

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 2013 Exploratory Airport Study (EAS), conducted by the California State University San Marcos MBA Cohort Class of 2014, concluded that San Diego International Airport will be incapable of handling the region's air travel needs beyond 2035. San Diego International Airport (SAN) currently offers few options for international travel due to its short runway and limited space of expansion. The study evaluated three potential locations for a new airport within San Diego County. It concluded that the only feasible location for a new international airport within the county would be located on or near the southern edge of Camp Pendleton in Oceanside.

The 2014 Exploratory Airport Study (EAS), conducted by the California State University San Marcos MBA Cohort Class of 2015 picks up where the previous one left off. It explores the regional implications of an international airport in Oceanside, California. Specifically, this report expands the definition of the airport's reach beyond San Diego County to include Southwest Riverside and Southern Orange Counties adjacent to the proposed Camp Pendleton Oceanside location. For the purposes of this study, this region is referred to as the Tri-County region and the proposed airport is called the Southern California International Airport (SCIA).

Chapter 1 defines the Tri-County region in terms of its driving distance from the proposed airport site. Residents of Tri-County – as well as all San Diego County residents – are underserved compared to national averages in terms of reasonable access to a large international airport. International travelers wishing to reach San Diego, and San Diegans wishing to travel internationally, are forced to connect through LAX or other major international airports. Furthermore, the Tri-County population is projected to reach 2.7 million – almost as large as the current San Diego County population – over the next 25 years. A new international airport located in the Tri-County region would provide much-needed access to international travel for these residents, as well as convenient access for international business and leisure travelers to the region.

The Tri-County region is home to an ethnically diverse, well educated, and relatively affluent population. In general, residents are representative of today's flying public. In fact, they are more likely to travel internationally than the U.S. population, yet they have limited access to international travel options in the immediate region. The region is also home to some of Southern California's most iconic tourist attractions. In order to estimate the size of an international airport in Southern California, the Chapter 2 begins by investigating the

size and capacity of its existing and planned airport infrastructure including Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Long Beach (LGB), John Wayne (SNA), Ontario (ONT), San Diego International (SAN), and McClellan-Palomar (CLD). Studies show that that by 2040, these existing airports will be insufficient to meet the demands of the flying public even after planned improvements are completed. They will fall short of demand by an estimated 30-40 million enplanements. This is approximately the same number currently served by San Francisco International Airport (SFO).

The second part of Chapter 2 benchmarks the Tri-County and San Diego regions against other major metropolitan areas served by major international airports. These include New York City, served by JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark airports; Chicago, served by O'Hare and Midway airports; San Francisco, served by SFO and Oakland airports; and Dallas, served by Dallas-Fort Worth and Love Field airports. The analysis highlights that each of these areas is served by a single major international airport (two, in the case of New York City) as well as a large airport handling primarily domestic flights. Currently, more than 98 percent of flights into and out of SAN are domestic. With such a short runway and no room to expand, SAN (the primary airport for San Diego) cannot accommodate international traffic. The benchmarking study demonstrates that SAN can and should remain a vital domestic gateway, much like Midway, Oakland, and LaGuardia; SCIA in Oceanside, within just a 45-60 minute drive for the majority of the region's population, will be able to accommodate international travel.

Commuting to and from LAX over long stretches of freeway only exacerbates the region's travel and environmental problems. The proposed location of SCIA is conveniently situated in Oceanside, California, which is a connecting point for currently underutilized public transit systems from throughout the region. Chapter 3 investigates planned improvements in the public and private transportation infrastructures that will be needed to offer efficient, environmentally friendly, and sustainable access to the airport. The analysis indicates that current and future plans for transportation infrastructure should be able to accommodate the ground transportation needs of a major international airport.

Building a major airport is a capital, labor, and time-intensive project. The recent expansion of SAN took four years, while the construction of the Denver International Airport, America's newest, took six years. However, such timeframes are for construction only and do not include additional time required for obtaining government and voter approvals, bidding, or design. Chapter 4 estimates the regional economic impacts of

building and operating a major international airport in the Tri-County region. Benchmark analysis against recent projects indicates that during construction phase, the proposed airport will employ as many as 11,000 construction workers, many of whom will relocate to North San Diego County. Once opened and fully operational, the airport will attract more hospitality, transport and warehousing business to the region. By conservative estimates, the new airport will bring between 100,000 and 200,000 new offsite jobs to the region. This is comparable to the 189,000 new offsite jobs created by the new Denver Airport. By the time SCIA begins operations, new workers could potentially infuse an additional \$3 billion to \$7 billion into the local economy.

The need for a new international airport is clear. Current and planned infrastructure in Southern California will soon be insufficient to meet the air travel needs of the flying public. These travelers also vote and live within the region. Thus, the political influences and implications on the decision to build the airport require both time and careful consideration. Chapter 5 addresses these concerns. There are many stakeholders who will have a voice in whether or not this project can be launched. Such a project would require agreement among stakeholders including the U.S. Military at Camp Pendleton, San Diego County voters, local businesses and communities, and many regional and national government agencies. A series of in-depth interviews elicited the concerns and interests from representatives of these parties. They are included and discussed in the report.

Political and personal concerns and opposition aside, all stakeholders interviewed agree that a new international airport would provide tremendous benefits to the region. These benefits include increased air travel, tourism, and business and community development. Nonetheless, there are a number of legitimate concerns and drawbacks that will need to be addressed and surmounted. The report ends with a series of recommendations for building upon existing relationships and cooperative efforts among leaders throughout the Tri-County region. If properly executed, these recommendations will help make the concept of Southern California International Airport a reality.