

SUMMARY

This report does not seek to address whether air traffic operations at Love Field should or should not be expanded. Rather, it seeks only to determine the impact of expanded air traffic operations at Love Field on area roadways. Clearly, expansion of air traffic operations at Dallas Love Field will have an impact on area vehicular traffic. The extent of the impact, however, will be dependent upon the degree of future expansion.

There are many intersections surrounding Love Field where existing Levels of Service (LOS) are already poor and create problems for area commuters. Additional traffic loads to congested intersections will create even longer delays for area motorists, as well as encourage alternative routing through nearby residential neighborhoods.

There are also intersections where Levels of Service are currently fine, yet where additional congestion from expanded operations at Love Field will create new problems. Motorists, area businesses and nearby residents would experience delays where none currently exist should the airport expand to projected levels.

These impacts not only affect travelers bound for Dallas Love Field, but also will have far-reaching effects on motorists who may never visit the airport. Because of the compounding effect of traffic delays on area roadways, impacts can be projected for streets as far north as Park Lane in North Dallas.

Additionally, commuters from North Dallas, Addison and Plano will experience additional delays in their daily commutes along the Dallas North Tollway as more and more motorists attempt to reach Love Field via Mockingbird Lane. A potentially dangerous situation could exist as greater numbers of motorists exiting the southbound Tollway overwhelm the design volume of the Mockingbird exit ramp, blocking mainlanes of traffic on the Tollway during rush hours. This report projects an additional 410 vehicles will attempt to use the Tollway/Mockingbird interchange during peak periods alone. (Peak periods are those one-hour windows in the morning and evening where traffic is at its worst.)

Delay is an incremental factor that may seem minuscule at the outset. But consider that the average trip along Mockingbird between the Tollway and the entrance of Love Field will take *every* vehicle an additional three minutes -- even for those who are not going to the airport. Three minutes may not seem long, but for motorists who travel this route twice a day -- once in the morning, once in the evening -- this delay accumulates to an additional lost day (24.92 hours) per year.

A primary result of increased traffic congestion is the well-documented increase in "slippage," that is, when motorists abandon congested major streets in search of quick alternatives through residential neighborhoods. If the airport expands to projected levels and area streets swell with the added vehicles, residential neighborhoods surrounding the airport -- as well as areas throughout Highland Park -- will see quite streets turned into busy streets as more and more traffic cuts through in search of quicker routes to the airport.

Currently, 75 percent to 97 percent of the traffic on one residential Highland Park street is cut-through traffic going to Love Field area and/or the Tollway. Not only will this figure rise as airport operations are expanded, but additional streets will begin to experience this traffic burden as well.

Traffic delay is not only lost time, but money, as well.

Using a conservative baseline of \$18 per hour in lost wages and benefits, the added delays caused by an expansion at Love Field will cost each commuter passing by the airport \$448.50 per year. With thousands of individuals now caught in additional congestion combined, the total impact to the Dallas economy could be at least \$5 million in lost wages per year. The loss of a quarter-million hours -- 246,052 hours per year -- could have an impact on the Dallas economy that has yet to be considered or measured.

Additionally, new parking structures will need to be construed at Dallas Love Field to accommodate the added volume of passengers. The cost for additional multilevel parking garages at Love Field -- the existing garage is near capacity and there is not enough room for adequate open parking -- would approach \$26.3 million. To recover these costs, current parking rates of \$5 to \$7 per day may need to be doubled.

In conclusion, the impact of added vehicular traffic stemming from expanded operations at Dallas Love Field needs to be considered in future decisions. There are many measurable effects -- from individuals' lost time and wages, to a wide-spread economic impact, to personal lifestyle changes for area residents -- that will be created by such expansions.