. A particular concern is the underground tanks and piping which will either be uninsurable or cause an environmental issue that will cost many thousands to deal with.

The immediate fuel system problem is the point-of-sale credit card system. The FuelMaster card reader is already well beyond its useful life and, as of April 2021, will not be supported by the banks because it cannot meet the security requirements to read new generation cards. After April 2021, CPAD will be liable for any fraudulent use traceable to our obsolete system as the new security measures and protocols will not work. CPAD will likely be subject to increased operating fees to continue to use our obsolete equipment. Similarly,

The fuel-delivery hoses on the pumps are life-limited items and, in 2021, will be at their end of life.

CPAD does not have the funds to make either of these changes/repairs at this time.

## **Chapter 6. FINANCIAL**

This District is facing a critical budget situation with the increasing fixed costs and ongoing operational needs such as obstruction mitigation. We are unable to create any reserve funds to deal with the failing infrastructure, equipment and systems which are all near or already beyond their useful lives. The Board recognized the dire situation when passing the FY20/21 budget by including a strong statement that the budget is insufficient to operate the District.

A critical operational and financial concern is the underground fuel tanks and piping which are beyond their recommended life. A failure will likely result in a significant expense for environmental remediation. Without project capital to replace the system in the near future, any issue will likely end our ability to sell fuel and also leave us with a significant expense.

Due to the budget situation, the treasurer led a committee to study long and short-term budget requirements to maintain and update the airport along with identifying possible funding sources including grants and additional resident fees. The outcome of this clean-sheet study was to put a measure on the ballot to raise the annual special tax per property to a minimal amount needed to maintain operations. The measure received a majority of Yes votes but failed to achieve the required super-majority vote of 2/3rds majority; so, the measure did not pass.

The District is now at a critical junction as funds are not available for required street maintenance and the airport does not have enough funds to operate even at a bare survival level. If anything fails or an unexpected expense occurs the District will quickly become insolvent. This situation is not acceptable and must be corrected by whatever means can be implemented to provide sufficient funding to both operate and provide financial reserves.

There appears to be a majority of residents in support of continuing this Airport District so the Board will review all of the revenue options available to Special Districts and pursue a course necessary to provide financial stability for our Airport District. Unfortunately, all of the apparent options except for the ballot measure approach that was defeated will require additional overhead and legal cost to implement which will likely be reflected in higher cost to the residents to get the same benefit.

If the District becomes insolvent, the County will be obligated to dissolve it and take over operational and fiscal management. The County shows no interest in keeping this airport operating and will be free to do whatever they decide with the property to reduce their costs and liability.

### **Chapter 7. MOWING AND WEED CONTROL**

This year has continued to be particularly challenging due to the long 2019 rainy season requiring additional work for weed control. Mowing and weed cutting has been dependent on a few dedicated volunteers with borrowed or rented equipment. We were fortunate to receive the donation of a new self-powered mower to the District which replaced the failed tractor and brush hog equipment that was either not operable or breaking down so often as to be unusable and as a result both have been salvaged.

The loan of a suitable vehicle to pull the mower was available for a large part of the mowing season but is no longer available. The mower is not ideal at this time for the height and type of weeds that have started to take over while we search for a replacement tow vehicle.

Just prior to this report date a working group consisting of the volunteers who are actively mowing proposed their equipment needs and received a budget to go ahead and procure what they need. It will be challenging as we can only afford used equipment which is difficult to find in the size and condition required.

One of their primary issues is having sufficient mowing width to cut down on mowing labor hours and being able to cut through the areas not suitable for the self-powered mower. The team is presently searching for a tractor and flail type mower on the used market. In the meantime, we will continue with the self-powered mower using what borrowed tow vehicles we can find. It will be supplemented by the airports walk behind brush mowers and hand trimmers.

CalFire convict crews continue to provide a critical service in clearing brush throughout the airport at a very low cost.

### **Chapter 8. HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DISPOSAL**

CPAD has continued to review the existing creation of waste and has been able to greatly reduce costs and liabilities associated with the storage and eventual disposal of hazardous waste.

## Chapter 9. SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

1. Water intrusion into the lighting control shed has been stopped by adding external drains. The shed is now dry and has been cleaned up inside as it was becoming a storage area for obsolete and unused items not part of the lighting system.
2. LED light fixtures have been installed in several of the rented hangars and all of the outside apron lights have been repaired
3. The public restroom door was broken and it was found the support structure was also deficient. The jamb side support has been repaired and the door rehung within a new jamb. The door now functions without dragging on the floor
4. Removal of debris and general clean-up of the entire airport area continues.
5. The entire office interior was gutted then painted, new light fixtures, carpet and trim installed along with cabinetry to both clean it up and make it more useable with efficient storage.
6. The critical policy and procedure documents for both the Board and airport operations have been reformatted and rewritten using a uniform template in word and approved by the Board.
7. Severe cracks in the 13 taxiway have been repaired thanks to a volunteer donating time, materials and equipment.
8. The PLASI was found to have several internal failures which have been repaired and it is back in service. (Daytime only until night operations restored)
9. An additional access gate for emergencies was added off of Oxford.
10. An inventory of equipment and tools was started using metal ID tags and photo backups to identify what we have. Volunteers to speed up this process would be greatly appreciated.
11. Critical errors in the airport and District data were found in both FAA and CalTrans databases which are being reviewed and updates are being processed. The FAA data errors are causing the potential loss of \$30,000 in CARES funds, so it is important to keep this stuff accurate.
12. The special assessment for the USDA bond to repair the streets had not been updated leaving previously paid principle (from owners that chose to pay off their balance) accumulating interest for 8-9 years and the collected admin fees had not been transferred to the District accounts. These issues have been resolved.
13. Financial processes and associated policies and procedure documents have been reviewed and rewritten to close gaps in the system and begin to mitigate ongoing

biannual audit findings. Significant changes to and process to approve purchases and monitor ongoing contracts and purchases have already been implemented.

14. Tracking of volunteer hours has started and indicates that it requires 100 to 200 hours of effort every month in addition to the more than 40 hours a week put in by the manager to run this District. These volunteers include management and engineering support and activities such as mowing, obstruction mitigation, and repairs. The bulk of this effort comes from 5 people. When they move on, these functions stop.

15. The management of this District is also working hard to re-establish positive relationships with Cameron Park Community Services District, CalTrans Aeronautics, FAA and El Dorado County. The District historically appeared to be avoiding contact and one observed result was the District was generally perceived unfavorably.

## **Chapter 10. OFFICE PROCEDURES**

We have started to go through and sort/save/dispose of the mountain of files both in the office and in the adjacent hangar. Many are water damaged. A revised policy on document retention based on the LAFCO guidelines has been adopted allowing the disposal of as many old files as possible. Much work remains as this is a page-by-page process to review all documents. Volunteer help would be greatly appreciated.

Spare parts and support equipment have been searched and stored with like types together. Many things were hard to find as they were stored in multiple places.

A special thank you to Foothill Flying Center for the donation of an office computer system to replace the existing obsolete hardware (it was taking several minutes to do almost any function) which we had no budget to replace.

## **Chapter 11. COMMUNICATION**

A previous Grand Jury report was critical of the communication capabilities between the Board and constituents. CPAD adopted a paperless meeting system utilizing extensive use of an outbound email platform, a computer driven projector to improve communication and as a means to eliminate the waste and cost of paper copies. A new web site ([cameronparkairport.org](http://cameronparkairport.org)) has been developed and is continually being updated as a communication portal with meeting Notices, Agendas, and other district information.

2020 required most meetings to be conducted remotely by ZOOM due to COVID 19 precautions. As of this writing, our next step is to place recorded Zoom meetings on a dedicated video channel accessible by the public.

The airport manager has developed both a tracking system and a proactive approach to complaints from our neighbors, which are usually due to flying non-standard patterns or exhibitions of some sort. He has been active in educating pilots to the proper pattern and noise abatement procedures and interacting with the complainants with great success.

## **Chapter 12. COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

CPAD is very aware of the potential for creating anti-airport neighbors especially with the obstruction problem and is using a cooperative approach in contacting both residents and neighbors which has been very successful to date.

The new web site is open to the public for their information and feedback. We also continue to be available to assist in community events. The annual *Summer Spectacular* and *Cops and Rodders* events were canceled due to COVID 19, but we hosted a unique drive-through *Trails to Treats* Halloween event with CPCSD that was very well received.

## **Chapter 13. CHALLENGES**

The top priority is to continue work to remove the temporary night flight restriction which is being addressed aggressively through the obstruction mitigation process.

The biggest challenge ahead is dealing with the fact that the airport and street maintenance activities are severely underfunded. We were unable to achieve sufficient support from the residents and, as a result, Measure P for a nominal income increase failed to pass.

Without additional support, this unique neighborhood will fail.

Like many who moved here to be in an aviation lifestyle community, I desire an airpark that is better than just the marginal situation we are continuing to try and make work as reflected in our Vision Statement for this District. More of the neighborhood needs to face the financial reality and come together in defining and reaching common goals to ensure a long-term future.