

# THE BOND BUYER

## What's in the San Diego International Airport's \$3 billion redevelopment plan?

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A plan costing up to \$3 billion to replace San Diego's Lindbergh Field's more than 50-year-old Terminal 1 as well as redevelop other parts of the airport advanced this week with the release of a lengthy environmental analysis documenting potential impacts.

The completion of the initial draft environmental report triggers a 45-day public comment period, a necessary step before the San Diego International Airport can proceed with actual construction, expected to start in 2020.

The centerpiece of what will be the next phase of Lindbergh Field's redevelopment is the remaking of Terminal 1, which would eventually grow from its existing 19 gates to 30.

Before the project can begin, a final environmental report must be completed and then certified by both the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority board and the California Coastal Commission.

Once completed, the overall development plan is expected to provide a far more comfortable and efficient process for the 28 million passengers who will eventually be navigating the airport. Last year, Lindbergh Field served a record 22 million passengers.

"This is the official launch of the most extensive improvement of San Diego International Airport (SAN) in its 90-year history," Kimberly J. Becker, CEO of the airport authority, said in a statement. "Upon completion, San Diego residents and visitors will enjoy a truly 21st century airport for decades to come."

The multi-phase project encompasses a number of elements, beginning with major changes for Terminal 1, which accounts for more than half of the total project cost.

In addition to more gates, there would be a 7,500-space parking structure, a dual-level roadway in front of the terminal and a new airport entry road near the intersection of Laurel Street and North Harbor Drive, which is aimed at relieving congestion for those heading westbound to the airport.

In a later phase, which would not be completed until 2035, Terminal 2 would undergo several changes, including modernization of the older, eastern portion of the terminal.

The net effect of the planned changes would be to expand Lindbergh Field's current 51 gates to 61.

Terminal 1, which opened in 1967, is in need of a makeover, the airport authority agreed a few years ago when it approved the current plan. It lacks efficient security screening areas, passenger services, separate arrival and departure roads, and other features typical of modern airports.

Lindbergh Field has undergone a number of significant changes in recent years as it responds to growing demand for domestic and international air travel. Terminal 2 was expanded in 2013 at a cost of nearly \$1 billion; in May, a 2,900-parking garage opened, and last month, the airport debuted a \$229 million international arrivals facility.

The environmental impact report, a voluminous document prepared over the last couple of years, covers numerous potential impacts, including some that are characterized as "significant and unavoidable." Examples are cited in the areas of noise, air quality and traffic, where it is noted that there would be considerable impacts on multiple intersections and roadway and freeway segments.

The initial phase of the Terminal 1 reconstruction is scheduled to open in 2023 with 22 gates, and eight more gates would be added three years later.

If all goes as planned, the final environmental analysis would be completed and approved by the end of this year, and Coastal Commission review would take place sometime in 2019. The airport authority says it will cover most of the cost of the redevelopment with user fees.