



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: May 13, 2014

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Certification and Operations Division, Airport Department

SUBJECT: Agreement For Facilities And Services As Part Of The Interim Family Assistance Plan For Santa Barbara Airport

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council authorize the Acting Airport Director to execute an Agreement with the UCSB Board of Regents for use of University facilities as an interim family assistance center for an anticipated maximum of 12 hours in the event of certain airline accidents or incidents at or near the Santa Barbara Airport.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires that airports maintain an Airport Certification Manual (Manual). The Manual provides direction and lines of responsibility for day-to-day operation of the Airport and details operating procedures to be followed for both routine matters and unusual circumstances or emergencies that may arise. A major component of the Manual is the Emergency Plan.

The Emergency Plan addresses essential emergency related and deliberate actions planned to ensure the safety of and emergency services for the airport populace and the community in which the airport is located. A component of the Emergency Plan is to assist the airlines with the location of a family assistance center.

Family Assistance Act

In 1998 Congress enacted the "Family Assistance Act" to ensure families of victims involved in fatal air carrier accidents are treated with respect, and provided care, resources and information. The Act requires airlines to establish a family assistance center for family and friends of crash victims. The Family Assistance Act puts the full responsibility of establishing and operating a family assistance center on the Airline involved in the accident. However, historically, it has taken up to 12 hours for an airline to secure a hotel facility for the Family and Friends Center.

Airport operators have no obligation by law to assist in handling family and friends of victims. However, the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board encourage airlines and airports to work with community partners to plan for compassionate managing of distraught friends and relatives while the airline sets up the assistance center.

It has been a long standing industry practice for airports to designate a gathering area, in the terminal, for this group. However, this practice can result in large numbers of distraught family and friends in and around the terminal within sight of the crash site which compounds their stress and grief.

The Airport does not have adequate onsite facilities to effectively manage a potentially large group for up to 12 hours. The Airport's response plan designates the historic Ovington Terminal as the friends and family gathering location, but due to its small size and lack of seating and amenities it is not adequate.

Agreement with UCSB for Interim Family Assistance Plan

The Airport has worked with UCSB emergency management staff during the last two emergency exercises to test the concept of setting up a portion of the Multi Activity Court (MAC) center as an interim friends and family center. The use of the MAC or similar UCSB facility while not an ideal situation, offers a more comfortable space and provides more amenities than the Airport. The offsite location also provides better privacy and separation from the incident site. The UCSB agreement will:

- 1) Help meet the short term needs of distraught family and friends while airline establishes a sustainable center at a hotel.
- 2) Ensure that Santa Barbara Airport has the availability of a facility for all air carriers serving the airport including airlines diverted to Santa Barbara Airport.
- 3) Streamline the coordination effort required to initiate an offsite interim family and friends' center.
- 4) Provide UCSB assurance of payment for their facilities and services.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Airport is responsible for providing all services at the assistance center such as food, grief counseling and transportation. These are the same services the Airport would provide if the center was onsite and processes are in place to secure and provide these services.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Any expense incurred for the interim family center will be processed as emergency expenditures via the Emergency Operations Center.

PREPARED BY: Tracy C. Lincoln, Airport Operations Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Hazel Johns, Acting Airport Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office